

The Funambulist by its Readers:
Political Geographies
from Chicago and Elsewhere

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...and other such stories.

Foreword / Architecture as Publishing

Chicago Architecture Biennial 2019 Curators

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In many different moments of architectural history, independent publications have provided a site of experimentation for ideas that would not find way into the discipline mainstream. Carving out a space for cultural and technological speculation, utopian ideals and revolutionary design, indie publications offer a space freed from the constraints of a form of art that is overly determined by structures of power and capital. At crucial moments they have been even more relevant than architecture in built form, allowing architecture discourse and practice to transform itself by being contaminated with questions outside traditional disciplinary boundaries, institutions and complicities.

Can we conceive publishing as a spatial practice in its own right, operating as a form of “speech-act” architecture? In our research process for the Chicago Architectural Biennial 2019 we encountered many practices that explore the field of architecture through publishing. Established in 2015 in print and online formats, along the last four years *The Funambulist* became one of the most prolific sites of architecture debate outside the official networks of architectural discourse. Its editorial framework — as the magazine’s subtitle says, the “politics of space and bodies” — is not concerned with formal canons and master-builders, but rather seeks to question how architecture functions as a means to govern bodies in space through a set of divisions, separations and exclusions. Networking an impressive diverse set of contributors from different geographies, *The Funambulist* focuses on questioning how architecture is related to the politics of race, anti-colonial struggles, queerness, and feminist approaches to the city. Its ambitions are overtly, and at times naively, political, seeing the act of publishing as an operative instrument within contemporary struggles. In a moment of shrinking democratic rights, climate emergency, and the resurgence of fascist speeches, we could not ask for less.

For the Chicago Architecture Biennial 2019, we invited Léopold Lambert, the tireless editor-in-chief of *The Funambulist*, to revisit the magazine’s archive and select a set of texts responding to the curatorial framework of *...and other such stories*. In the autonomous and collective spirit that makes *The Funambulist*, Léopold instead invited the magazine’s own readers and writers to look back at this archive, decentralizing the figure of the editor and the author at the same time. *The Funambulist* also commissioned new essays by activists and spatial practitioners from Chicago, engrossing the volume with unique local perspectives. The result is *The Funambulist by its Readers: Political Geographies from Chicago and Elsewhere*, a reunion of diverse voices that capture the spirit of our times, in architecture and politics. ■

Introduction / The Funambulist by its Readers

Léopold Lambert, Editor-in-Chief

Initiated in 2010 as an online editorial platform, and then in 2015 as a bimonthly print and online magazine, *The Funambulist* parts from a narrow understanding of architecture as the authored design of inhabitable sculptures to favor its broader definition as the discipline that organizes bodies in space. When investigated through this definition, architecture can be perceived as one of the key components as to how political forces are able to materialize into space and enforce themselves onto bodies. Although true anywhere else in the world (as this volume illustrates), the United States, where the Chicago Architecture Biennial occurs, offers a particularly poignant example of the kind. The infrastructure of the settler colony includes the boats that forcefully displaced 12 million kidnapped African bodies, the plantations that then extracted the workforce of those same enslaved bodies, as well as the architecture of the border and carceral state — from the state and federal prisons to the concentration camps detaining yesterday Japanese diaspora and today Indigenous migrants coming from the south of Turtle Island. These examples overlap with the history of violence that founded this nation state and through which it continues to operate. To this, one could answer that architecture has also been materializing decolonial and anti-racist political forces; this is true to a certain extent, but we have to observe how easy it is for architecture to enforce the settler-colonial and carceral agenda before we can even start doing so. After all, hasn't the incumbent president of the settler colony run an entire electoral campaign on the very materialization of a colonial border line into the most common architectural typology: a wall?

With such a perspective, we have attempted to detach ourselves from architecture as a discipline and have focused instead on direct or indirect spatial approaches to anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, queer, trans, feminist, anti-ableist political struggles, and that against what they are fighting. Palestine, Kashmir, Kenya, Kanaky, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Guinea, Japan, Singapore, France, Turtle Island, and the waters of the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Aden, and the Persian Gulf... these are the geographies mobilized in this volume, but they are among the many we have been discussing in the first 25 issues (and counting) of the magazine. This list does not provide merely a context to the struggles, but rather, considers the spaces that influence them and that are, in turn, informed by them. This is true at multiple scales: although it is common to examine the ableist object, the gendered house, the segregated neighborhood, the capitalist city, or the colonial infrastructure as having processes of violence incorporated within their very structures, these multi-scalar built environments are nevertheless interchangeable. Analyzing the structures of violence is crucial,

but not enough however; this is why our six issues of 2019 are dedicated to promoting several dimensions (spaces, publications, architectures, futurisms, self-defense, and pedagogy) of political struggles from Aotearoa to Chiapas, from Johannesburg to Gaza, etc.

We have decided that the key notion emerging from this collection of texts should be political usefulness. Much more than convincing a liberal audience of the urgency of the political struggles showcased throughout these pages, our number one ambition consists in producing something useful, if not operative, for those who are fighting “on the ground.” This is why we tested this notion of usefulness by inviting twenty regular readers (many of whom are also contributors) of *The Funambulist* to pick one text in our first 22 issues that appears to them as being particularly politically useful, and to explain it for this text, which is then to be republished in this present volume. The definition of “useful” was left open to the discretion of these twenty guests. Some understood it in its most operative manner (how to organize, what strategies to adopt, how to approach time or space differently), while others interpreted it through more literary or methodological readings.

All the texts relate to the statement drafted by the curators of the Chicago Architecture Biennial that commissioned us this volume. The Indigenous insurrections, from Turtle Island (Nick Estes, Deborah Cowen) to Kanaky (Anthony Tutugoro), address the notion of sovereignty that “No Land Beyond” proposes to question. Both the memories of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde headquarters in Conakry (Sónia Vaz Borges), and those of the Palestinian infrastructure of intimacy that used to incarnate the family home later destroyed by the Israeli army (Sabrien Amrov) relate directly to the “Appearances and Erasures” chapter. As for the “Rights and Reclamation” section, it can be found in the anti-racist movements of the French and Portuguese suburbs (respectively Hacène Belmessous, and Ana Naomi de Sousa & António Brito Guterres). Finally, the decolonization of time (Rasheedah Phillips), the radically anti-normative design of Arakawa and Madeline Gins (Momoyo Homma), and the “Decolonial Mapping Toolkit” (Patrick Jaojoco) embody excellent examples of what the Biennial curators intended for the chapter “Common Ground.”

However, none of this would make any sense if the attempt to produce political usefulness here would not be profitable to activists in Chicago where this Biennial is set. What could appear as common sense requires instead some deliberateness, as the effects of the Biennial itself could not possibly be neutral to the city — something that the curators themselves have well understood, but these effects are much greater than the event under their control. This is even more true when one of the main initiators of the Biennial

is former mayor Rahm Emanuel himself. During his eight years of tenure, his administration has shut down 49 public schools, encouraged the gentrification of neighborhoods inhabited predominantly by the Black and Brown working class, and considerably reinforced a police force that practices what the U.S. Department of Justice itself has called a “pattern and practice of unconstitutional abuses, including the use of excessive force, especially against people of color” (*Mother Jones*, 2017). In 2015, massive protests demanded Emanuel’s resignation as investigations established that a video of Black teenager Laquan McDonald being shot 16 times by a white police officer on October 20, 2014 was deliberately hidden from the public by the mayor’s office, while Emanuel was running for reelection. Admittedly, Emanuel did not transform the Chicago Police Department (CPD) into the institutional enforcement of structural racism it currently is. Using the most extreme instance of its brutal recent history, between 1972 and 1991, the CPD has tortured over a hundred Black and Latinx people in their West Chicago Homan Square facility, as *The Guardian* revealed in 2015. However, he brought his contribution to this history of racist harm; most recently in projecting the creation of a \$95 million police academy in the Black neighborhood of West Garfield Park, not far from Homan Square, which continues to be used by the CPD despite the atrocities committed in it.

In these conditions, our participation to this Biennial was conditioned on making this critique heard through the voices of five Chicago-based activists, as well as dedicating a third of our production budget to their honoraria — for his help in this process, I would like to thank another Chicago activist, Ladipo Famodu. These five activists are Patrica Nguyen who, along with her collaborator John Lee, has been selected for the design of the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project; Benji Hart, one of the key figures of the #NoCopAcademy campaign; Jesse Mumm, whose academic and activist work takes site in Humboldt Park against gentrification; Maira Khwaja, whose job as an educator puts her at the forefront of the daily problems faced by her students, between racist policing and gun violence; and finally Anjolie Rao, whose bridges between the world of architecture and that of political activism make her place in the pages of this volume particularly relevant. A few months after incumbent mayor Lori Lightfoot took office, the usefulness of these contributions is not so much to be found in an assessment of the previous administration’s policies, and more in the urgency to fundamentally sever them, and hold the municipality accountable for the violence it continues to produce through its police and neo-liberal policies. If we might be of any use to this end, then our participation to an event like the Biennial would have been worth it. ■

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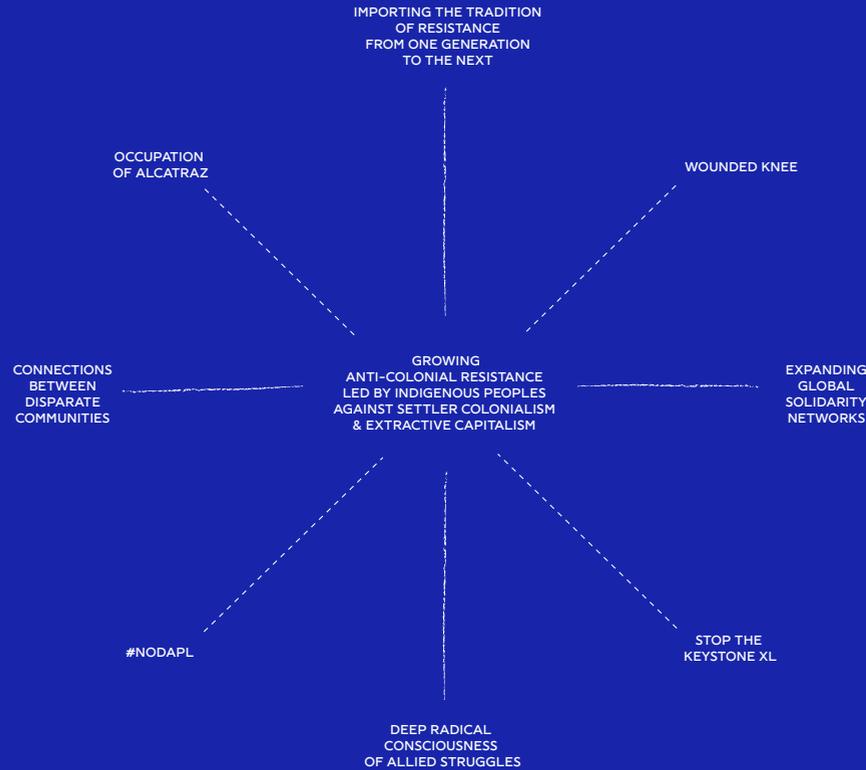
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“Freedom is a Place”: Long Traditions of Anti-Colonial Resistance in Turtle Island

INTRODUCTION BY DEBORAH COWEN ///

Nick Estes is among the most politically inspiring of contemporary writers of Turtle Island and this short but sumptuous piece demonstrates why. Courageous, enlightening, and sometimes surprising, “Freedom is a Place” offers a method for engaging the here and now through re-reading the then and there. Bending time, following its ruins and afterlives into the future and back to events from a distant past that cannot yield, Estes moves with precision, giving us a method and a map to help find a path to a place of justice. This piece invites us to think in ways that anticipate the change we need to see; it is profoundly multiracial and multinational, it is inextricably material, and it is deeply moving — it cultivates a feeling of possibility. From the title and very first line of the piece, Estes asks the reader to think across histories of oppression that are too often put in competition. Locating an early tradition of anti-colonial placemaking in Turtle Island in the practice of escaped enslaved African people and the creation of maroon colonies, Estes enacts solidarity through literacy. Not surprising given Estes’ enormous investment in anti-colonial organizing — political life figures in the inescapable materiality of place, territory and infrastructure. And here again Estes turns to the Black radical tradition — sustaining that important engagement — to think with the extraordinary abolitionist geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore. Lastly, this piece thinks with movements and about movement. Estes shows us struggle from the inexplicable revolutionary courage of movements past and present, and in doing so, moves this reader to care and to act.

Deborah Cowen is a geographer engaged in research and organizing around the suburbanization of poverty, the politics of infrastructure, and the intimate life of war in ostensibly civilian places. She lives and teaches in Tkaronto.

“Freedom is a Place”: Long Traditions of Anti-Colonial Resistance in Turtle Island

The project of anti-colonial place-making has a long tradition in Turtle Island that can be traced from the creation of maroon colonies of escaped slaves to contemporary Indigenous-led uprisings, such as the camps at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The first non-Indigenous people to permanently live in the North American continent were not Europeans, but, in fact, were former African slaves. Brought here as unfree people to a free land, communities of fugitive slaves have resisted this unnatural condition, sometimes abetted by Indigenous allies and relatives.

For example, in 1526, Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, a Spanish conquistador, founded North America’s first European colony, San Miguel de Guadalupe, in what is currently the state of South Carolina. With him he

brought a hundred African and Indigenous Caribbean slaves as well as hundreds of Spanish settlers. The slave plantation was the first bordertown, a European-dominated settlement trespassing into sovereign Indigenous territory, which paved the way for later Anglo iterations of settler colonialism, such as the infamous Plymouth Plantation. Within a year, the enslaved had joined with the original people of the land, the Guales, to extirpate the Spanish colonizers. It was the first successful anti-colonial slave revolt and Indigenous uprising on the continent. The self-emancipated Africans joined their Indigenous comrades, making kin and living with the land without dispossessing, displacing, or eliminating the original people like Europeans would do for the next five centuries. They became the first permanent non-Indigenous inhabitants of Turtle Island. The colony, however, was also a preface to the apocalypse that gave rise to the first nation born entirely as a capitalist state: the United States.

While it is important to document the nightmare of settler colonialism, it is also profoundly urgent to examine the deep radical consciousness of allied struggles that co-create liberated spaces and communities of freedom, past and present. **In the essay “Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence,” Ruth Wilson Gilmore maintains that the practice of abolition geography “starts from the homely premise that freedom is a place.”** And although Gilmore’s concept emerges from the Black Radical Tradition, it is compatible with Indigenous traditions of radical relationality, of bringing human and non-human beings into just, reciprocal, and accountable relations. Kim Tallbear describes this process as a form of kinship, of making those seen as different into familiars and by nurturing Indigenous relations to other humans and the land, water, air, plants, and animals — something anathema to white



supremacist empires like the United States, which is premised on exclusion, theft, slavery, genocide, and imperialism. Put simply, the U.S. is an alien nation, a place built on unfreedom.

In 1969, during the 89-day takeover of Alcatraz Island by Red Power activists in the San Francisco Bay, a young Black Power revolutionary who later took the name Assata Shakur visited the island offering her services as a medic. She marveled at “the quiet confidence” of the Indigenous activists who had founded a new community based on their traditions out of what was once a notorious federal prison. Originally Ohlone land, the prison island was the site where four Modoc resisters were hanged and where “hostiles” such as Paiute and Apache prisoners of war and other western Indigenous nations were imprisoned in the late 19th century for

resisting U.S. invasion. In 1894, the military also imprisoned 19 Hopi men at Alcatraz as punishment for refusing to send their children to government- and church-run schools where they would be violently indoctrinated with the virtues of U.S. patriotism and white Christian civilization. Confinement, whether by boarding school, reservation, or prison, attempted to break Indigenous kinship relations, by stealing children and leaders and removing them from their communities, and thereby eliminating their relations with the land. The Indigenous prisoners at Alcatraz had encountered similar conditions that Red Power activists had found generations later: a harsh landscape purposefully isolated from the rest of the world, uninhabitable, abandoned and in disrepair, much like the Indian reservations from which they had come. This time, however, Indians of All Nations, as

they called themselves, had drawn from the ranks of Indigenous peoples shipped to U.S. cities as part of the federal termination program called relocation. Once they came to the city they were deprived of their history and culture. The activists aimed to transform the notorious Alcatraz prison into the first “all-Indian university” where courses in Native history and culture would be taught. “Our children will know freedom and justice,” their manifesto declared.

Although evicted by police under orders from the Nixon administration, Alcatraz catalyzed an Indigenous movement that kicked off occupations of federal lands and buildings across the continent. The height of which occurred during the 71-day siege at Wounded Knee, where Indigenous activists took over the small town in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, demanded the ouster of a corrupt tribal administration, and declared independence from the United States. While a captivated U.S. public only saw — and still only see — the spectacle of militant Native men in braids and shades brandishing firearms, James Baldwin saw something else. “What Americans mean by ‘history’ is something they can forget,” he said, in an unpublished interview that was recently uncovered, reflecting on this period of Indigenous uprisings and selective settler memory. “They don’t know they have to pay for their history, because the Indians have paid for it every inch and every hour. That’s why they’re at Wounded Knee; that’s why they took Alcatraz.” The fires of Indigenous liberation had been lit at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee, and they continued to burn decades later.

Gilmore calls the generational memory of striving toward freedom an “infrastructure of feeling.” She builds on Raymond Williams’ “structure of feeling” to say that every new generation is an accumulation of knowledge from past struggles, a deliberate “selection and reselection of ances-

tors.” Indeed, the Black Radical Tradition and traditions of Indigenous resistance are accumulated knowledges and selectively inherited genealogies of emancipatory struggle. But revolutionary ideology doesn’t just exist in the mind; it is a material force to be reckoned with. It turns injury into movement. “Our DNA is of earth and sky,” wrote the late Red Power poet John Trudell. The DNA was not the biological unit, but a metaphor for how radical relationality, as caretakers of the earth, is coded into Indigenous resistance. **“Our DNA is of past and future.” It builds both physical and ideological networks linking radical places and histories to political practice and an anti-colonial imagination of a future otherwise.** It is an infrastructure, a solid foundation but not immutable. This was most recently manifest during the nine-month Standing Rock uprising.

And while there are infrastructures of Indigenous resistance, they confront infrastructures of settler colonialism in the form of police, prisons, dams, and oil pipelines that intend to destroy, replace, and erase. These infrastructures of dispossession have forced destroyed and attacked communities to re-imagine and reconstitute themselves once their homes and lands have been taken. Settler colonialism is typically seen as taking Indigenous lands to extract value from those lands. Equally so, however, in the case of oil pipelines and hydroelectric dams, Indigenous land and water is coveted simply so that it can be wasted. For our nation, our lands were coveted so they could be destroyed, to put water on top of them.

When the Army Corps flooded our homelands and agency headquarters twice in the 1950s and 1960s, our nation, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, was forced to imagine how to reconstruct the nation after flooding and relocation in a way that reflected our values. Indian reservations and Indigenous life were entirely absent

from the original Army Corps maps and plans. Without notifying Lower Brule, the Army Corps decided to build the Big Bend Dam on reservation land to protect Pierre, South Dakota, a white-dominated bordertown and the state capital. To save white homes and livelihoods, we had to sacrifice ours. **We had to draw and redraw the layout of our new community, as the old one was entirely covered with water.** New roads and water pipelines had to be planned and constructed. Entire cemeteries, our dead ancestors, had to be disinterred and relocated along with our living ancestors to higher ground. Planners ultimately chose a half-moon shaped community structure, a symbolic gesture to traditional camp structure of tipi lodges whose entrances opened east to the rising sun. In the center of the newly planned Lower Brule community was a school to show the emphasis placed on education. Fanning out from there were municipal and administration buildings, churches, a juvenile detention facility, and several outer rows of housing. While imprisonment and Christianity were foreign institutions to traditional Oceti Sakowin societies, the new modern relocated communities made and imagined space for youth incarceration and churches.

A half century later, the planners of the Dakota Access Pipeline, who worked closely with the Army Corps, had to imagine Indigenous peoples out of existence, to justify the pipeline’s trespass through protected treaty lands and across the Missouri River, a freshwater source for millions. When the pipeline potentially interfered with white settlers’ water in Bismarck, North Dakota, the Army Corps rerouted the pipeline, so risks of water contamination in the case of a pipeline rupture were outsourced to the

downriver Native nation of Standing Rock, whose reservation boundaries weren’t included on the initial Army Corps’ planning map. The prayer camps that were erected to oppose the pipeline’s construction attracted thousands of Water Protectors from around the world drawing on global solidarity networks.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Department, the local law enforcement agency policing the protests, produced an image that was widely shared on social media, of “359 Out of State Agitators Arrested in North Dakota,” in an attempt to criminalize and delegitimize the camps. It had the opposite effect. The map showed the different states of arrested Water Protectors, proving to Standing Rock and Indigenous peoples the widespread solidarity to protect their river, Mni Sose, the Missouri River. The image also proved infrastructures of Indigenous resistance cut deep, extended beyond the physical geography of the Standing Rock reservation, and were about more than what is often viewed as just “Indigenous issues.”

Beyond the Dakota Access Pipeline, a growing international movement has intensified to continue fighting the growing network of pipelines across North America. Kinder Morgan, Keystone XL, Enbridge Line 9, TransCanada Energy East, among a whole host of others, connect Indigenous nations and frontline communities. Each flashpoint of struggle indicates a growing anti-colonial resistance led by Indigenous peoples against settler colonialism and extractive capitalism. The broad array of current and proposed pipeline infrastructure sprawls across the continent like a giant spider web. When one pipeline is defeated, such as the Keystone XL, it can be revived or another rises to take

its place. In one sense the pipelines appear like the many-headed hydra in Greek and Roman mythology. Geographer Katie Mazer, invoking the work of radical historians Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, argues that it is not so much pipelines that are hydra-like — chop off one head and another takes its place — but rather, the globalizing networks of pipeline infrastructure connects disparate communities of the exploited and dispossessed. Mazer writes that the growing geography of fossil fuel infrastructure expands and unites in common cause a “seemingly mutable mass of variously dispossessed peoples,” nearly impossible to defeat. Mazer also argues that, like all oil pipelines, DAPL is not an isolated, issue-based struggle. Each pipeline exists in relation to other pipelines, whether or not they are defeated or built. DAPL is a transnational project, refracting back the transnational and international realities of Indigenous resistance.

Evidence of the hydra-effect can be seen in the vast array of solidarity networks that supported the #NoDAPL struggle. Black Lives Matter, Palestinian justice organizations, religious groups, military veterans, and many more from other social locations and movements galvanized support for the Indigenous-led resistance movement beyond the physical geography of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. **From the camps sprang to life the flame of Indigenous resistance that fanned out across the continent. But solidarity isn't a fleeting moment that springs up only in moments of crises and dissipates in the interlude.**

The state of North Dakota in turn mobilized 76 law enforcement jurisdictions from across the settler colony to suppress the uprising, drawing from its own security state solidarities. In August 2016, Governor Jack Dalrymple invoked powers granted under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact — which allowed states to seek help during declared “community disor-

ders, insurgency, or enemy attack” — to crush the Indigenous-led uprising. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan used the same powers to crush the Black-led uprising in Baltimore after the police killing of Freddie Gray. This time, an Indigenous nation was declared the threat. Emergency management response has been increasingly used as a new mode of Indigenous expropriation and of suppression of Black revolt.

DAPL also contracted Tigerswan, a murky mercenary group that ran counterinsurgency operations against civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it applied the same techniques against unarmed Water Protectors. According to *The Intercept*, the private security firm referred to Water Protectors as “terrorists,” the prayer actions as “attacks” and a “jihadist insurgency,” and the camps as a “battlefield” (May 27, 2017). They noted specifically the presence of Palestinians and also tracked the movements of Water Protectors of Middle Eastern descent. In their daily briefings to local enforcement, Tigerswan frequently used aerial photography to monitor the growth of the camps. One situation report had superimposed the image of a gorilla atop the camp. It was an image of Harambe, a gorilla killed at a Cincinnati zoo when a Black child fell into his cage. White supremacists used the killing of Harambe to mock Black people online, charging that a gorilla had to be killed because Black parents are careless. The comparison of Black people to monkeys and gorillas is also a well-known racial trope. The anti-Black trope was used to racialize, mock, and degrade Water Protectors of all stripes with the image of primitivism. To DAPL and police, the camps were a theater of operations, enemy combatants who had to be destroyed.

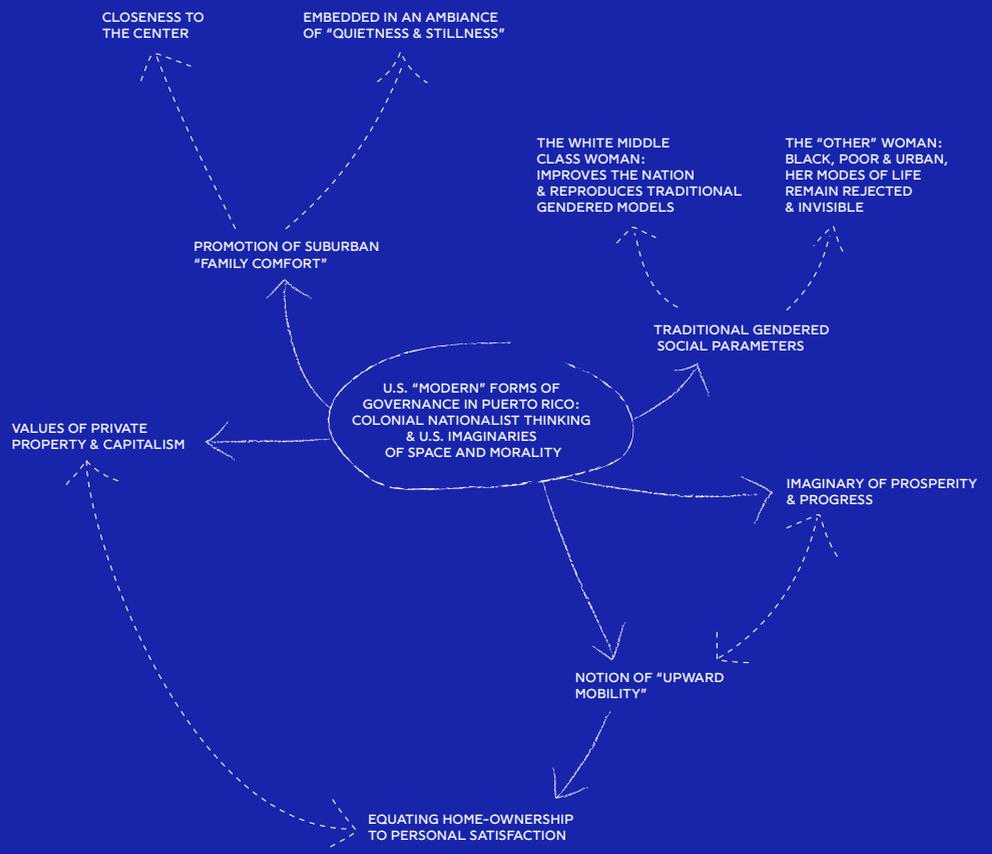
To Water Protectors, in contrast, the camps were a place of life, where an emerging Indigenous future was actively under construction. “I think it's a rebirth of a nation,” said Faith Spotted Eagle, an Ihanktonwan

elder and co-founder of the Brave Heart Society. The Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota nations re-united as the Oceti Sakowin. At the camps, the Indigenous movement had reproduced itself, not in a biological way but through imparting the tradition of resistance from one generation to the next. “And I think all these young people here dreamed of that one day they would live in a camp like this,” Spotted Eagle continued, “because they heard the old people tell them stories of living along the river.”

New camp arrivals were given a hand-drawn map of what was at the time North Dakota's 10th largest city. Roads had been named for Indigenous revolutionary heroes, such as Red Cloud and Red Warrior Camp. The map indicated where to find free kitchens, health clinics, legal aid, security, and camp supplies. There was also a day school for young Water Protectors, called the Mní Wičhóni Nakíčizin Owayáwa, the Defenders of the Water School, a name chosen by the students. Education centered treaties, language, culture, and land and water defense. The curriculum of Indigenous song, dance, math, history, and science was less about indoctrinating youth to be good citizens of settler society. As Indigenous educator Sandy Grande points out, the Defenders of the Water School was anti-colonial education for liberation — how to live and be free and in good relation with others and the land and water. The camps offered a brief vision of what a future premised on Indigenous justice would look like. With all its faults, there is something to be learned from the treaty camps at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers.

Access to food, education, health care, legal services, a strong sense of community and community security were guaranteed

to all. Most reservation communities in the U.S. don't have access to these services, and neither do most poor communities. Yet, in the absence of empire with Indigenous governing structures in the camps, people came together to help each other, to care for one another as relatives. The camps were designed according to need, not profit. Their threat to an oil pipeline was not the greatest threat to the settler state — the greatest threat was that the camps represented an unrelenting revolutionary tradition that was simultaneously international and local, that will rise again to action to create and recreate places, spaces, and histories of freedom. **That's what separated the camps from the world of cops, settlers, and oil companies that surrounded them. Capitalism is not merely an economic system, it is a social relation.** In contrast, Indigenous social relations — premised on radical relationality — offer a revolutionary different way of relating to other people and the world. For capitalism to live, the Indigenous world has to die, and vice versa. ■



Colonial Suburban Home-making in Puerto Rico

INTRODUCTION BY JAVIER ARBONA ///

In this succinct piece, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia dissects the production of the tropical suburban home as a form of everyday colonial power that brought U.S. suburbia to Puerto Rico.

I appreciate this article for the exposé of how the United States used Puerto Rico as Cold War anti-communist propaganda by accentuating individualist welfare, the ease of tropical living, and familial comfort within the rubric of profit-seeking via investment in the private property of the home site. Ironically, this was accomplished through the devaluation and partitioning of fertile agrarian land — a strategy that ultimately has foreclosed sovereignty.

Furthermore, the spatial arrangements within the Puerto Rican suburban home emphasized gendered domesticity — for example, aligning the kitchen with the bedroom for the mother figure to find efficiency and ease in her role of caregiver — thus showing us the deep entanglements of colonialism into the sphere of sexual reproduction and female bodies. Simultaneously, the conflicting forces of rural-to-urban migration cast into crisis this idealized home, as the image of whiteness desired from suburbanization hardly matched the colored proletariat or the formal arrangements of their clustered dwellings. The local government used press and magazines to wage a campaign of racial purification that highlighted interiors of suburban whiteness while erasing the Blackness of Puerto Rican society.

And yet, as we fast-forward to the present context of U.S. banks extracting capital from Puerto Rican land after decades of staging a tropical fantasy, it turns out that the very same material good that was premised as an U.S. gift of economic and sexual freedom has had the opposite effect, serving as a vehicle of indebtedness and displacement.

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Colonial Suburban Home-Making in Puerto Rico

Colonial micro-aggressions are multiple and coinciding. They are often normalized and therefore difficult to locate or conceptualize. The Caribbean island of Puerto Rico, often dubbed “the oldest colony in the world,” is currently facing a very visible economic and political crisis, the starkest of its modern history. It defaulted in 2016 when it was unable to pay a \$72 billion debt, which, owing to the island’s territorial relationships to the U.S. cannot be legally addressed through regular bankruptcy procedures. Instead, U.S. congress appointed a federal fiscal control board to recover the debt. Its seven unelected appointees have unrestricted powers to run the island’s economy and are officially in charge of the affairs of 26 different public entities including the entire local government, and the Housing Finance Authority. This “restructuring” body and its undemocratic imposition are often compared to the Troika’s coup during Greece’s financial crisis. But in Puerto Rico, the present neo-colonial situation is deeply entangled within a much longer history of violent and silencing interventions imposed “from above” — a history

that is imprinted in the socio-spatial logic and fabric of suburban home spaces.

For over 400 years (1492-1898), Puerto Rico was a Spanish colony which, amongst other macro-aggressions, involved the extermination of the local Indigenous (Taíno) population and the introduction of African slavery and racial classification as a form of difference. The territory was then handed over to the United States as a Spanish U.S. war-spoil in 1898. This transformed the machinations of power and control into “modern” forms of governance that helped conceal the discourse of imperialism in the everyday cultural areas of for example health, urban life, housing and sexuality. Key to this trajectory of normalized rule was the deal struck in 1952 between local political elites and the U.S. government which gave Puerto Rico a unique “Free Associated State” status, consisting of partial political and economic autonomy and U.S. citizenship for those born on the island.

This guaranteed continued U.S. federal influence over local matters, while solidifying the kinds of political complacencies and enabling partnerships between local and metropolitan power-elites that continue to structure those same highly unequal relations today. It is no exaggeration to say that the nature of these configurations — and the everyday modes of colonial being that have resulted through it — have facilitated and entrenched the current state of crisis.

This history, then, is not just a backdrop, but a central constitutive force in the way Puerto Rican society (and its physical spaces) have developed. **Specifically, demarcating space through definitions of appropriately raced and gendered national belonging became, since Spanish imperialism, an instrument of colonial control. Nationhood was initially constructed and reproduced with male agency placed at the center of dominant racialized cultural denominations.**



This carried through in a more “modern” version of masculinity during U.S. rule.

I offer here a very brief historical look into one of the many areas of life in which colonialism configured the island’s space and its representations: the construction of suburban homes, as materiality and representation. It is not a critique nor a commentary on nationalism, but rather a foray into the way in which colonial nationalist thinking and U.S. imaginaries of space and morality have, together, influenced the social and material creation of a suburban order. I am interested in exposing these trajectories as a way to think more carefully about the veneer of U.S. “help” or “benevolence” in times of crisis.

In the early 1960s, the Puerto Rican magazine *Hoy* (Today), dedicated to “helping homeowners improve their homes” held a contest to “improve” private properties because “growing families required bigger houses” and “more space is necessary for a more comfortable life.” Amidst the 21 types of projects that were listed as necessary were: “Preparing a store shed in the patio [...] including an apartment for grandparents [...]. Letting your kid have a room [...]. Convert your ‘porch’ or balcony into an ante-room [...]. Make a laundry room [...].

Improving the entrance [...]. Adding a room to work on carpentry...” The impetus for such “improvement works” formed part of a wider suburban logic that grew exponentially from the 1950s onward in this Caribbean colony when, despite an unfavorable economic situation, the U.S. Federal Housing Association (FHA) guaranteed financing of new homes through long-term loans, allowing for the incorporation of masses of the working and middle classes into the private property market. Despite similar patterns of rural to urban migration in other Caribbean and Latin American contexts, the intensive private suburbanization that these loans permitted had no comparison in the region. The emphasis these placed on private housing development must be located within the U.S. anti-communist logic which saw home-ownership as strengthening the values of private property and capitalism. It strategically (and internationally) portrayed Puerto Rico as an example of democracy that focused on the individual welfare, visibly verifiable through housing. Other factors influencing the island’s suburban sprawl were: the abundance of cheap land which made all terrain appear “urbanizable,” legitimating, in turn, the belief in the right to private property; and the mass

return of veterans from European wars and the Korean war.

According to the influential local members of the Planning Board of the time, “the family has to be able to live up to the standards of the housing itself; to count with the means with which to improve it, so as to make it evolve” (Passalacqua, 1951). Back then, the official philosophy of the government’s Housing Authority Agency (called *Corporación de Renovación Urbana y Vivienda* or CRUV) was that private property was an investment that protected families’ futures through inheritance. That is to say, that the success and economic progress of the idealized family had to manifest itself through not just the purchase, but also the continuous care and physical evolution of the individual home.

In a different publication, the Puerto Rican government’s Housing Investigation Board used the U.S. uni-familiar suburban home as a scientific referent point through which to speak about the island’s ideal (suburban) home. It should be both close to the center and embedded in an ambiance of “quietness and stillness.” It has wide-enough free spaces for future expansion and from which to isolate the household conveniently (with trees) so as to serve the rural “touch” and give feeling of exclusivity. The color and vegetation of the immediate surroundings should be taken into account to generate a sense of amplitude, and construction materials should be simple and inexpensive (for example, plywood and masonite). The “suburban mobility” idea, which likened homeownership of a free-standing house to personal satisfaction, was founded upon the mythical imaginary of the “U.S. way of life.” **In Puerto Rico, the government was able to create this imaginary of prosperity and progress through capitalist symbols of home and property by playing on the desire of rural migrants during the industrializing period to access urban life**

without losing their little piece of land; and to migrant second generations’ desire for security following histories of slum eradication and relocation.

The home was also an architectural and cultural artifact that served as a mechanism of domestication, codifying the spaces and uses of the suburban home in highly gendered ways. For instance, in the report quoted above, the Planning Board recommended ideal spatial relations between domestic rooms: “Access to bathroom without crossing spaces — to be accessed through hallways to ensure more privacy [...]; direct connection to the living room and kitchen to save the *ama de casa* (female home-maker) from long and arduous trips, with the kitchen conceived as the center of the domestic economic unit [...] enough closet space; separate the children according to sex by constructing three rooms.” **Here, the materiality of the modern home — its inside and out — is used to reproduce and discipline the traditional binary pairs that link the public with work and masculine (the cognitive) and the private with the domestic and feminine (the body).** The suburban “family comfort” that was being promoted by these kinds of publications was supported by these dualisms, which rendered the work of social reproduction conducted by women invisible while male’s remunerated labor was valued for its “bread-winning” function. Residential design therefore sought to guarantee domestic bliss according to traditional social parameters and imperatives (“room *for* rest,” “screen walls *for* fun in the garden,” “kitchen *for* the female head of household,” “hallways *for* privacy,” etc.) based on the U.S. “Home Sweet Home” model. Within the colonial context of Puerto Rico, this supplanted white, middle-class, heterosexual vision responded, on the one hand, to social transformations that were taking place inside and outside the home and, on the other, to a growing moral

anxiety regarding dark, poor bodies that would live inside these new suburbs.

GENDER, PROGRESS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ///

The mass migration of rural populations during the island’s industrialization was officially projected as an uncontrollable disorder that impoverished the urban landscape. The shantytown aesthetic that came to dominate large swathes of land did not match up to the modern notion of upward mobility being promoted, and economic underdevelopment in general came to be presented as produced by that overpopulation. Two opposing discursive figures emerged in that context: the poor woman/mother, racialized as Black and blocking of progress and capital formation through her dangerous sexuality and excessive and irresponsible fertility; and that of the white middle-class woman that improved the nation by virtue of her feminine decency as a mother that could reproduce traditional gendered models at the same time that she reproduced the nation with her new nuclear and reduced family.

Although this nuclear model produced a larger number of working women, it did not eliminate their “private” responsibility to reproduce the family, nor the need for and invisibility of their domestic labor and the conflictive relations between men and women within the home. The changes that *did* occur and destabilized traditional norms were described popularly as evidence of the fragmentation of traditional culture. **This is how, like in so many other colonial projects of (masculine) nation-production, the sexualized body of the Puerto Rican woman (the “mother” of the nation) became one of the focal points of cultural and political debates.** Within this

framework, the Puerto Rican woman faced two simultaneous tasks: that of ensuring an idealized past and a modern present/future. Urban planning served a special function within that logic since housing construction was a central domesticating aspect of the larger socio-spatial project that sought to civilize and modernize the new Puerto Rican.

VISUAL IMAGINARIES AND THE NEW SUBURBAN WOMAN ///

A brief visual analysis of the cover of the Sunday *San Juan Star* Magazine of 1963 (whose audience was limited to English speakers) and of an archival image of a new public housing project allows us to see how some of the dynamics described above were represented and spread during the time. In the first, a white and happy mother of a nuclear family is center stage. She looks at us, standing, from the center of her suburban garden, as if she were in sole control of the elements that surround her. The information we have is ambiguous. On the one hand, her clothes and actions (weekend BBQ) suggest that she could be a modern worker that retains her role as wife, mother and home-maker. On the other hand, the man that is sitting and being served by the woman could signify the “resting time” of the head of the household. By situating her in the middle of the Sunday scene, her place between the modern and the traditional is highlighted. This, together with the isolation and greenery of the suburban garden, and the U.S. BBQ alludes to the idealized cultural hybrid that the spaces and modes of suburban life promised. Visual productions only help us see half of the story, and the implicit one that is not shown tends to be as or more significant. Here, whatever conflict may



(1) Sunday San Juan Star Magazine (September 29, 1963).
 (2) "A 'typical' family in Villa Kennedy public housing," /
 Supplement 31, October 1971, Proyecto Digitalización
 El Mundo.

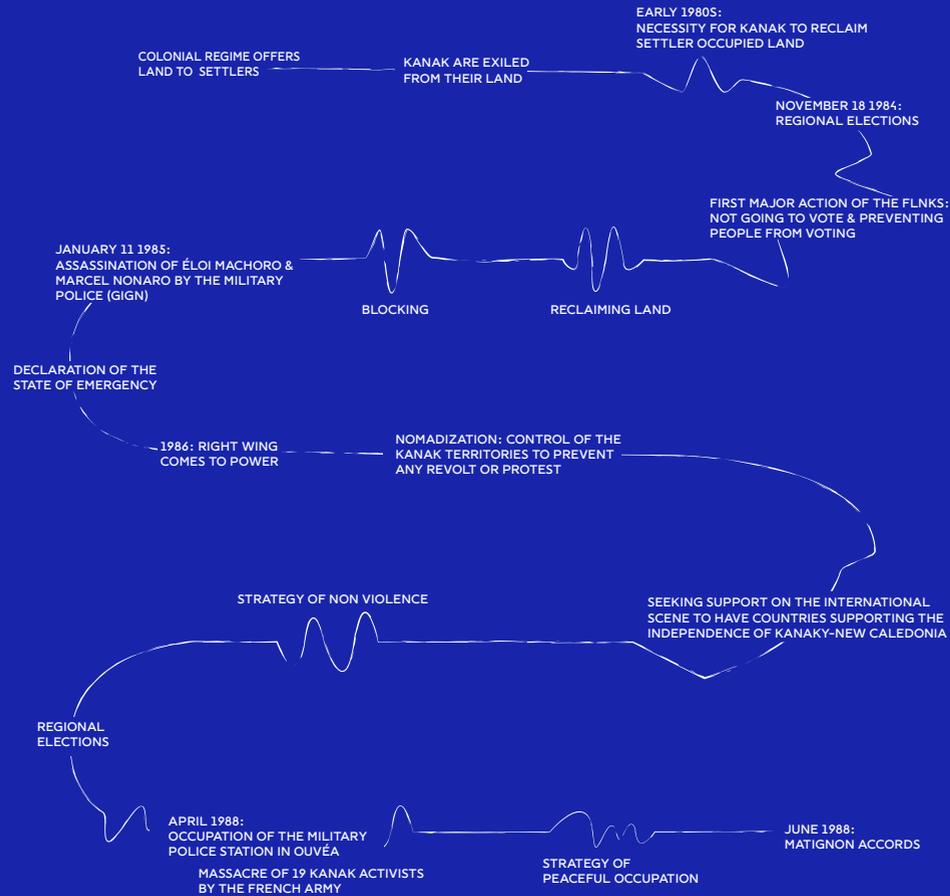
have emerged from her re-definition of woman as modern worker is omitted. By invisibilizing her possible public work and reinserting her feminine body (with modern pants) firmly within the domestic nuclear family, this picture serves to perpetuate the traditional model while hiding the real struggle at the time to harmonize women's roles as citizen, mother and worker.

In the bottom photograph, we can also see this success from the perspective of the interior of a public housing apartment that emulates the suburban socio-material domesticity. Here, the furniture and decoration establish a non-conflictive contrast between the modern (television, leather sofa to read the newspaper) and the traditional (religious paintings, women working over the living room table). At the same time, gender roles are explicit: the living/dining room is sealed by feminine curtains and contains all the action (and our gaze) in the interior, but the smiling man's bodily position and the lounge chairs suggest that he is the public worker and head of the family. The role of the women, whose faces we do not see, is (like the curtains) clear and relational: they exist to serve and give space and comfort to him.

In both photographs, we can see how the concepts of comfort offered by the spaces and design of the suburban home are materialized and traversed by gendered, racialized and classed dimensions; while the figure of the citizen/worker is also attached to gendered and racialized logics of appropriate private and domestic morality. In the happy worlds of these images, where the fantasy of property is achieved, the "other" woman — Black, poor, urban — and her mode of life remain out of sight, rejected.

In this briefest of historical ventures, the suburban home was presented as a socio-technical hybrid that collects heterogeneous trajectories, both visible and invisible. A key element to its success was the granting of U.S. finance that helped materialize a U.S.-centric notion of domestic propriety in tropical suburban space. **Today, as Puerto Rican residents and government officials struggle to eke out a space of control over decision-making in all arenas of public life including housing and planning, it is worth reconsidering the subtle everyday micro-practices that enable colonialism to flourish relatively undisturbed.** Linking histories of power and representation then and now can help us dig deeper into the current climate of brutal austerity, massive suburban homeowner defaults, evictions and repressions, reverse mortgages and other new financial home products — all forming part of a new colonial crisis-citizen and his/her "defaulting" spatiality. ■

Translated from French
by Léopold Lambert



The Strategic "Toolbox" of the Kanak Insurrection (1984-1988)

INTRODUCTION BY NADIA EL HAKIM ///

Most articles of *The Funambulist* were essential for me to understand how current specific situations are deeply rooted in a long history of struggles and domination.

In the text I chose, Anthony Tutugoro relates the episodes of the Kanak insurrection through a series of political actions that led to the Accords de Matignon-Oudinot in 1988, implementing the independence process of New Caledonia.

One month after the first self-determination referendum in New Caledonia, Léopold invited Anthony to the office in Paris while issue 21 was in preparation. The referendum was an opportunity to remember the struggles that triggered it, 30 years ago. Indeed, I found this conversation particularly useful in this context. The engaging conversation allowed me to better understand the complex ongoing process of decolonization in New Caledonia beyond the already received hegemonic discourse. Anthony draws a particular attention to how the claim for independence organized in different forms of action, from boycotts to non-violent occupations, and found its way despite the repressive agencies of the French State.

I reflected upon the vertiginous echo in the colonial link between centralized French metropolitan politics and its repercussions on New Caledonia Kanak at the other end of the world. Interestingly, Anthony also points to how the Kanak struggle reverberates between peoples, for instance by reminding us that leaders of the FLNKS met the Larzac activists during their trips to France, thus highlighting the international affinity of the fight against domination.

Although I wasn't there when the discussion was held, Léopold gave me the tape to transcribe and I found myself listening carefully to the stories Anthony was telling, absorbed by his remembering of the elders who fought for what is rightfully theirs. The conversation seemed to take the form of an oral transmission, the aim of which was to keep the struggle alive.

Nadia El Hakim worked as an editorial assistant for *The Funambulist* between 2018 and 2019. As a practicing architect, she is currently participating in projects of different scales along with a multidisciplinary team, at the edge of art, architecture and crafts. Her main research interests are situated in the mutations of the design process in the context of economic and political crisis, in Europe and the Middle East.

The Strategic “Toolbox” of the Kanak Insurrection (1984–1988)

As the movement that fights for the independence of Kanaky-New Caledonia is currently energized by encouraging results in the first of three self-determination referendums (November 4, 2018), we remember the 1980s Kanak insurrection in this conversation recorded in *The Funambulist’s* office on December 7, 2018.

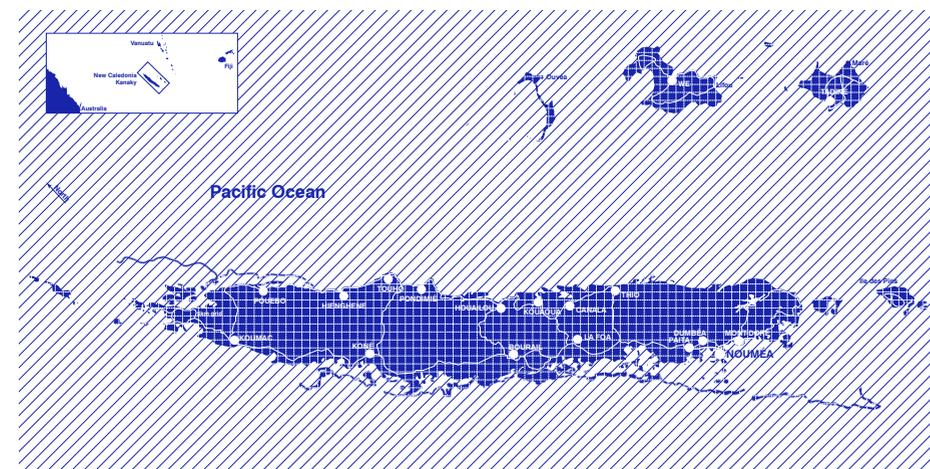
A conversation between
Anthony Tutugoro
and Léopold Lambert.

LL Giving a date to the beginning of an insurrection is always a problem as it pretends that what happened earlier was somehow distinct from what followed, but if we are to accept that the 1980s Kanak insurrection started the night of November 18, 1984, could you describe what happened then?

AT November 18, 1984 is indeed commonly

accepted in Caledonia as the date of the beginning of what we erroneously called “the events.” When I’m with my students I tell them to stop talking about “the events,” because what are these events? A carnival? I much prefer the definition of Hamid Mokaddem [see *The Funambulist* 9: Islands] who speaks of “a revolutionary political sequence constituting the Kanak people as a nation.” **As the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) emerges, all the pressure groups and independent political forces fighting for independence decide to engage in an active boycott**, which does not simply mean not going to vote to the November 18, 1984 regional elections, but also preventing people from voting. They were rejecting the Lemoine status for the country that was being implemented. Despite appearing to give a form of emancipation to New Caledonia, the Kanak people having already become a minority at that time, the game was rigged and they knew very well that the elections would be lost, hence the occupation of the town halls.

In Lifou (Loyalty Islands), the mayor, Édouard Wapaé, talked to the elders who absolutely wanted to vote. We have to see how this question of the boycott touches something sensitive between generations. Some of the elders went to fight in Europe during WWII and gained the right to vote for Kanak people. This is still in the relatively recent past! The elders who knew that some of their brothers had lost their lives fighting for this right did not understand that their own children were telling them not to vote. In Canala, it was a bit more radical, ballots were burned and Éloi Machoro, the Minister of Security of the Provisional Government of Kanaky, broke a ballot box with



an axe in a spectacular staged action. Many other actions of the kind happened everywhere in the country. After that night, Léopold Jorédié, another leader of the FLNKS gave a speech to explain to the whole population what was being done and why.

This was not the first time that there was an insurrection in New Caledonia, but it’s true that this particular night was the first major action of the movement constituted as a national liberation movement. All this was really new, in particular the synergy of it; there were not only political movements, but also unions, the group of Kanak women for the struggle, and several revolutionary tendencies that decided to send a strong message to the population to say “Now it’s enough!”

LL Although many actions had happened punctually that night, the occupation of the village of Thio on the East Coast lasted much longer. Can you tell us how it happened and took form?

AT The things I found in my research about

the relation between the independentist activists and violence is that, when we look at the movement’s strategy, there is no discussion about violence being the ultimate means of national liberation. There are spontaneous situations and specific circumstances in which violence develops. But at no time is it said that violence will be a strategy to achieve the result of independence. Instead, they repeatedly talked about peaceful occupations. This is what Machoro did with his men in Thio. They had weapons, but they were never used during the entire time of the occupation.

It was not at all a coincidence that it was the city of Thio that had to be taken. At that time it was the SLN (Société Le Nickel, a state-owned company that exploited nickel in New Caledonia to export it and make big profits out of it). The idea of occupying the village of Thio was to stop the exploitation. In general in New Caledonia, the villages are occupied by the descendants of colonists, the Europeans live mainly

in villages or Nouméa agglomeration. Kanak live in tribes and, in much smaller amounts, in Nouméa and in villages too. The idea was to take the village and stop the activity. Even when the military police (*gendarmérie*) intervened — they came by helicopters — they found themselves disarmed by the Kanak activists. It is not innocent that Machoro was the Minister of Security in the Provisional Government of Kanaky! He had some military knowledge to be able to bear arms without using them and disarm other forces.

LL What about the land that has been reclaimed there, which was one of the goals of the occupation?

AT Reclaiming the land might have been a bit more symbolically violent: some activists went directly into settlers' houses to make their position on the matter clear, but it should be noted that each time it was addressed case by case, there was not a general method for everyone. There was a moment when many people from Thio fled, crossed Grande Terre's chain of mountains and returned to Nouméa or the West Coast.

A few years earlier, there had been the creation of the Land Committee that had been mostly active in the north of the West Coast in Voh, Koné, Pouembout and the central chain of mountains. The method of the land committee was one that the FLNKS also used, at least in the beginning. One has to remember that the settler colonial regime had given land to freed convicts who had been deported to New Caledonia, and settlers who had moved there. And of course, they were given the best pieces of lands, in the plains where the soil is fertile, where it rains and one can recover water, etc.

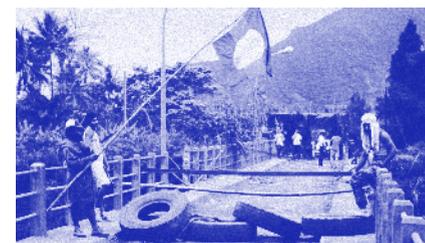
In contrast, we Kanak have been put in reservations. The tribe is nothing traditional, it's a colonial construct to gather families that were not necessarily at this very place before, when the spatial occupation was mostly based on clans. Many tribes have been placed at the bottom of valleys, where the land is least fertile. In the early 1980s, it was necessary to reclaim the land that was occupied by specific families of settlers.

People from many tribes would gather and share the tasks to build a hut on these lands. For example, members of one tribe would cut a central pole, others would bring the peripheral poles, others would come with cross ties and schooners, etc. It was very organized! They would also bring some pots and pans, and improvised dishes on the spot if they did not come with pots already full. Men, women, children, elders, everyone would take a part in it. In half a day they would assemble the hut and would usually add a sign with the mention “reclaimed land” on it. Sometimes, the hut itself was strong enough to insist on the symbolic aspect. The person who lived on the farm would have to see it whenever leaving their house and would see all the people who were there to show him that “we need to talk.” The procedure was always the same: first they would send a first letter to ask to discuss, then, if there was no answer, either they would try a second time or already set up the hut, and once it would be on the land it would mean “now we are here, when are we talking?” [laughs] Some settlers would come to discuss in good faith and some others, not at all. This is reflected in departures, some people left by themselves, in other cases, there has been clashes or the hut would occasionally be burnt down. **What's remarkable**

with this strategy, on the contrary of the roadblocks, is that it did not only involve the young men, but instead all members of the community. Symbolically it was quite powerful for the families to reappropriate space this way.

LL You just mentioned roadblocks. They are a very important item in the Kanak activists' toolbox, aren't they?

AT Blocking, even in the cultural process, is a recurrent method. Blocking a road means “if you despise us so much that you can't listen to what we have to tell you, then we block.” So yes, it has been used very much and it still is even today, in particular by the unions that block companies' entrances when they want to manifest their discontent. It's a strategy for making ourselves heard. It's true that the axes to move on Grande Terre are quite narrow, and there are almost always attempts from the military police to clear them. We often talk or write about how they would come with armed vehicles and throw tear gas, while the activists would reply with stones. But we never talk about how there are always discussions between the activists or the leaders of the committees of struggle — the FLNKS was organized in committees of struggles — and the police forces. It's only



when we can no longer discuss, that the VRBG (armored vehicles) come to clean the roadblocks, which are actually quite rudimentary: simply some pieces of wood that were cut on the side of the road, or other stuff found here and there.

LL Something I only recently learned was that the assassination of Éloi Machoro on January 11, 1985 by the military police (GIGN) happened in a context when Machoro and his men attempted to do in La Foa what they had been doing in Thio and, this way, cut Grande Terre into two parts: the South where most settlers were, and the North where Kanak people were in great majority.

AT Yes, but what mostly prevented this has been the death of Yves Tual [a young French settler] the day before the assassination. After this, the French authorities put a price on Machoro's head. They had been informed of his presence near La Foa on the West Coast — there had been some leaks about the Thio activists' moving — and decided to “neutralize” him — that's the word they used. It became a matter of “national interest.” There are many stories around the assassination of Machoro. He was in a house with other activists and they were besieged by the military police forces.



(1) Kanak activists blocking the bridge that links the village of Thio with the main road to Nouméa in November 1984. / Photograph by Gabriel Duval.
(2) The same bridge today. / Photograph by Léopold Lambert (2018).

He wanted to negotiate and came out of the house, he and Marcel Nonaro were killed by the snipers. While on the night of Yves Tual's death, Nouméa was the site of violent riots from the settler population (buildings were on fire, the independentists' headquarters were attacked, etc.), the following night, after learning the news about Machoro's death, the anti-independentists in Nouméa were very happy. Some of my relatives told me that they heard people talking about “opening up the champagne.”

LL Of course, the Kanak activists were not the only ones to find strategies to take control over space. After the assassination of Éloi Machoro, the state of emergency was declared and the six following months saw many raids of the military police in various tribes. But it is after the right wing came back to power in 1986 that we saw the most systematic tactics of surveillance and counter-revolutionary interventions. Can you describe for us what “nomadization” is about?

AT It is a military strategy that consisted in penetrating the tribes under the pretense that the army would come to help the inhabitants making buildings, cultivating the fields, working the ground, and thus establishing a relation with them. It is therefore a time when the military police are in the tribes, surveilling (*quadriller*) them, and controlling each piece of territory in Caledonia. What more does it involve? Well in case of riot, you already have the staff on hand to arrest activists, as well as the equipment that is very easily deployable. So the nomadization is the control of the Kanak territories to prevent any revolt, any form of protest.

LL Back to the Kanak activist toolbox, they then tried something else, didn't they?

AT Yes, many leaders of the FLNKS undertook trips to France to seek support and they met with the Larzac activists who had been fighting against the construction of a military base in the South of France a decade earlier. Kanak activists were seduced by the theories of civil disobedience and non-violence — not that it was something new in the struggles; some of them had been practicing this in the 1970s. The most well-known moment of 1987 was the “15 Days For Kanaky” campaign all over New Caledonia. The idea was to go in particular to strategic places of Nouméa, the capital, to show that we exist and, in case of being beaten up by the police, to “turn the other cheek.”

The strategy was to seek support on the international scene to have countries supporting the independence of New Caledonia, given that, by then, the country had been re-registered on the list of territories to decolonize. This is also how, in 1987, the FLNKS presented the U.N. with what would be the constitution of this new state. It was also about credibility. It was important not to say: “We will revolutionize society and we'll kick out everybody!” No it's not that, it was about creating a national state with all the people who make up the country. Meanwhile, some sit-ins were organized in Nouméa and elsewhere. These images went around the world thanks to an Australian TV crew, and the international community was shocked to see that French police officers were beating up male and female pacifist activists who were sitting on the ground in the center of Nouméa. Picnics were also organized in the southern wealthy parts of the city, in Anse Vata or the

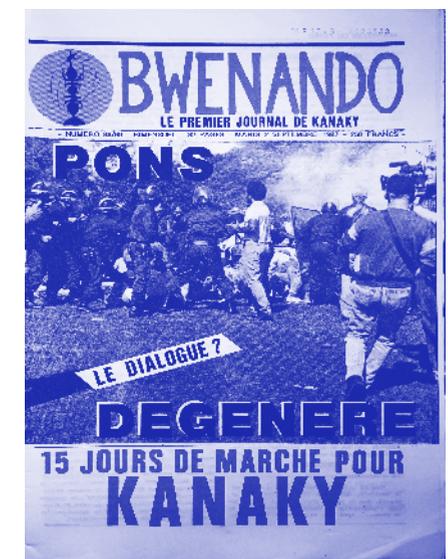
Baie des Citrons. Today it is completely banal for Kanak to go there but back then, the discrimination was so strong that it was an outrage!

More generally, the FLNKS used a panel of strategies that were mobilized at specific times to try to obtain things from France: the rule was always to aim a little bigger to obtain less. These are negotiating strategies that appear very clearly in the historical sequence of the 1980s. For the sequence of non-violence for instance, if it does not necessarily succeed and it creates conflicts internally, then we stop and move on to something else. It's true that when you get punched in the jaw with a police baton, I don't think that you'd voluntarily return the next day for them to break the other side of your jaw!

LL Precisely. After the August 23, 1987 sit in — the one that was filmed by the Australian television — the two activists who are arrested and detained are Elie Poigoune and Alphonse Dianou. The former told me that it is during these two nights in detention that Dianou decided that he was done with this strategy of non-violence. In April 1988, he led the occupation of the military police station (*gendarmerie*) in Ouvéa island that turned terribly wrong, with the 29 officer hostage situation that ultimately ended up in the massacre of 19 Kanak activists by the French army. This strategy of military police stations occupation was however used many times during the 1980s, wasn't it?

AT Yes. In that case, it was apparently part of a new strategy to launch simultaneous

pacifist occupations on all the military police stations of the territory, to surprise the police, surprise the institutions, the authorities, and oppose the regional elections (that were happening the same day as the French Presidential elections). The strategy of peaceful occupations is different from the strategy of non-violence, that's for sure. Even if it is not violent, in any case if you enter a police station, you can anticipate that it turns ugly, there are weapons after all. That's what happened in Ouvéa. All the archives concur to say that the person who opened fire in the police station was a recently-arrived officer who did not necessarily know the activists, who were people who would come often to the station, talk, sell fish or crab, etc. The person panicked when the official declaration of the pacifist occupation was made, and he fired on the activists. From there, things went for the worse.



"PONS (the French Minister of the Overseas Territory) worsens. 15 Days of Marches in Kanaky." (Cover of the Kanak activist publication *Bwenando*, Issue 88/89 (September 2, 1987). / Photograph by Léopold Lambert (2018).



It ought to be noted that apparently this occupation happened one day early; that’s why it ended up being the only one in the country. Following this, the French state mobilized all that it could mobilize in terms of military to find the commando that had taken the hostages to a cave near the tribe of Gossanah. Many accounts pretend that the FLNKS leaders did not really respond to the situation. In reality, they did. Not Tjibaou directly, but they did. It’s just that at the moment, they did not have control, tools, or communication with the commando — there were no phones of course — they could not talk to see which strategies to adopt. When Dianou said “I will release the hostages when you’ll grant the independence of my country,” he declared this from the cave but had no way to discuss this with the Front’s leaders who were on Grande Terre or on the other islands. And so the die was cast at this moment, especially when we see that there was no more discussion possible

with the authorities, and that they sent the paratroopers, the GIGN and other special forces. It’s impressive for a small country like Caledonia to see all these helicopters over people’s heads. I think that it had a very strong deterrent effect. **Ouvéa was really a show of force from the French State, that they were ready to mobilize everything they needed: 19 activists were killed in the operation, including at least three executed, it was later proved.** France wanted to show that any armed action was deemed to be met with a much greater force. Activists who were involved back then all have in mind the way the French TV was using a rhetoric that would picture the FLNKS as terrorists. My own very first memory was a picture shown on the news of New Caledonia cut with a machete and bleeding.

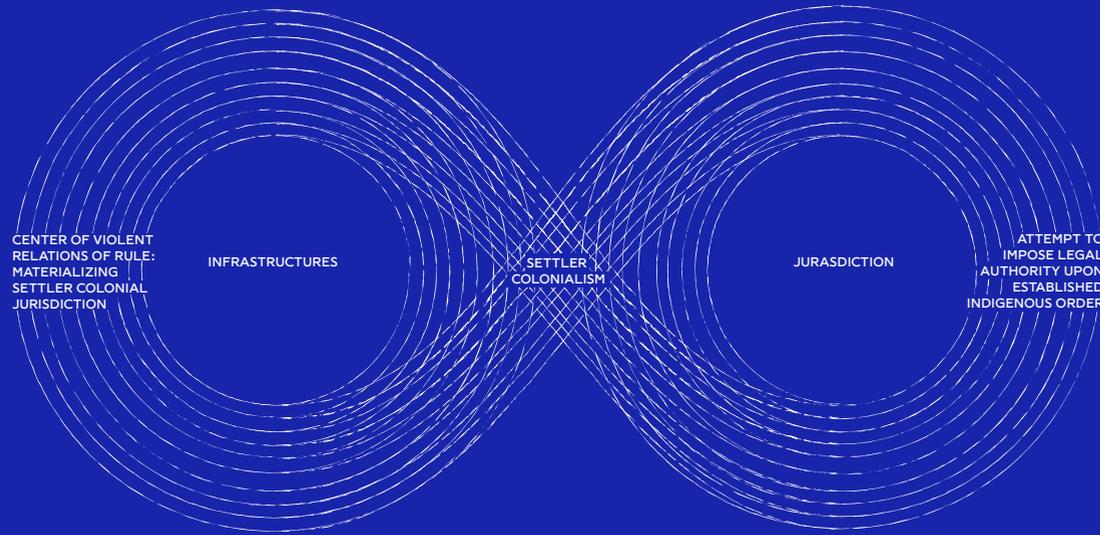
Following this episode, there were a few isolated events, but that was pretty much it. But in the end, we can say that the strategy of peaceful occupations

Graffiti representing Éloi Machoro and Pierre Declercq (a white independentist activist assassinated in 1991) on the wall of a community building in Nakéty, Machoro’s tribe. / Photograph by Léopold Lambert with the authorization of representatives of the tribe (2018).



was what led to the Matignon Accords in June 1988. After this, the FLNKS continued to exist and a new and completely different sequence started envisioning new strategies. It consisted of entering institutions that were partially created with the provincialization that began after the signature of the Accords in 1988. Tjibaou himself paid with his life [he was assassinated by a Kanak activist from the tribe of Gossanah on May 4, 1989] to engage all the Kanak people in this new ideology: “Manage our own region, manage our economy, demonstrate to the state that we are capable and that afterwards, we will be able to convince more people to join the project... In other words, vote for us!” [laughing]. ■

“No matter the result, as long as there will be one Kanak alive in Kanaky, this land will never belong to you. Kanaky for you, I would give my life.” Banner on the road to Tiendanite, Jean-Marie Tjibaou’s tribe. / Photograph by Léopold Lambert (2018).



The Jurisdiction of Infrastructure: Circulation and Canadian Settler Colonialism

INTRODUCTION BY ELISE MISAO HUNCHUCK ///

In “The Jurisdiction of Infrastructure: Circulation and Canadian Settler Colonialism,” Deborah Cowen deftly detangles and articulates the entangled and often obscured means and materials through which settler colonialism has been — and continues to be — produced.

At the time of publication, it had been three years since the presentation of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, and one year since the sesquicentennial anniversary of the settler state’s confederation. One year has since passed and what held then holds now: “the infrastructure of settler colonialism continues to be settler colonial infrastructures,” including jurisdiction and the material infrastructures of railways, pipelines, and roads. With each assertion over “national infrastructure” (including the TransMountain pipeline), Canada continues to act in bad faith, enacting jurisdiction over lands that were never ceded and are governed by multiple Indigenous jurisdictions.

As Shiri Pasternak once wrote, “Indigenous peoples in Canada have marked the socio-spatial limits of capitalist expansion for centuries and continue to hold their ground to this day. Due to the geography of residual Aboriginal lands, they form a final frontier of capitalist penetration for natural resource extraction, agribusiness, and urban/suburban development.” An example of such a frontier is presented by Cowen, who writes about the Tiny House Warriors: *Our Land is Home*, a creative initiative that constructed tiny houses and placed them along the proposed pipeline route through their territory. Land is the literal foundation for all spatial design practices and politics, and in this simple act of building home, the Secwepemc deny settler colonial infrastructure through a refusal of the settler colonial claim to jurisdiction and the fundamentally racist concept of *terra nullius* (vacant lands).

“If infrastructure underpinned settler colonialism, literally and materially making Canada,” Cowen concludes, then “a decolonial response might begin by asking what infrastructures can take us beyond ‘150.’” If the tiny houses of Secwepemc territory provide us with a model of “hope, possibility, and solutions,” they also provide us with the sharp reminder that any decolonial response must be based upon nation-to-nation relations alongside the recognition of multiple sovereignties and multiple jurisdictions in relation to the land.

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The Jurisdiction of Infrastructure: Circulation and Canadian Settler Colonialism

system. It was not the benevolence of the state, but the extraordinary resilience of those survivors and their class action lawsuit that brought the Commission into existence. While the Canadian state had to be dragged into the process, 2015 was nevertheless a moment of possibility for change. Beyond official state commitments to reconciliation, institutions of all kinds made promises to take up the TRC “Calls to Actions.” Academic, artistic, health and cultural institutions began articulating programmatic responses, and Canadians were invited to take responsibility beyond formal and legislated action.

Just two years later, that sentiment of possibility withers. “Canada 150” — ostensibly a moment to mark history — was instead defined by enforced amnesia. Festivities were awash with the language of reconciliation, but sidelined both historic and ongoing state violence, not least the very act of celebrating the “replacement” of multiple Indigenous jurisdictions with a single colonial one. As the late Secwepemc leader, Art Manuel, made clear, “I do not wish to celebrate Canada stealing our land. That is what Canadians will be celebrating on July 1, the theft of 99.8% of our land, leaving us on reserves that make up only 0.2% of the territories given to us by the Creator.” Millions of dollars were spent on “150” balloons and birthday parties, in a gaudy, ghastly celebration of the birth of a colonial formation which had its genesis in genocide.

Between these two moments, these two years, lie promises and practices. Promises of change and renewal collide with practices that reproduce the very colonial relations which all those promises were meant to undermine. What has fatally fractured hope in this moment is, arguably, infrastructure. Indigenous people organized against the “150” birthday festivities, insisting that struggles over pipelines, dams, and drinking water offered a better diagnosis of “Nation to Nation” relations.

“Infrastructure always seems to promise something, and so often it seems as if it is a promise intended to be broken.” (AbdouMaliq Simone, “Come On Out, You’re Surrounded,” *City*, Vol. 19, 2015).

It is only three years after Canada’s Truth & Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC), and the first year after the settler state’s 150th anniversary celebrations. The TRC was marked by moral and political claims to repair relations between Canada and Indigenous people, and by formal and popular commitments to redress the violence perpetrated by this settler state. In 2015, live broadcasts of the Commission’s reporting described the years of work invested in archiving stories from thousands of survivors of Canada’s residential school



Drawing attention to the infrastructure that underpins contemporary settler colonialism, water and land protectors expose ties that are long and bind tightly. James Wilt writes:

“The massive ‘Canada 150’ celebrations of July 1 are finally over, leaving little in their wake but hangovers, a multi-million-dollar price tag and mountains of trash. But for some Indigenous peoples in Canada, the festivities remain a visceral reminder of their continued dispossession from ancestral lands and waters. That’s especially true for those on the frontlines of mega-projects — pipelines, hydro dams, oil and gas wells, liquefied natural gas terminals and mines — that infringe on Indigenous land rights.” (James Wilt, “Three Indigenous Perspectives on Canada 150 in the Era of Pipelines, Dams and Mines,” *The Narwal*, 2017.)

Struggles over energy and extractive infrastructures have been fierce across national space in recent years. From the Site C Dam to the Ring of Fire, to Muskrat Falls, and especially the TransMountain Pipeline. As water and land protectors are hauled off from protest sites, we cannot forget the ways in which these infrastructures are always entangled with legal ones.

Legal and carceral systems have indeed been at the center of anticolonial struggle for the ways they disproportionately cage Indigenous people and systematically exonerate those who kill them, as with the murder of Coulten Boushie and Tina Fontaine. And yet law is more than a question of overrepresentation in courts and prisons, and cemeteries. It is more than a question of the racialized application or enforcement of a legal system. It is through the claim to jurisdiction that settler states attempt to “replace” established Indigenous legal systems and sovereignties with their own, as Shiri Pasternak has argued. Jurisdiction is the authority to have authority over a particular territory. But jurisdiction is actualized through material infrastructures. In other words, historically and in the present, the construction of railroads and pipelines relied upon the settler states’ claims to jurisdiction, but that jurisdiction is also materialized through infrastructure.

What holds then and now together? What are the routinized, systemized and lasting means through which settler colonialism is reproduced? What are the infrastructures of settler colonialism on this land?

One urgent answer to this question is seemingly circular: the infrastructures of settler colonialism are in fact, settler colonial infrastructures.

INFRASTRUCTURE'S JURISDICTION ///

“We are in a position where we know that this is federal jurisdiction. We’ve been clear. We don’t see a need to refer something to the Supreme Court of Canada when we already know that it’s a federal jurisdiction.” (Bill Morneau, Canadian Federal Minister of Infrastructure, April 2018).

Infrastructure has long been essential to the making of settler states, but national states are also a means to achieve infrastructural ends. Today, in April 2018, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fights tirelessly to assert national jurisdiction in order to see a planned pipeline to completion. In the face of extraordinary Indigenous resistance to Kinder Morgan’s TransMountain project, and without a trace of the tears that fell for reconciliation, Trudeau asserts over and over that this infrastructure is in “the national interest and it will get built.”

The TransMountain pipeline struggle, billed by some as “Canada’s Standing Rock” has been simmering for some time. Approved in 2016, TransMountain involves a \$7.4 billion investment in a new 980-kilometer pipeline parallel to an old existing one, almost tripling capacity for oil companies to ship up to 890,000 barrels of oil per day from Alberta to the west coast of British Columbia (B.C.). The project has been contested since it was first proposed. Indigenous resistance has been fierce and creative with legal and direct action by peoples along the path of the pipeline, and across the continent. The Secwepemc Nation are a particularly significant force, with more than half the length of the pipeline planned to run through their unceded territory. The Secwepemc Women’s Warrior Society has pledged to stop any TransMountain development



on their lands. Two B.C. municipalities and the province of British Columbia have also taken formal action, while environmental, student, and social movements, as well as the province of British Columbia have all mounted direct actions or legal challenges. An extraordinary drama has been unfolding in the struggle between B.C.’s efforts to block the pipeline and Alberta’s commitment to see it built, involving fiery rhetoric, threats of interprovincial boycotts, and calls for the federal government to assert its jurisdiction from Alberta’s provincial leader. On April 8, 2018, in the face of all this, Kinder Morgan declared it would withdraw all non-essential work, giving Ottawa just seven weeks to ensure the security of the project.

The government and mainstream media have not stopped talking about the jurisdictional struggle between provincial and federal governments. They frame the building crisis as a struggle over provincial and federal jurisdiction, and hardly mention what is without a doubt the larger jurisdictional question between the settler state and Indigenous nations whose territories underlie the pipeline’s path. **Canada asserts jurisdiction over “national infrastructure” but lands in question were never ceded and are governed by multiple Indigenous jurisdictions.**

In a paper entitled “Jurisdiction and Settler Colonialism: Where do Laws Meet,” Shiri Pasternak outlines how in the context of Canadian legal history, “Indigenous peoples — much like firearms and motor vehicle registrations — have been gradually

transformed into objects of jurisdiction rather than subjects in nation-to-nation relationships.” Pasternak follows Audra Simpson and others who interrogate the space of overlapping jurisdiction — where the settler state attempts to impose legal authority upon established Indigenous orders. Jurisdiction is thus a key infrastructure of settler colonialism, and, as Pasternak insists, “to engage in the question of what it means to decolonize law, we must ask by what authority a law has the authority to be invoked and to govern.” Indeed, the mainstream account of the jurisdictional struggle at play with the TransMountain pipeline already assumes that the settler state holds a monopoly on jurisdiction, but it does not account for the foundations of this authority. By making the TransMountain question one of exclusive federal jurisdiction, what is elided is not only the authority of authority, but also the work of infrastructure in materializing that self-proclaimed jurisdiction.

The story of a singular settler jurisdiction and a single jurisdictional struggle that unfolds within the settler state is thoroughly inadequate, yet it is also revealing in that it takes us back to the Constitution of the Canadian state, and the time of confederation when these links between infrastructure, jurisdiction and settler colonialism were forged. In 1867, the “fathers of confederation” gathered to sign a document which was understood to birth the Dominion of Canada, but the labor was slow as this Constitution relied on infrastructure to be actualized. Stanley insists in his classic work *The Canadians*, “Bonds of steel as well as of sentiment were needed to hold the new Confederation together. Without railways there would be and could be no Canada.”

Indeed, this infrastructure literally and materially made the Canadian state possible, but in a seemingly circular move, it was also the Constitution that provided the federal government’s jurisdiction in the making of national infrastructure. Delegates from the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick made the construction of the “Intercolonial rail” a condition of their entry into Confederation. Section X (145) of the Constitution is explicit, explaining that “in order to give effect to that Agreement,” the rail must be complete “with all practicable speed.” Section 92(10a) of the Constitution also specifically asserts national jurisdiction over “Lines of Steam or other Ships, Railways, Roads, Telegraphs, and other Works and Undertakings connecting the Province with any other or others of the Provinces, or extending beyond the Limits of the Province,” while section 92(10c) extends to “Such Works as, although wholly situate within the Province, are before or after their Execution declared by the Parliament of Canada to be for the general Advantage of Canada.” Four years later, British Columbia joined confederation, again on the condition of the construction of national rail infrastructure. Because B.C.’s signing of the Constitution was contingent on the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR), the genesis of a settler state that spanned coast to coast was only realized by that same infrastructure that was sanctioned by the Constitution.

Then, like now, infrastructure was at the center of violent relations of rule, materializing settler colonial jurisdiction. The CPR was famously referred to as “the spine of the nation,” but it was built through colonial dispossession, hyper-exploited

racialized labor, and the circulation of finance from the transatlantic slave trade into the iron tracks. By turning to a particular stretch of the tracks we can see how infrastructure assembles settler jurisdiction as it violently trespasses Indigenous jurisdiction.

LOCATING “NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE”: SECWEPEMC TERRITORY ///

In 1885, a different group of white men gathered to drive the last spike into Canadian Confederation. They gathered on the unceded territory of the Secwepemc people and staged the famous ceremony announcing the completion of the CPR at Craigellachie. These “engineers” of confederation worked in iron instead of ink, and to this day a small plaque marks the site. Yet it is less than 50 kilometers down the track at the Revelstoke stop where we might linger for a fuller picture of the price of this national infrastructure.

Like Craigellachie, Revelstoke is also built on the unceded territory of the Secwepemc — the very same people who are vocally and creatively protecting land and water in the current struggle against the TransMountain pipeline. Revelstoke tends to conjure images of ski slopes and luxury lodges, as today the town is a famous alpine resort, yet behind the name is a larger and more gruesome story of distinct importance. The town was named after Edward Baring, 1st Baron Revelstoke, in honor of his role securing the crucial funding for the CPR with his family’s Barings Bank. The scale and reach of the bank was extraordinary, Barings literally financed empires. London’s oldest merchant bank, Barings’ wealth was derived largely from imperial plunder and the transatlantic slave trade. The Barings were active in the East India Company and the Caribbean slave trade. They were key in financing counterrevolutionary efforts in Haiti and they financed the “Louisiana Purchase,” which further dispossessed Indigenous people and

opened large lands to the American plantation system. After the British criminalized the trade in enslaved human beings, Barings moved to finance large sections of the U.S. cotton plantation system, becoming the largest importer of American cotton in the 1840s (Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 2015).

While the Barings are commemorated in the naming of this alpine town, it is on this same treacherous stretch of the rail that more than 700 Chinese laborers died in obscurity. Railway builders in Canada, verging on bankruptcy and facing delay, borrowed labor recruitment and management strategies from the United States and brought as many as 17,000 Chinese laborers to Canada between 1881-1884 to build the most treacherous sections of the rail. They were paid a fraction of the wages of white workers, purchased their own gear and provisioned themselves in work camps, and dealt with extreme racism from white workers and media. Immediately after the completion of the railroad, in 1885, Canada imposed a “head tax” on Chinese immigrants, initially set at \$50 a person. The tax was later raised to \$500 before Chinese immigration was banned in 1923.

Through Revelstoke, so many local and transnational threads of imperial violence are interwoven, but of course it is not just here that national infrastructure did the work of dispossession. To the east, in the central plains, Indigenous people were deliberately starved to death or submission, in order to clear the plains for the CPR as James Daschuk has detailed. On both sides of the Medicine Line, the encroaching railroads served as the rationale and the means for genocide through the mass slaughter of the bison. It was also in the prairies that the CPR received an enormous land grant and entered the field of colonial real estate agent, actively recruiting settlers, building model settlements and irrigation systems, and of course selling land under the



auspices of the CPR Department of Colonization. With each stretch of the track, from coast to coast, the horrors accumulate. Yet it is on these same Secwepemc lands where struggles over settler colonial infrastructure and jurisdiction unfold today. In the contemporary struggle over the pipeline as with the historical imposition of the rail, Canada’s claim to jurisdiction is founded on colonial replacement enacted through infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE BEYOND “150”? ///

“For Indigenous peoples, the 150th anniversary of Canada carries little cause for celebration. For us, the history of Canada is one of dispossession, disruption, and coercion. First Peoples have suffered greatly since Confederation, and it is worth asking whether the same will be true of the next 150 years.” (John Burrows)

One of the more visible and creative efforts to stop the TransMountain pipeline unfolds in the Secwepemc’s Tiny House Warriors: Our Land is Home project. Here, warriors are constructing ten tiny houses and placing them along the pipeline route on their territory, “to assert Secwepemc Law and jurisdiction and block access to this pipeline.” Initiatives like this build on long histories of creative anti-colonial organizing on this same territory. **With the struggle against the TransMountain pipeline, we see precisely the refusal of settler**

colonial infrastructures but also the refusal of settler colonial claims to jurisdiction. Indeed, historical struggles over rail and contemporary struggles over pipelines both suggest that infrastructure and jurisdiction are deeply entangled in the making of settler colonialism. The CPR was a condition of possibility for national jurisdiction in that without the rail, confederation would have been dissolved. But so too, the railroads required “national jurisdiction” that was granted by the Constitution. Today it would seem as though jurisdiction is the condition of possibility for the pipeline, while the pipeline, if built, would enact the settler state’s self-proclaimed jurisdiction.

There is only one way out of this crisis if Canada is going to honor its commitments to reconciliation, to treaties, and to the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people, and this must start with honoring the jurisdiction of sovereign peoples. The outstanding question, as Anishnaabe legal scholar John Burrows articulates so well, is not about where we have been, but about whether the future will be different. If infrastructure underpinned settler colonialism, literally and materially making Canada, a decolonial response might begin by asking what infrastructures can take us beyond “150”? ■



Patricia Nguyen

BIOGRAPHY

Patricia Nguyen is an artist, educator, and scholar. She is Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Professor of Instruction in Asian American Studies at Northwestern University, where she received her PhD in Performance Studies. Her work explores forced migration, political economy, carceral states, torture, and nationbuilding. She has published in *Women Studies Quarterly*, Harvard Kennedy School's *Asian American Policy Review*, and *Women and Performance*. She has exhibited and performed at the Nha San Collective Vietnam, Mission Cultural Center, Jane Addams Hull House, Prague Quadrennial, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile.

STATEMENT

The Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project invited artists of color based in Chicago whose work focuses on racial justice to propose memorial designs. The proposals were featured at the Still Here exhibition at the Arts Incubator from March to April 2019. As co-founder and executive director of Axis Lab, an architecture and arts organization that focuses on inclusive and equitable development, I was invited to participate and brought on architectural designer, John Lee, to the project. John is also a co-founder of Axis Lab and design director, and earned his Masters in Architecture degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. As an artist team, our collaborative projects center community voices to reveal histories of state violence and create platforms to imagine alternative realities grounded in social justice. Our approach to community engagement is rooted in performance studies, women of color feminist theory, and Black radical thought, as we believe in the power of cultural production to shape our collective futures.

VOICES
OF
CHICAGO #1

Building a Monumental Anti-Monument: The Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project

create our memorial design for the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project (CTJM).

CTJM is the leading organization in the continued fight to secure reparation for survivors of torture ordered by Chicago Police Department (CPD) commander, Jon Burge. Before Burge rose to a prominent position as a detective in the CPD, he was a military officer during the Vietnam War where he learned torture techniques in a CIA-led operation called the “Phoenix Program.” Burge was among several military officers who partook in war crimes abroad and returned to the United States to become police officers. From 1972 to 1993, Burge led the charge torturing over 125 (and counting) predominantly Black and Latinx men, women, and boys into forced confessions of violent crimes, which resulted in decades of incarceration and over 10 sentenced to death row. More recently, La Tanya Jenifer Sublett, the first Black woman and currently only woman to come forward as a survivor discussed how her experiences of torture were normalized and dismissed (especially sexual violence), revealing gendered differences in the violence experienced and how difficult it is for women to come forward.

Decades of intergenerational and interracial organizing efforts led by CTJM, Project NIA, We Charge Genocide, and Amnesty International, coupled with a push from the #BlackLivesMatter movement during the 2014-2015 election season led to the passing of the Reparations Ordinance in Chicago’s City Council. The Reparations Ordinance is the first U.S. law ever passed to provide reparations for racist law enforcement violence. According to CTJM, “the City of Chicago is agreeing to acknowledge the City’s responsibility for gross human rights violations and to commit significant resources to help repair the harms inflicted on the torture survivors, their families and the

Building a Monumental Anti-Monument: The Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project

Monuments can trap a sense of history in time, suspending it in its material form and mode of engagement with its public. I first heard of the notion of an “anti-monument” from a news article about Colombian artist, Doris Salcedo, whose recent installation melted 37 tons of rifles, pistols, and grenade-launchers turned in by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerillas into tiles. Salcedo discussed wanting to create something useful out of weapons that “caused so much pain” and that monuments are “a way of forgetting.” Drawing initial inspiration from Salcedo’s work, I continued to meditate on this concept of an “anti-monument” with architectural designer, John Lee to



communities they come from.” The Reparations Ordinance includes a formal apology; financial reparations; a center on the southside of Chicago to provide counseling, health care services, and vocational training; opportunities for torture survivors and family members to enroll in City Colleges and receive their education and degree for free; Chicago Public School (CPS) curriculum on the history of Chicago Police torture in 8th and 10th grade; evidentiary hearings for torture survivors who are still behind bars; and support for the creation of a public memorial. The ordinance calls for a minimum of \$20 million to finance the Chicago Police Torture Reparations Commission, the Chicago Torture Justice Center, CPS curriculum, and the public memorial.

CTJM developed the memorial project with a phenomenal group of artists, lawyers, survivors, educators, and activists committed to human rights and social justice. The process of collecting proposals and selecting a memorial design began in 2010 through a series of community-based conversations

about how a memorial could properly honor the lives of survivors without erasing the history of violence. CTJM’s dedicated team had studied memorials for survivors of state violence all over the world. From 2011 to 2019, a series of community events, workshops, and protests were held across the city from the Jane Addams Hull House Museum to Experimental Station to the Southside Community Art Center to the Daley Plaza to the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center to Chicago’s City Council meeting to name a few. They received and exhibited over 70 speculative memorials for Burge torture survivors. In the fall of 2013, CTJM co-founder, Joey Mogul drafted and filed the Reparations Ordinance in Chicago’s City Council and it was finally approved on May 6, 2015. The last remaining item on the legislation to be realized is the public memorial.

In March 2019, CTJM worked with the University of Chicago’s Art + Public Life to exhibit proposals by commissioned artists, one of which will be chosen to become the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial.



The exhibition was curated by Hannah Jasper with the support of survivors Anthony Holmes and Mark Clements. Six artists who have demonstrated commitment to racial justice work in the city were invited to submit proposals to produce an ambitious, permanent public artwork to honor named and unnamed torture survivors. The artists are Monica Chadha with Nelly Agassi, Juan Chavez, Sonja Henderson, Andres Hernandez, Preston Jackson, and John Lee and myself. The winning design proposal was selected by a team of jurors comprised of torture survivors, artists, community activists, cultural workers, architects, educators, and individuals in the philanthropic community.

John Lee and I are deeply humbled with the great honor of building the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial to center the stories of survivors, archive the struggle for reparations, and create a community space in the continued fight for justice. As artists, we ask ourselves: “What is our role as cultural producers in the face of continued war, police brutality, mass incarceration, and poverty in our nation’s history?” For us, connecting the history of slavery, international wars, and domestic policies that criminalize poor and

working class communities of color to resilient transnational struggles for liberation was a critical point of departure in defining what this memorial can offer as a public archive and educational platform for all generations. We envisioned a monumental anti-monument, where time does not stand still within the memorial to commemorate a history as past, but a past that is still present and its scale as undeniable. We hope to honor the survivors, both those who have come out and those who are unknown with this memorial and affirm that they are, in the words of Anthony Holmes, “still here.”

ENVISIONING A MONUMENTAL ANTI-MONUMENT THROUGH MEDITATIONS ON BREATH, FORM, AND FREEDOM ///

“I will not stop as long as I have breath in my body” are the words that echo from torture survivors we had the honor of meeting. The will to continue fighting for justice and reparations remains. Our collaborative approach to design centers community voices to reveal histories of state violence and create platforms to imagine alternative realities grounded in social justice. The idea for this memorial project began with a meditation on breath, form, and freedom. There are four main elements of the

memorial design: 1) Names of survivors will be engraved on the wall in the entrance of the memorial. In addition, those who are yet to be named will also be presented by etches on the wall. 2) Timeline of the reparations movement and facts about the history of torture by Jon Burge and the Chicago Police Department. This timeline will be created in collaboration with survivors and members of the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project. We believe timelines are a political project, framing what is remembered and how it is remembered. We want to make sure the process centers the voices of survivors, organizers, and activists who have been central to this work. The hope for the timeline is to break open how memorials trap time, traditionally resolving a past wound or memory within the confines of its built form. Our timeline aims to offer the public a mode of engaging with timelines that reveals converging and diverging temporalities to narrate a history of the reparations movement in Chicago. Embedded in the timeline is the belief that political struggle is a collective durational performance carried forth across generations, decades before the Reparations Ordinance was passed and well into its future. 3) Community Space will be a multi-use space and can transform into a gallery, stage, cookout area, classroom, meditation room, etc. 4) Manifestos will be part of a collective creative writing project with survivors. To transform the violence of forced confessions, the manifestos portion of the project seeks to open up a space where reparation can be facilitated with survivors to write

visions for the future. These words will then be engraved into the walls that open up in the community space. The manifestos by survivors will be the first and last words visitors see.

Breath is in relationship to the right to live in the face of state violence and histories of slavery, U.S. imperialism, and police brutality. Our understanding of breath brings together Black radical thinkers (Frantz Fanon’s “combat breathing” and Christina Sharpe’s “aspiration”) and Buddhism (Thich Nhat Hanh) to imagine the memorial as a site for critical engagement with the history of reparations for survivors torture by Jon Burge and the Chicago Police Department. The idea of breath is woven through several elements of the design including the structure, material, and function. The structure of the memorial has wide windows, spacious ceilings, and expansive openings into the community space. The structural material includes contrasting ribbed and smooth concrete with timber accents for the memorial installation, and window details. The unfinished textures, which speak to the notion of continued struggle, evoke the conditions torture survivors endured and the continued resiliency in each person to continue fighting for justice. The function of the center of the memorial design is a community space that can function as a stage for performing, meditative, and educational space. Here breath is enlivened through the voices of survivors, families, friends, and fellow community members sharing space together.

Form is encapsulated in the shape of the memorial design as a curved circular structure, which represents a nonlinear sense of time, ethos of communal support,

and rebirth. Traditional memorial projects relegate the past into an object of observance. Our design embodies the idea that time can be folded and grounded in the present moment.

Names of the survivors are immediately present in the entrance, and as guests move through the curving interior corridor, the timeline of the reparations movement is mapped out. Towards the exit leads into the outdoor community space, which offers a platform where history is present with us, but also opportunities for imagining futures together.

The coil design is inspired by the Zapatista caracole, Standing Rock's Indigenous organizational protest formation, Torkwase Dyson's hypershapes, and Christina Sharpe's discussion of the hold/to be held in the aftermath of transatlantic chattel slavery. Moreover, the circular character inverts and transforms the rigid block structure of prisons and schools as a critique of the school to prison pipeline, pointing to criminalization as an overtly racist process. Many of the survivors testify to the lack of educational and economic opportunities in their neighborhood as a link to why they were targeted. Nevertheless, the "coil" opens up to a space that seeks to offer a space to gather, bear witness, and create. The form is like a womb that holds a history of Chicago, while carrying a space for rebirth and regeneration through continued dialogues, educational workshops, and healing spaces.

Freedom is a continued struggle for more life in the face of systemic violence. The memorial design ultimately seeks to be a place of possibility to bring together people from all sides of the city and internationally to engage with a history of Chicago. To create a platform for survivors

and community members to learn about Chicago's reparations movement, offer lectures, workshops, community gatherings, which hopefully connects directly with students and teachers in the Chicago Public Schools as part of the curriculum initiative. Lastly, through a collective creative writing process with survivors we hope to create manifestos for the future of the words of survivors themselves, to be carved out onto the pillars that open up to the community space. Transforming the act of forced confessions to reparative modes of writing manifestos as a way for survivors to write for themselves their hopes, messages, and lessons they would like to leave for us. The fight for justice continues and this memorial seeks to cultivate a living structure that exists as a platform to honor the lives of survivors and space of critical reflection and engagement.

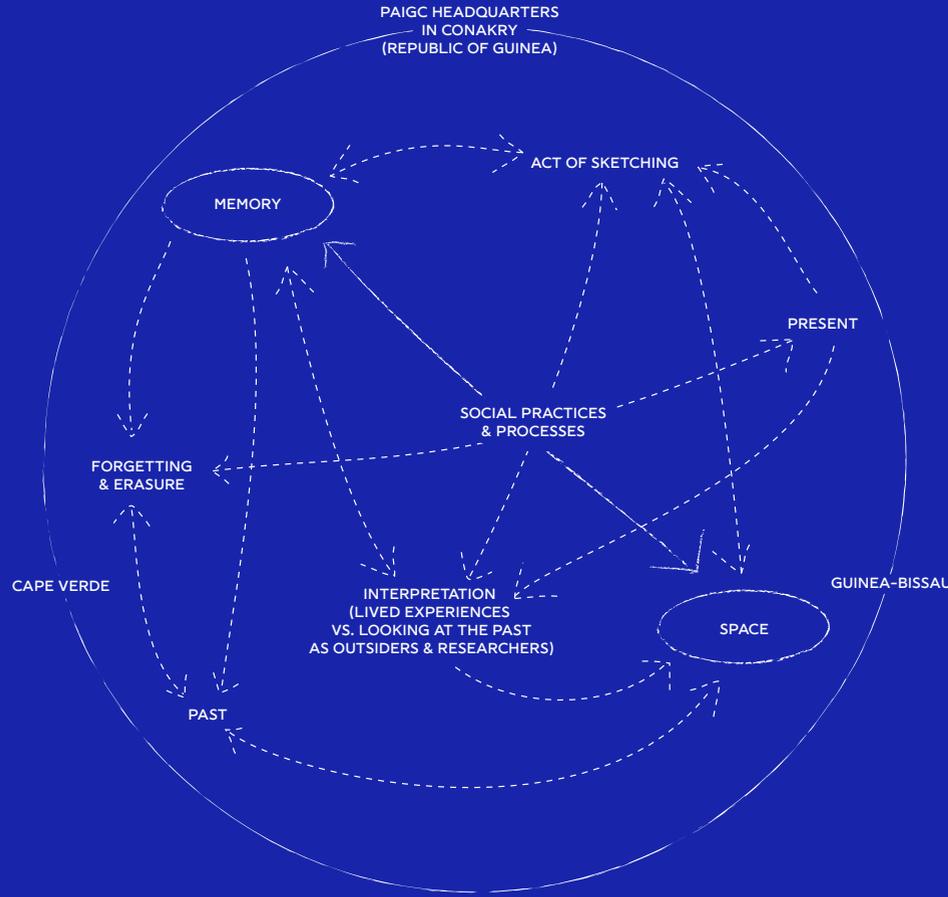
The movement for reparations began decades before a memorial project was conceived of, and almost a decade after the first initial meetings for a public memorial, CTJM has chosen a memorial design to be built. The timestamps on these movements are important to note, especially because community organizing and activism are fundamental to creating long lasting change, but it does take time. The fight for reparations does not end with the passing of a law; it continues to be a durational struggle for those who have yet to be free from imprisonment, for Chicago Public Schools to implement the reparations curriculum, for sustained funding for the Chicago Torture Justice Center to provide healing and counseling services, and for the public funding and land to build and maintain a memorial.

Although, this historic legislation package was approved, former Mayor Rahm Emanuel has since refused to secure funding and land for the public memorial. Currently,



CTJM is working to secure funding with the newly appointed Mayor Lori Lightfoot for the memorial. The Arts and Culture Transition Team has also recommended Mayor Lightfoot and the City Council fully fund the memorial within the first 100 days of this new administration.

Based on community meetings and interviews with survivors, CTJM just recently confirmed the memorial site will be in Englewood, a predominantly African American neighborhood on the southside of Chicago, where many of the survivors live/d and were tortured. We hope the memorial's location in Englewood will connect directly with the public school curriculum crucial to the Reparations Ordinance. As the project unfolds we are committed to ethical development, especially in the context of Chicago's history of forced displacement through urban renewal/modernization projects alongside divestment from Black and Brown communities in the city. ■



On the Space of Imaginations and the Space of Memories: Remembering the Conakry PAIGC Headquarters

INTRODUCTION BY MARGARIDA WACO ///

Sónia Vaz Borges' text touches upon the history of a liberation struggle. Through it, she includes what seems essential to the discussions about a system of repression, "an errant archive made of people, their stories, memories and experiences of space" in her spatial reading of the spaces created by such. If space and memory are inseparable, how do we build a framework that offers new alternatives to the collective memories and archives produced by society? Vaz Borges' text does not only challenge how history is constructed; it becomes a powerful tool that helps analyse the ending of a colonial era.

From her professional perspective as a militant historian, Vaz Borges, as she puts it, "tends to describe space as a container of chronological events." Thus in her encounter with one of the individuals that lived through the specific space time of the PAIGC headquarters, the testimony transforms poetically when describing the symbolism attached to the HQ, the actions it produced, and the lives that unfolded there. As a stepping stone in my own reading, I'm able to draw parallels, although diffuse, to a legacy traceable to the past of a Portuguese rule that for years dominated the so-called Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (Portuguese-speaking African countries). Despite being too young to have lived through a decade of trauma following the independence war from 1961-1975, I listened to the stories of various individuals and (re)encountered spaces that once set the scene for these events; to me, the imaginary of a struggle thus becomes reinforced, if not present. In its presence, it seems to accelerate a process of constructing a personal archive of memory and be able to comprehend, digest and find peace.

Margarida Waco is the Head of Strategic Outreach of *The Funambulist*. She is an Angolan-born emerging architect, writer and strategist who continuously works in the intersection between spatial practices, development and communications. She has a background in architecture from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and, in addition, journalistic studies from Roskilde University and Sustainable Development from Sciences Po, Paris. Alongside *The Funambulist*, she is engaged in a research project that focuses on urbanisation in the Sub-Saharan African region.

ignite our imagination, and when we imagine, we allow ourselves to create our own version of the story, the place and the space. History books fill our imaginaries with stories of struggles and great battles, political arguments, and military tactics, all located in a certain space and in relation with other places. Images of people in these struggles fill our imaginary with stories, and questions such as:

- What did they look like?
- How did they dress for the struggle?
- What did their smile look like?
- What did they dream of?
- What things did they carry in their backpacks, bags, or purses?
- Did they even have one?
- What did their house, room, or entrance hall look like?

In 1959, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), a liberation movement founded in Guinea Bissau by the agricultural engineer Amílcar Cabral together with a group of Guineans and Cape Verdeans, waged an armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial government in the liberated areas located in the Guinean forests between 1963-1974.

After several attempts to negotiate independence with the Portuguese colonial regime, the PAIGC started an armed struggle. The history of this struggle is quite well documented. Books, and some detailed chronologies, allow us to follow more or less all the different phases of the liberation struggle, from writing down the dream of liberation, to the plan to achieve it and the practice of such a dream.

However, while books, chronologies, and even event celebrations, contribute to creating a collective memory of the struggle, this collective memory has been forged by a generation that didn't actually live through it, but is a result of it. When studying the

history of the PAIGC, archives are the official space where its memories are stored. We rescue memories here, but we can also silence and bury them in unoccupied shelves and rooms. **When searching for elements of PAIGC histories in the archives as a researcher, I came to face several silences, or what I call spaces of silence, meaning empty spaces in the archive where, because of the circumstances, or the struggle, the armed war, and the emergency of achieving the dream of independence, certain elements that would have helped us build the imaginary of spaces where the struggle happened, were left blank.**

The archive provides us with several other materials, including written documents, letters, photographs, and audio records, but when studying the history of a liberation struggle, the question that emerges is, what was the space like where the headquarters were located?

- How was the space organized?
- Who lived there?
- How did people live there?
- How did people circulate in that space?
- What dynamics were developed there?
- What memories do people have of that space, its dynamics, and its configuration?

These are questions that, with great difficulty, we can answer by drawing from the physical and solid archive. The closest answers that the archive provides are a couple of photos, namely the images of a destroyed house and a car. Both the house and the car belonged to Amílcar Cabral, and were photographed at the PAIGC headquarters. The photos were taken in 1970, after a Portuguese military operation called "Operation Green



Sea" (November 21-22, 1970). Unfortunately, a partially destroyed house and a car are not enough to recreate the space of the PAIGC headquarters, the environment, and many of the memories of those who lived there.

Between 2013 and 2015, while working on my PhD research on PAIGC militant education in Guinea Bissau and being fortunate enough to speak to and interview many surviving Party militants, I decided to explore and learn about these side questions that lived in my imaginary of the struggle.

It was in this process of recovering and reconstructing PAIGC militant education that I turned to what I consider to be the errant archive. **The errant archive is made of people, their stories, memories, experiences, and reflections. It is not fixed in space, place, and the information that these errant archives provide is not frozen in time.** The memories that the errant archive shares are expressed in diverse forms, according to the context in which it is consulted and the conversation that develops.

THE SPACE OF MEMORIES: HEAD-QUARTERS AND COGNITIVE MAPS ///
Place: A particular position or point in space. I met Arlette Cabral (who is not related to Amílcar Cabral, and were photographed at the PAIGC headquarters. The photos were taken in 1970, after a Portuguese military operation called "Operation Green

On the Space of Imaginations and the Space of Memories: Remembering the Conakry PAIGC Headquarters

Spaces used for historical national liberation struggles, such as the headquarters of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, may not exist physically anymore, but the memory of the militants who lived and struggled in them can recreate the idea of them.

ARCHIVES AND IMAGINING A LIBERATION STRUGGLE ///

Space: A continuous area or expanse that is free, available, or unoccupied.

Histories read or told, true or fantasy, always

yards of all the houses located on Francisco Mendes Avenue in Bissau. Two big calabash trees marked off the house. From the island of Martinique, she emigrated to Paris to study to become a nurse. But due to her low blood pressure and the strict laws of the hospital which did not allow people with her health condition to practice nursing, she was forced to look for other places where she could work.

In the beginning of 1960s, Arlette and her sister chose to move to the newly independent Republic of Guinea, which had become independent in 1958 after 60 years of French colonial rule. There was an acute shortage of medical professionals after most of the industry had fled to France, and Arlette was subsequently able to find work as a nurse. Her low blood pressure was never a problem throughout her entire life and career. In fact, she was still a practicing professional in the year that I met her, at 80-something years old, working in a general ward in the outskirts of the city of Bissau. Several medical students even came to visit her house asking for advice for their school exams and working with patients.

In Conakry, the capital of the Republic of Guinea, Arlette worked for the city's main hospital and rented a small apartment. She described her room as having only a bed, a table, and two chairs, with a red ceiling, two red walls, two yellow walls, and a green window. She had chosen this pallet of colors herself. She mentioned that the room could have had many more objects, including a bag full of photographs and other personal belongings that had gotten lost during her travels from Martinique to France, and then to Guinea. It was in Conakry that she would meet and fall in love with Fidelis Cabral, a PAIGC militant.

Arlette likes to tell life episodes, which sometimes made it difficult to trace the stories that she shared. In the house's yards or living room, she jumped from theme

to theme and never told it straightforwardly. The constant interruptions of doing an interview surrounded by family and friends did not make the process easier. Maybe that was one of the things that motivated me to spend hours talking with her in her backyard while enjoying some bissap juice, or sometimes a simple glass of water.

It was during our conversations that I raised my questions about the PAIGC headquarters in Conakry:

What did it look like?

Where was it located?

How did you get there?

The PAIGC headquarters were located in Conakry, more specifically in an area then called Le Quartier Minière, near Ratoma. It was the president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, who gave the PAIGC permission to occupy and reconstruct the space and use it as the liberation struggle's headquarters. Information about this place is scarce. All that is known is that the place was a French neighborhood during colonial times. After Guinea's independence, the French people living in the neighborhood fled the recent independent territory. Before they left they made sure to destroy their own houses, by breaking the windows, doors, plumbing, and electrical lines, so that nothing could be of use. **However, the name Le Minière remained, and was used by PAIGC militants as a nickname for their headquarters.**

My long stay in Guinea Bissau was enough for me to collect many memories of Le Minière, but not enough for me to form a site plan so that I could localize these memories. I left Bissau with a promise from Arlette that she would do her best to have a sketch for me when we met again. The opportunity came one year later, but this time in Lisbon, when I was visiting and she was in the city to receive medical treatment on her feet. When she called me on the phone, she said that she had something for me, and we met

in the house she was staying in, near Portas de Benfica. With two sketches of the plan of Le Minière, Arlette guided me through her memories of the space, indicating where she had only vague memories or no memories at all.

From these guided memories drawn on a piece of white paper with a pencil, I learned about and could visualize Le Minière and its stories, even if at a very small scale. From the house's living room, Arlette guided me through the roads and where they led, through the buildings where she and her comrades lived, the Party's general secretariat office, the room from where the PAIGC broadcasted its Rádio Libertação (Liberation Radio), the people warehouse where the Party stored many of the products that would be sent to the liberated areas in Guinea Bissau, the guest house also known by the PAIGC militants as "Buckingham Palace," the garage and car repair shop. She shared the serenade nights that some Cape Verdean comrades used to have.

Out of all the spaces that Arlette described, and the stories behind them, she dedicated a large amount of time to discussing the Party canteen, which was located near her house. The canteen is very much associated with one of the most important episodes in her life: she got married there, and her wedding also marked the inauguration of the canteen. It was even delayed a few days in order for the Party to do both events on the same day. Her sister and brother in law were her wedding witnesses, and her comrade Lilica Boal was her husband Fidelis' witness. Amílcar Cabral presided over the wedding ceremony.

That day, instead of the typical boiled fish with rice that was normally served in the canteen before its remodeling, the food



was more special. All Arlette's comrades were present, with the exception of Vasco Cabral, whom they called "The Photographer"; he was travelling. For that reason, there was no wedding photo to memorialize the occasion. But she remembered very clearly the warm bottle of champagne, offered by a comrade and hidden by her husband after Amílcar Cabral had demanded that he shared it with everyone else.

SPACE OF MEMORIES AND THE MEMORIES OF SPACE ///

Memory: The faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information.

Between the memory and the process of remembering, there is a social space with whole social practices and processes. Arlette's memories, located in the past, were brought to the present through questions and my own imaginations about the PAIGC and the headquarters. The sketched plan of Le Minière represented the space where

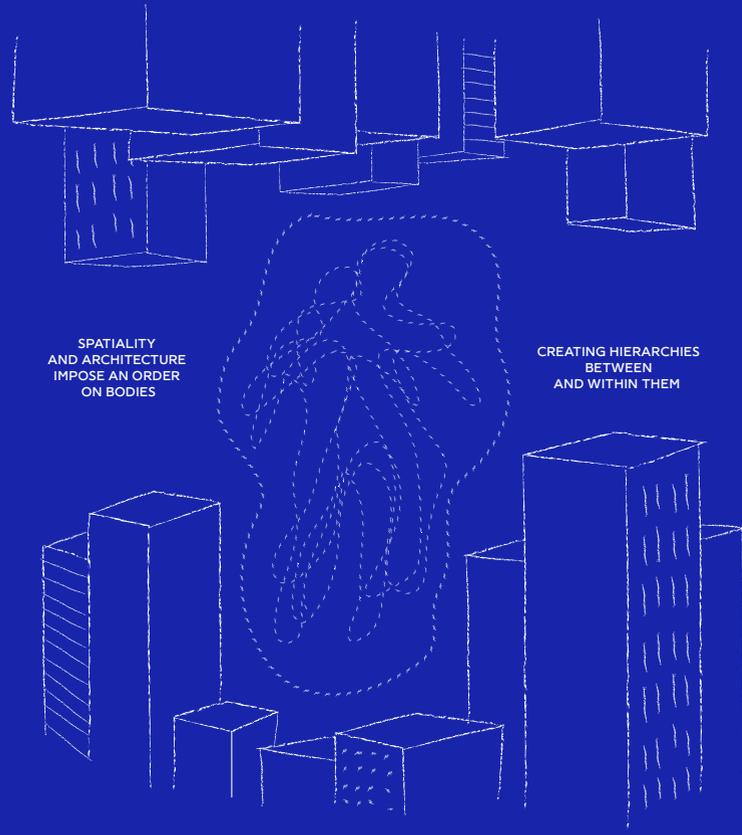
this past and present encountered one another. The sketch became part of her life, but also part of the life of those who would recognize their histories in that space, and therefore would be able, in the small space that this sketch represents, to localize their special memories, paths, friends, and other events. The sketch can become a dynamic space and a memory referential where social practices and processes can be localized. Every single pencil line already drawn, or that might be drawn in the future, will be associated to people, events.

Nonetheless, they will be associated also with practices of forgetting and erasure, and therefore some spaces might never exist again in that drawing. **Memory and space are inseparable, because if memory produces spaces, its own existence is impossible without a space, which allows us to assume that the space also produces the memory.** However, memory and space are in constant mutation and in constant movement. My conversations with Arlette and her memories were produced in different spaces, starting in her home in Bissau, and then in Lisbon where they acquired physical form. The Le Minière site-plan sketch, more than a final point of Arlette's memory, is now a trigger for other memories of the space, and can also be used to instigate other imaginations of the space.

As a trained historian, I tend to describe space as a container of chronological events, with start and end dates, and sometimes with an object that represents these events in the space. The history of the PAIGC is no exception to this practice. When writing the history of liberation struggles, we historians tend to ignore the various paths of individuals' lives that were forged during the struggle. And that the people who lived in those spaces had a relation to the space that went beyond dates and objects. The space known by historians as the PAIGC headquarters had within it other dynamics

and interpretations. The interpretation of the headquarters as space has a different interpretation for the PAIGC militants. Yes, it was still viewed as the PAIGC headquarters, but as a space itself, it included memories and emotions that are most of the time difficult to express in words.

For Arlette and many other PAIGC militants, the Party headquarters as a space of action had a much broader symbology than what historians may give it. For us, as outsiders and researchers, the headquarters represent the space of decision making from which all the coordinates and the coordination for the liberation struggle and also its bureaucracy were developed. It represents a hierarchy within the struggle. **But for the militants, the headquarters represent their lives and the place they lived, left, stayed, and created.** Even though the space itself, in its physical form, does not exist anymore, when militants remember and share their (hi)stories, that same space is still there, awaiting them in an immaterial form, nearly intact in their memories. ■



Strolling into Imaginarities: When the Constitution of Space Produces Disabled Bodies

INTRODUCTION BY ELLA MARTIN-GACHOT ///

Part of my time as an intern at the Funambulist in the summer of 2018 was spent researching and preparing for the Space of Ableism issue that would be published that fall. I remember reading one of No Anger's first drafts for this piece and knowing then that it would be important. Her ability to smoothly shift gears and blur the boundaries between the theoretical and the personal, in a style not dissimilar to that of Paul B. Preciado, whom she cites, immediately caught my eye. Moreover, No Anger's point that architecture shapes the discourse about bodies, or is a technology of body, is an idea that I often come back to, as I distance myself more and more from what I was taught in architecture school: that bodies inform architecture. This piece for me is a manifesto and evidence of the power of *The Funambulist*, as a platform for what No Anger calls "re-presencing."

Ella Martin-Gachot graduated from Smith College in May 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and Environmental Science & Policy. Her studies have focused on the importance of place and placemaking in society and the impact of public space and its design on people's lived experiences. After a summer internship at *The Funambulist*, she moved back to Paris to work for the FIAC (International Contemporary Art Fair) and to continue her long-term quest to make a home in the city.

Strolling into Imaginaries: When the Constitution of Space Produces Disabled Bodies

THE IMAGINARY AND SPATIALITY ///

My body is seen as disabled.
 My body is not an assigned role.
 My body is not a silent voice.
 My body is not a fiction.
 My body is real.
 My body is sometimes feminine.
 My body is lesbian.
 My body is free.
 My body is in love.
 My body is alive.
 My body is a dancer.
 And, in front of you, who look at me, my
 body strolls and dances,
 In the space, among you, with you.
 I am not a dead image, you know?

I stroll with my wheelchair in the street, and feel that my presence in public space is not obvious. Stairs in front of buildings, high pavements, narrow doors; everything makes me feel bad, and out of place. My presence in public space is unexpected; I have to explain myself. I feel like a foreign object, an extraneous body, alien to social spaces, alien to the human community. Everything tells me: “You cannot enter. You are not welcome. You have not been imagined among us, so how can you be among us?” I am not able to enter. I am not allowed to enter. In these situations, my abilities are defined by the space around me. My rights are defined by the space around me. It’s not my body that represents an obstacle to my movement; rather, it’s the spaces I am in. My body is not disabled in a vacuum; a set of stairs in the absence of an elevator is what hinders my movement. A door which has to be pulled, instead of sliding or being pushed, makes me unable to enter a space on my own. Gradually, this relation between space and bodies adds up to a tacit segregation: my disabled body is stripped of its rights because of the constitution of spaces. **Spatiality and architecture impose an order on bodies, create hierarchies between and within them, stipulating which places each is able or allowed to be in.** We can consider spatiality a reflection of dominant relations, but it produces domination too.

The collective imaginary is structured by dominant relations. There are bodies that matter, and there are others that do not. Some bodies are more present in this imaginary than others; my disabled body is not. Consequently, my presence in public is somewhat of an impossibility. My presence is erased from the collective imaginary, and subsequently erased from the street. There is an important relation between the imaginary and spatiality. A certain manner of thinking about bodies determines a certain manner of thinking about and making spaces,



since spaces are made for bodies. However, we can also say that spatiality in turn produces imaginaries about bodies. It is often assumed that I have no regular social life, because disabled bodies are so rarely seen in the outside world. But does being disabled really prevent me from having a social life? Or could it be because of the poorly adapted spaces outside that my movements and presence there are limited? Is it not rather the very constitution of spatiality that produces this fiction of the disabled person without a social life?

We could say that this representation of the disabled person — as someone who lacks a regular social life — is an imaginary body. But this fictional body gradually erases disabled bodies as they actually are. Some of these representations, which are more dominant than others, are at least marginally based in reality, which often creates a confusion

between the imaginary and the real: similar to a *trompe-l'œil*, they determine ways of looking at real bodies. What is imagined about bodies becomes their truth and reality. Here, we note a paradox: dominant fictional bodies are considered more legitimate than real bodies, and serve as the basis upon which norms and practices are determined. These fictional bodies reflect the hierarchies and relations of domination between bodies. In social space, bodies are described in certain manners: there are hegemonic manners of perceiving and describing bodies, and there are hegemonic fictional bodies, which we call “corporal scripts.” For example, female bodies are often described as mothers or sexual objects: they are configured as people who stay indoors, which leads to particularly violent interactions when women make use of public space. Their right to be present is continually undermined by the attitudes and

behaviors of men. We note that the same logic surrounds disabled bodies: scripts about these bodies determine the behaviors toward and interactions with them.

Therefore, we are led to conclude that spatiality and architecture actually contribute to creating these fictional bodies, and in turn their corresponding corporal scripts. Many institutions reproduce and present these corporal scripts to the social world. We will call these institutions “technologies of the body.” This notion refers to Teresa De Lauretis’s concept of “the technologies of gender” (1987), which are responsible for constructing hegemonic representations of femininity and masculinity by various technologies and modes of discourse. **Indeed, the manner in which a space is constituted can reproduce or even construct certain images of bodies by hampering their movements, assigning them particular roles, and determining their right to be present in public places.**

AT THE THEATER OF BODIES ///

In *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics* (2014), Paul B. Preciado describes the architecture of *Playboy Magazine*, in particular the house of the magazine’s creator, an extravagant manor filled with designed furniture, rotative bed, transparent swimming pool and cameras: everything served to set the scene of the heterosexuality of the single man. Preciado shows how the architecture and construction of a space can contribute to dramatizing heterosexuality. We can draw the same conclusion about ableism. This idea of dramatizing can be used to speak about a more general issue: the presence (or not) of bodies in the street determines the manners of seeing and showing those bodies. Streets (and all public spaces) are a theater where bodies are shown in a certain role, where some are allowed onstage and others have to stay in the background. For example, when I

hold my girlfriend’s hand on the sidewalk, people cannot fathom that she is my girlfriend. At best, strangers will refer to her as my friend. At worst, they’ll call her my teacher. My love and my desires have to be invisible, and my body too. A role is assigned to me by heterosexist and ableist logics. I don’t have a right to be seen. I am not allowed to show my body onstage. I am not even imagined on this stage, in the great theater of bodies. This imaginary determines the right of bodies to be present and visible, and in turn, this manner of presenting bodies reinforces the imaginaries about those bodies. The presence of my disabled body is not expected in public spaces, which makes me feel like I have no right to be there. My body is an exception that should not be present. On the street, people look at me inquisitively. They look at my body with surprise, curiosity, or condescendence. My presence is continually questioned by people’s looks and words. The question often arises: “Why are you as you are?” What I hear is: “Why are you here?” As I my presence has not been imagined in public spaces, I seem awkward, and have to explain my body, my existence. I am expected to be elsewhere, in other spaces, specialized for my special body. I have to be inside; I have to hide. But perhaps it’s not my body that is special — perhaps the specialized spaces where I am supposed to be locked away, circumscribed, and hidden are creating the narrative about my body being abnormal, exceptional, and special. The dominant narrative about bodies informs the organization of space, which then in turn manufactures that narrative.

But I am not invisible. I am not silent. I have a body. I have a voice. A voice that can sing or cry. A body that is alive and free. I want to liberate myself from the chains of an imaginary that locks me down and erases me from public spaces. I refuse its violence, which reduces me, absorbs

me into the artificial costumes that I have to wear. The violence of this imaginary hurts bodies; my body. I want my space on stage, in front of your eyes. I want you to see me, in the manner that I decide. Now, on stage, I am going to dance. Look at my feet and my arms, my legs and my hands, my face and my back. Look at me turning, jumping, laying down, and rising up. Look at me. Look at my body that appears, dissolving the images that, an instant before, erased me. Look at me wearing a grey sadness, a blue joy, a glittering love, a luminous sorrow. Look at my body wearing shades of hope and despair. Look at me. It’s me, not an image. You learned the image. I learned the image. I learned to feel shame for my body. I learned the need to hide myself, to want to be invisible. Now I have to forget, and you have to forget too. You and I have to forget that some bodies aren’t supposed to matter, that it’s alright for them to be left out of the imaginary to make more room for others in the great theater of bodies.

THE ISSUE OF ACCESSIBILITY: BETWEEN ERASURES AND “RE-PRESENCING” ///

Making spaces accessible to disabled bodies can make disabled people feel like they have a right to be present in public spaces. **But if this accessibility is based on a preconceived idea of what a disabled body is, it may end up reproducing the dominant imaginary and creating more erasures.**

Accessible spaces are often made *for* disabled people, but rarely *with* them. This approach to accessibility often utilizes abstract norms that are based on an imaginary about disabled bodies, which in turn mask the various realities of such bodies. Spaces may seem accessible to “the disabled body,” but not necessarily to my disabled body.

The architectural norms of accessibility are founded in an essentialist logic, which values the image of a disabled body more than the reality.

To illustrate this idea, I’ll share my own experience: for the past six years, I have been living in a university residential building in Lyon, France. Last year, the administration decided to renovate three apartments in the building, including mine, to make them more accessible, but without ever arranging a meeting between the architects and the disabled tenants of these apartments. At the end of the “upgrades,” I discovered that my apartment had been outfitted with a giant bathroom. I asked the administration: “What have you made this giant bathroom for?” They answered: “To enable you to enter your bathroom in your wheelchair.” This response characterizes the simplistic way in which the disabled body’s daily existence is imagined: it is seen as perpetually stuck in its wheelchair. My disabled neighbor and I later talked about the renovations, and we noted that, for obvious reasons, we never shower in our electric wheelchairs; we never even enter our bathrooms in our wheelchairs, the tires of which are dirty from rolling in the streets. To enter our bathrooms, we walk a bit, and to bathe, we use a bath lift.

This example shows how important the role of the imaginary is in constituting the norms of accessibility through which “accessible” spaces are constructed. Accessibility for the disabled body, without the active participation of disabled bodies, is not a rational or efficient metric, since it leads to supplementary expenses to readapt the maladapted adaptation. This notion of accessibility is based on an idea of what a disabled body is, what it has to be, and how it has



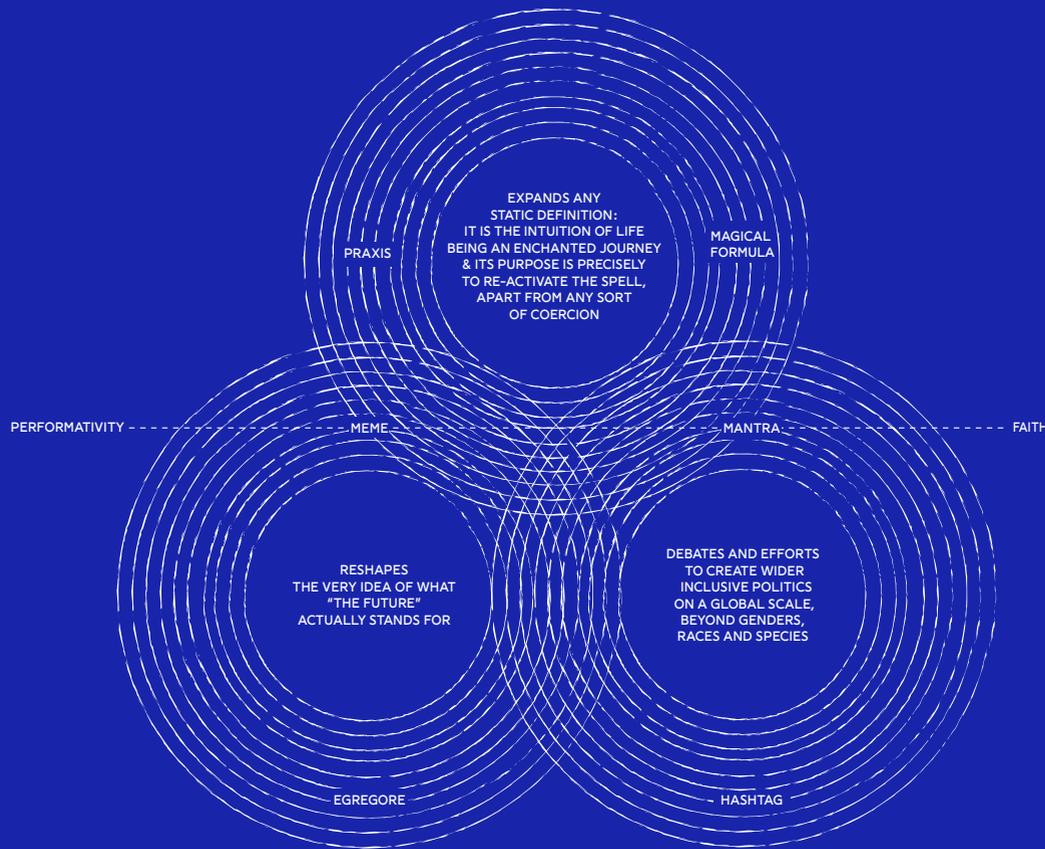
to live. Through architectural constructions, the corporal scripts about disabled bodies are reproduced and reinforced, masking the disabled bodies as they are.

These issues around spatial accessibility lead us to question the concept of inclusion. This fashionable term can itself be a source of violence when it implies that people who are to be included will have to conform themselves to preconceived models and roles. Their presence in public spaces is always conditioned by the dominant image of what their role is supposed to be. This assimilative conception of inclusion creates a sort of negation of their presence, by making a role and a place for these persons, but not with them.

Rather than the term “inclusion,” perhaps we should privilege the notion of “re-presencing.” The first time I encountered this idea was in a text by Paola Bacchetta, “La Fièvre des Archives #3 – Les Forces Transformatives d’Archives des Queers Racisé.e.s” (“Archive Fever #3: The Transformative Forces of Queers of Color’s Archives,” *Friction Magazine*, 2018), about LGBTQIA+ archives. Dealing with the

absence of queer people of color from the archives, as well as from our memories, Bacchetta advocates for “re-presencing” them. Different from representation as a portrayal and as a mandate — both of which end up masking the subaltern subject — re-presencing does not speak *about* certain people, but instead lets them speak. In the context of the archives, this means perpetually redefining what matters, and opening new spaces to make these presences possible and able to multiply. I propose to conceptualize spatial re-presencing as an assurance for the presence of disabled bodies. Since I show the important relation between the imaginary and space, I advocate for re-presencing as a perpetual redefinition of the imaginary about disabled bodies by designing spaces with the participation of real disabled bodies. Space can never be made accessible to an imaginary disabled body, but it must become accessible to real disabled bodies. Spatiality and architecture are the imaginary forces that assign roles to real bodies and determine their right to be present in public spaces. ■

“The Conquest of Cities: Look at my body that appears, dissolving the images that, an instant before, erased me.” / Artwork by No Anger (2018).



INTRODUCTION BY TOMI LAJA ///

The words written by Mawena Yehouessi in “Afrofuturistic Politics: Less Power, More Commitment” are politically useful because they empower the Black consciousness. Through *The Funambulist*, the article creates a space for the oppressed and calls for a re-examination of what *can be*: “alternative narratives instead of one that is single and systemic.” “Afrofuturistic Politics” promotes critique through a conscious skepticism beyond the conditioned western ideals in order “to create wider inclusive politics beyond genders, races, and species.”

“When I first met it, I felt renewed. Afrofuturism was this inclusive and abundant, diverse and uninhabited, creative and trans (taken literally as crossing) call for global change! Created by and for those who embody otherness and have been marginalized for centuries, Afrofuturism would cater to those of us unwilling to master or seize, but instead perform the world.”

Being a Black woman studying architecture (a field where only 0.36% of licensed practitioners in the U.S. are Black women), I am constantly thinking about the oppression in our constructed environments and what can be done against it. The more I learn, the more I question, and the more I mourn. Oppression’s goal is to create a world void of othered peoples through gradual extermination. “Afrofuturistic Politics” counteracts these intentions by presenting the ideologies and influences of Afrofuturism while arguing its importance and vitality for Black peoples — as well as all who are oppressed. Afrofuturism is more than an artistic movement, but an “instrument to empower,” a methodology, during critical times when histories are being erased, hidden, and rewritten.

Tomi Laja is a Bachelor of Architecture student, minoring in French Language, working on completing her professional degree at Iowa State University. She has experience in architectural design, publication, and creative direction. Her goals are to use design, art, and writing to promote afro- and eco-feminisms.

Afrofuturistic Politics: Less Power, More Commitment

Afrofuturistic Politics: Less Power, More Commitment

Afrofuturism is commonly conceived as a musical and literary movement; an instrument to empower Black folks facing a country within a white systemic frame with no room for them in its historical narration, past or present. The term, first proposed by Mark Dery in a 1995 conversation with Afro-fiction writers, has built itself a genealogy through music, literature, visual arts, fashion, and other forms. From freak genius Le Sony'r Ra's musical contribution, Afrofuturism has gradually become a label that tends to cover almost all questioning of the future made by people of color.

When I first met it, I felt renewed. Afrofuturism was this inclusive and abundant, diverse and uninhibited, creative and trans (taken literally as crossing) call for global change! Created by and for those who embody otherness and have been marginalized for centuries, Afrofuturism would cater to those of us unwilling to master or seize the world, but instead perform it.

Yet, at a certain point I started having doubts. Was my understanding of it accurate

or based on personal expectations? Wasn't it just an impetus circumscribed around a certain "community" (e.g. Black-America, trend prescribers, or intellectual elite)? What was its impact, in effective, tangible, and political terms, apart from the thrilling hope?

To be honest, I'm still digging into that. But for now, here are a few reasons why I believe Afrofuturism is a key methodology to question, if not redefine, our contemporary world. **Because Afrofuturism embraces many alternative narratives instead of one that is single and systemic, there's an opportunity to experiment with what tomorrow will look like.**

THE UNEXPECTED LEGACY OF SUN RA: BRANDING AS POLITICAL STATEMENT ///

Sun Ra is one of the first heartfelt and sophisticated examples of self-branding, making his otherness a strength like no one else had before. Dragged by the early race context, Sun Ra saw in the announced "Space Age" of the 1950s a promise for him and Black fellows to finally escape a country that viewed their lives and expectations as irrelevant. Becoming the Saturnian Archangel descendant of the eponymous Egyptian God, he was on a mission to preach peace. Far from fantasy, not only did he officially register his name change, but also suffered from cryptorchidism, and like the angels, didn't have a sex. As for his Egyptian alien ascendancy, what were African American folks if not that?

More importantly, his vision would prompt metaphors, both mythical and mythological, (science-)fictional and religious. These metaphors later became essential to a dynamic highlighting the distinctiveness of Black people, from a historically negative perception to how it could be, from now on, positively performed: "Black folks need a mythocracy, not a democracy," he said in a 1971 Berkeley lecture entitled "The Black Man in the Cosmos." And myths are indeed



some of the most effective tools for action and change.

Sun Ra and his group recorded over 120 discs and records in 30 years and performed across the United States, but also in Europe, Nigeria, Egypt and Japan. Above all, in 1957, he created El Saturn Research, one of the first independent U.S. music labels. "I had to have something, and that something was creating something that nobody owned but us," he stated. His use of the growing craze for jazz and Black music as a leverage to share his message thus became a significant game-changer, demonstrating that a person of color could set their own broadcasting channels and produce their own platforms. Whether "purists" like it or not, the legacy of Sun Ra is also to be found nowadays through the use of his myth in advertising patterns. When doomed with poverty porn or exoticism, knowing how to publicize ourselves is also part of cutting loose and overthrowing the shyness, the fear that we, as Black people, wouldn't be worth a wider, if not massive, attention.

BEYOND BLACKNESS, AFROFUTURISM AS A SELF-DEFINED QUEER (AESTH-)ETHICS ///

Proposing an Afrofuturistic vision of the world is everything but daydreaming a fanciful, year-to-come projection. It is instead a matter of critical thinking and long-term developments. It means debates and efforts to create wider inclusive politics on a global scale, beyond genders, races and species. In a 1996 interview, Mark Dery confided "that our inability to conceive of the future in any other than dystopian terms is one sign that we're moribund as a culture. [...] We have to relocate our cultural conversation about the promise of technology in the noisy, dirty here-and-now and begin to build a progressive, pragmatic futurism." In a conversation I shared with him in 2015, he added: "One of the most useful services Afrofuturism performs is pointing out the debt our Visions of Things to Come owe to all that has been."

In his book *Politiques de l'inimitié (Politics of Hatred, 2016)*, **Achille Mbembe** writes: "[Afrofuturism] states

that the very idea of human species is defeated by the experience of the negro, forced through the Slave Trade notably, to assume the attributes of a thing and share the fate of an object. Today, the “background negro” — which updates the “surface negro” without necessarily having a black skin — corresponds to a kind of subordinated humanity which the Capital hardly needs and that seems to be doomed to zoning and expulsion.” Following both ideas, Afrofuturism stands as a “phenomenology of alterity” seeking to inspire an always more mixed and complex assemblage of people and collectives who have decided to quit a fudged game and start their own.

By hacking historical portraitures, archive footages, stories, and contemporary techs and tools, Afrofuturism invents a more inclusive world. **It also provides a new form of ethics; a morale both anchored in the diversion of today’s stifling norms, structures, or institutions and the recall of the past’s traditional and subjective features, including magical realism, in order to reshape the very idea of what “the future” actually stands for.**

ALTER-HUMANISM AND HEALING POLITICS? HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER ///

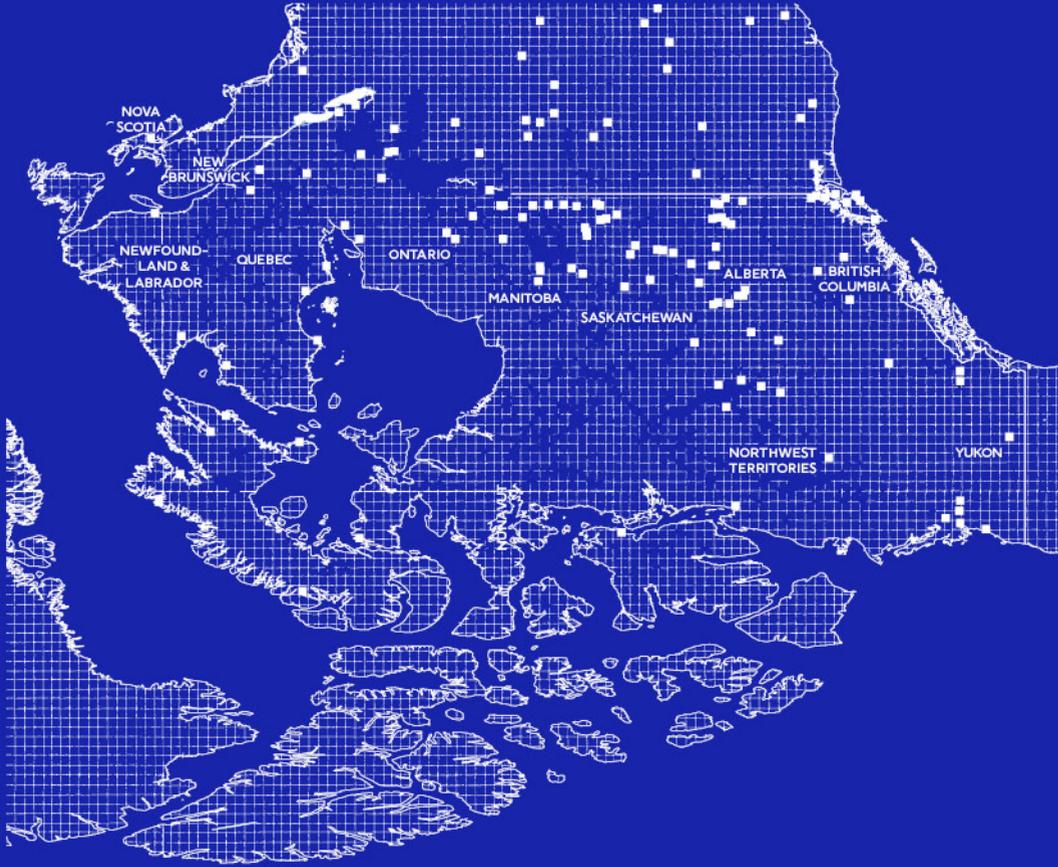
So that’s radical politics, really? It might be; especially at a time in which democracy forswears itself in the name of the struggle against its “un-democratic” enemies. When political representatives are given credit for casually explaining why they believe in “a positive racism, without hatred,” or building “great walls”? When only 10 countries were officially free of any conflict on a world scale in 2016 (according to Global Peace Index)? One issue, for starters, might be, and has almost always been, that whatever the proposal, area or time, the idea of a community, and the laws and institutions it induces, rely on “us against them” dynamics, often fostered by a hegemonic greed. Plus, don’t expect

everyone to aspire to the same future. So what then? Well, while lacking a specific agenda, it’s still strongly believable that communities can build upon other criteria!

Rasheedah Phillips (attorney and funder of the platform The Afrofuturist Affair) once wrote: “Many of us were Afrofuturists long before it had a name. Whether you call it mythology, ghost stories, cosmology, parable, folktale, sci-fi, religious tale, or fantasy, people of color have always contemplated their origins in the same breath that they anticipated the fate of humankind.” Beyond a somehow hackneyed (and historically racist) “humanism,” Afrofuturism, and other concepts developed by people of color (Creolization, Desidentification, Assemblage...) “rightly understand and foreground the relational nature of our being-in-common — our imperative to acknowledge the various iterations of our (social) difference and the ethical practice of being decent to one another in the face of this diversity” (Kaiama L. Glover). Common good is only to be found through multiplicity, and, if Afrofuturism is to be paradigmatic, it is because it is so inclusive, because it nourishes from always more different and unexpected subjectivities, cultures, cosmologies and languages.

Blurry, some might say. Well, Afrofuturism stands somewhere between performativity and faith: it is both a praxis and a magical formula, a meme and an egregore, a hashtag and a mantra. Thus, Afrofuturism expands any static definition: it is the intuition of life being an enchanted journey and its purpose is precisely to re-activate the spell, apart from any sort of coercion. ■

“We stand at a critical moment in this thing called history where we can freeze the moment and recognize our abilities to manipulate the collective timeline for positive change. Creating the future, defining the meaning of the future, and our existence in it, I believe, is the power of Afrofuturism. And so Afrofuturism and the concepts connected to it, must always be here, if we are to be here. And I believe we will be.” (Rasheedah Phillips)



Indian Residential Schools: Carceral Classrooms in Canada

INTRODUCTION BY DUBRAVKA SEKULIĆ ///

In her 2018 book *Colonial Lives of Property*, Brenna Bhandar shows how the contemporary juridical concept of property is developed through settler colonialism. In the last two centuries, the abstract, formalized legal system of property has subsumed the whole world as the invisible apparatus which organizes everyday life of every person in the world, and generates inequality. The crucial thing to understand in 2019 is that settler colonialism is not a thing of the past, but an atrocity which keeps coming back. *The Funambulist* is a great place to start to understand the scale and impact of the various ways that settler colonialism worked, works and continues to rule through organization of space, which does not stop at the scale of property grid. Desirée Valadares' "Indian Residential Schools: Carceral Classrooms in Canada," shows how architecture is implicit in normalization and naturalization of stratification as a dominant world-making strategy by giving spatial infrastructure for the policies of "policies of forced assimilation, a civilizing agenda, racial segregation, unethical labor practices and inequitable land reform strategies." Architecture makes settler colonialism visible and graspable in space, and the failure of preservation to make the physical outcomes of the settler colonialism legible. Even more, for me personally, this text almost works as a map of the programmatic field of entangled issues that are necessary to dismantle, both conceptually and practically, in order to rebuild a world better suited for life, and as a reminder of what my research agenda should be.

Dubravka Sekulić is an architect researching the transformations of contemporary cities, at the nexus between the production of space, laws, and economy. She is the author of two books: *Glottz Nicht so Romantisch! On Extra-legal Space in Belgrade* (2012) and *Zoran Bojović – Three Points of Support* (2013). Currently, she is an assistant professor at the IZK Institute for Contemporary Art, Faculty of Architecture, TU Graz, Austria.

Indian Residential Schools: Carceral Classrooms in Canada

Indian Residential Schools in Canada functioned as a node within an expansive network of government infrastructure that perpetuated policies of forced assimilation, a civilizing agenda, racial segregation, unethical labor practices and inequitable land reform strategies, influenced by deeply intertwined institutions of colonialism and missionary crusades. Jointly established by the Canadian federal government and various religious denominations, over 130 boarding schools existed nationwide from as early as 1874 until as late as 1996, when the last school officially shut its doors. Over 150,000 of Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were often forcibly removed from their homes and legally subjected to formalized spiritual, academic, and vocational training in these institutionalized settings. With a mission of “killing the Indian in the child,” the psychological impact of the Indian

Residential School system and its associated policies have been widespread, profoundly traumatic and intergenerational.

ACCULTURATION BY DESIGN ///

Evolving from European colonial prototypes, the design and operation of Indian Residential Schools in Canada involved new conceptions of space and architecture to instill order, discipline and self-restraint to pacify the nation's Indigenous youth. Rather than being innocuous landscapes and architectural products, these spaces played an active role in the government's efforts to assimilate and civilize the Indigenous child through an assault on their cultural identity. An optimistic attitude towards environmental determinism in the late 19th century and a belief in the transformative effect of architecture produced new spatialities in the design and layout of Indian Residential Schools in order to disrupt the Indigenous sense of place and identity.

The Department of Indian affairs acted as a centralized apparatus of architectural production, with government architects such as Ronald Guerne Orr playing key, yet often overlooked roles. School buildings typically featured a standardized symmetrical floor plan with a central block flanked by two attached pavilions forming an H-shaped building configuration. The standardized material and uniformity in layout reveals a level of confidence in one basic plan to produce a series of environments across provinces and territories with similar assimilative effects. This ideal closely mirrored other institutional buildings in Canada like reform schools, psychiatric hospitals and elite boarding schools which were designed in the late 19th century.

Recognizable sacred circular phenomenon and natural, spiral motifs were strategically abandoned in favor of rigid lines, harsh corners and squares to radically redefine space and meaning. The symmetry and



order of the long rectangular dining rooms and square classrooms with furniture aligned in straight rows served to dictate acceptable behavioral norms. Characteristic of Foucault's carceral archipelago, these boarding schools also featured regulatory and disciplinary practices to control space and spatially segregate Indigenous children by age, gender and ability.

Similarly, the surrounding landscape was designed by harshly splintering space into narrow rectangular and square lots. This reflected a broader ideology of comprehensive land use, planning strategies and aggressive surveying policies, characteristic of the late 1800s. Initially, most Indian Residential School locations were chosen for their proximity to rural white settler communities. A regimented curriculum of vocational training presumed the importance of industry and individualism to reforming Indigenous character and migratory hunter-gatherer lifestyles, which were at odds with prevailing

Euro-Canadian societal ideals. This approach was deeply rooted in colonial reverence for agrarian lifestyles, which relied on sedentary agricultural oriented economies. **Indian Residential Schools' landscapes, much like their buildings, became vehicles for cultivating civilization and promoting European notions of agriculture, individualism, scarcity, accumulation, and property.**

Aerial photos and landscape plans of Indian Residential School sites often feature adjacent farms, rectangular orchards, and narrow plots. At the expense of proper academic instruction, the inclusion of farming instruction and agricultural practice served both ideological and pragmatic functions — it advanced the settler project of civilization while reducing operating costs of Indian Residential Schools as produce and livestock cultivated by an indentured labor force were often sold to local communities for profit. This “citizenship training” and marginal

education further subordinated Indigenous youth and subjugated them to menial positions in society as common laborers and domestic servants with limited career mobility. As a result, Indian Residential Schools and their associated policies comprised a major conceptual tool for advancing colonial governmentality through the architectural design and layout of these carceral institutions whose sole function was to unsettle the political, social, and cultural life of Canada's Indigenous peoples.

BEARING WITNESS ///

Initiated in 2008, the highly-publicized Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) gained the distinction of becoming the country's first truth commission at the national level to focus exclusively on Indigenous people, and specifically the experiences of children who were subjected to systemic abuse. The TRC provoked a national debate about the haunting legacy of Indian Residential Schools, but its limited scope drew major criticism for failing to address other outstanding issues, such as systemic violence, dispossession and deeply rooted identity-based conflict, which continue to affect Canada's Indigenous communities, beleaguer the relationship between Indigenous peoples, the government and non-Aboriginal Canadians and impede transitional justice.

The commission's official mandate was to compile a comprehensive historical record of Indian Residential Schools. The commission undertook an expansive cross-country effort to collect testimonial and documentary evidence on the policies and operations of the schools and the difficult history surrounding these former carceral spaces of learning. Even looking only within this scoped mandate, a particularly noteworthy omission of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's sanctioned fact finding process was the lack of interest in the design,

building typology and programmatic use of Indian Residential School sites.

Today, the imposing presence of Indian Residential Schools and the institutional detritus of this complex and often painful history remains comfortably invisible to most Canadians. The isolated settings of the schools concealed them from broader Canadian society while in operation, and now also minimize the visibility of their traumatic aftermath.

RECLAIMING REMNANTS ///

This understudied aspect of Canada's architectural and landscape history remains incomplete, obscured, scattered and inaccessible since Indian Residential School architectural drawings and building records exist across archives of many jurisdictions with a range of public access controls and preservation practices. This archival and historical erasure is symptomatic of a more complex process of negation in which over 139 former sites themselves, situated on federally-owned land, remain excluded from the national register since they fail to meet limited, place-based heritage values outlined by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC).

The vestigial traces and architectural leftovers of the Indian Residential School complex, despite not currently providing any discernible public service, can act as an immediate and direct visceral connection to an often overlooked and difficult history. As a consequence, most extant Indian Residential School sites currently sit abandoned and remain devoid of comprehensive architectural and field surveys, measured drawings, existing condition assessments including material conditions and localized areas of deterioration. A direct engagement with extant physical traces of these carceral classrooms can serve important interpretative, commemorative and record-keeping functions



that shift from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reliance on testimonial evidence to an analysis of architecture as the object of study and as material witness. Furthermore, scientific engagement with these landscapes through forensic investigations, on-site study and exhumations of unmarked grave sites may reveal important information about the causes, contexts and consequences of high child mortality rates, the spread of diseases (tuberculosis, measles, pneumonia, mumps, influenza, etc.) and the unethical nutrition experiments openly conducted on residential school children. These seemingly related issues were classified beyond the scope of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and further prevented Commissioners from more direct engagement with these study sites.

The disintegrating fragments of this regional complex hold the potential to serve as material evidence in court and may also act as a visual manifestation of a process of recreating the past and

present at the site of trauma. A more inclusive cultural landscape conservation approach in addition to an engagement with architectural plans, archival documents, photos, drawings, propaganda films, visual art and the extant physical traces themselves, may yield a better understanding that could potentially reconfigure existing notions of these total institutions and their relation to infrastructure, policy and practice.

POST-CARCERAL HERITAGE ///

The study of Indian Residential School architecture provides further evidence for navigating the ethical nuances of a difficult history. A re-engagement with elements of this post-carceral cultural landscape raises important questions about practices of selection, preservation and cultural attitudes toward remembering and forgetting. The relics and material histories housed within these landscapes of incarceration have the potential to form the basis for future memory initiatives, act as legal evidence,

(4) St. George's Indian Residential School, Lytton, British Columbia (1935). / All photographs from National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba.

(1) Old Sun Indian Residential School, Blackfoot Reserve, Gleichen, Alberta (1935). (2) St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay, British Columbia (1940). (3) St. Paul's Indian Residential School, Blood Reserve, Cardston, Alberta (1930).

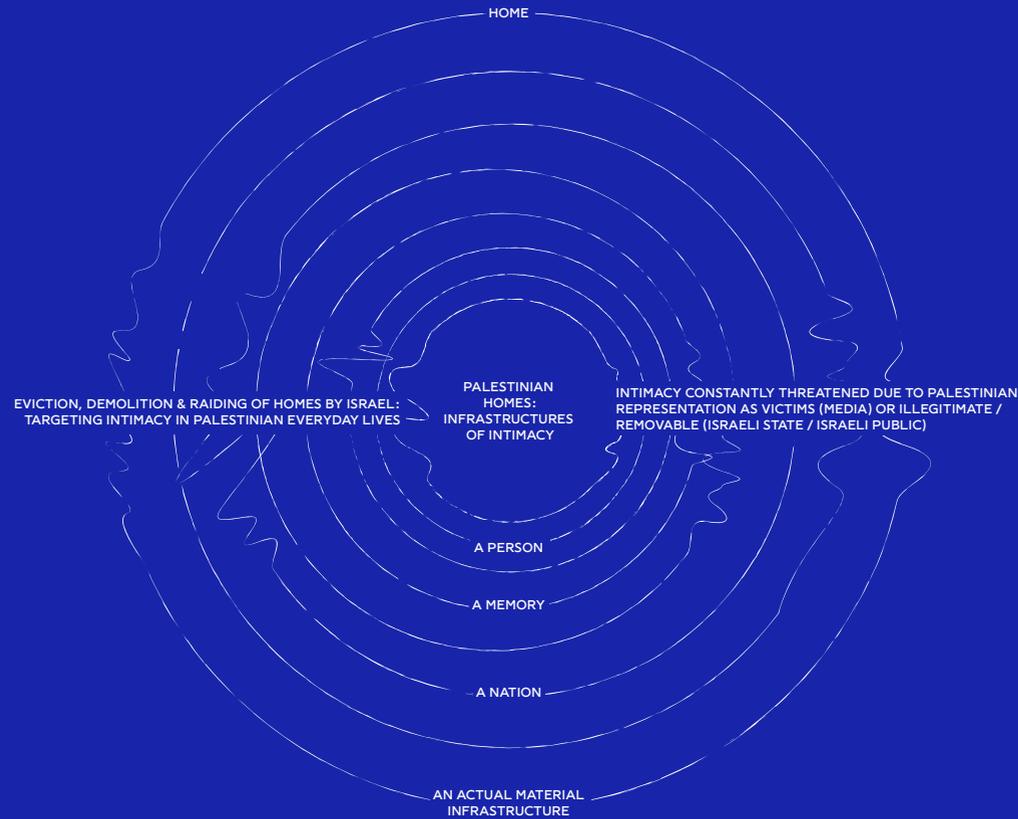
or result in greater public support for historical study through archaeology and forensics to expose concealed histories and alternate forms of interpretation.

However, documentation, interpretation and conservation remain a challenge since each site has unique circumstances: its level of designation, related survivor groups and preservation trusts, site conditions and ownership status. They are variously extant, repurposed, neglected, or demolished, and their place among existing national, provincial and regional sites of memory remains contested. **More recently, the extant architectural forms of Indian Residential Schools have been gradually erased through purposeful demolition by survivors through healing ceremonies but more often than not, they are ravaged by time, willful neglect and vandalism.** Indigenous intergenerational attitudes toward memorialization are often at odds with established norms of formal preservation and architectural conservation controls. Heritage advocates and Indigenous activist groups working to commemorate these spaces remain at different levels of organizational maturity with limited program structures and funding to effectively tackle landscapes that fall beyond the purview of established heritage boards and conservation agencies.

Current practices of ascribing heritage value marginalize sites with difficult histories through selective narrative omissions and by assigning heritage designations to only those resources that possess a certain defined standard of commemorative integrity or authenticity. Similarly, other comparable post-carceral spaces in Canada like Castle Mountain in Banff (the site of internment and forced labor of 70,000 ethnic Ukrainians during World War I) and Lemon Creek (the site of a similar atrocity perpetrated on Japanese Canadians during World War II) are deemed incompatible

with the commemorative values of the HSMBC and, as a result, are denied further study, interpretation or protection.

Canadian conservation policy and cultural management strategies require a radical redefinition to recognize the potential uses of heritage as a therapeutic practice that would enable survivor groups to become primary agents in narrating their own histories of struggle, trauma and oppression in ways that are accessible and compatible with respective culturally appropriate attitudes toward remembering and forgetting. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's official report, recently released on December 15, 2015, explicitly addresses these issues with a series of recommendations that may serve as a starting point for achieving this outcome. Ultimately, a re-envisioned policy and approach could play a vital role in not only the maintenance, study and documentation of these sites, but also fundamentally affect the ways in which former Indian Residential School sites are recognized, funded, adaptively reused and appropriately placed to act as tangible public reminders of trauma, suffering and accountability. ■



Palestinian Homes: Infrastructures of Intimacy and the Politics of Representation

INTRODUCTION BY FLORA HERGON ///

When Léopold suggested choosing what we would consider the most “politically useful” article, different ideas came to my mind. Why not an article from the Space and Activism or Police issues? But I also thought, “which article impressed you most while you were working for *The Funambulist*?”

That’s how Sabrien Amrov’s article came to my mind. The way she described Palestinian homes as historically *produced* spaces of gathering, memories and resistance, was really significant to me in order to understand the political meaning and Israeli strategy of home demolitions, behind the infrastructure. The author helped me to understand how politics of resistances and representations start from the intimate sphere, before spreading in public spaces.

Sabrien Amrov argues against the fetishization of war and of Palestinian subjectivities. Through photographs from her family’s house, she claims for the necessity of new political stories concerning Palestinian homes, which are currently stuck between two binary representations: “terrorist places” by the Israeli State, or *disembodied* sites of disaster by some pro-Palestinian media, groups and individuals.

Through a sensitive description about “when a house is a home,” Sabrien Amrov opposes the Israeli army’s powerful discourse on so-called “terrorist” homes. She also asks us to overcome the “three-minutes news package” through a consideration of the *before* and *after* periods of such home con/destructions. Eventually, the author invites us to rethink such “infrastructures of intimacy” in order to better support Palestinians, both *within* and *outside* such intimate places of long-term and everyday *resistance*.

Flora Hergon worked as an editorial assistant for *The Funambulist* between 2017 and 2018. She is a Master’s student in sociology and gender studies in Paris. Her work focuses on other “infrastructures of intimacy,” through a research on police home searches and house arrests during the state of emergency in France (2015-2018).

Palestinian Homes: Infrastructures of Intimacy and the Politics of Representation

Part of Israel's settler colonial practice is the systematic destruction of home. Home embodies many different ideas: a nation or a person, home can be a picture, home can be a memory. Yet home is also the actual material infrastructure people live in and around. As sites of living, homes are infrastructures of intimacy. They do the work of nurturing, controlling, sanctioning, and negotiating through cooperation and disagreement. They reproduce the social relations that are embodied in the modern distinction between the public and private spheres. When a home is demolished, it has implications that reverberate across Palestinian society. It implies a destruction of a place where people sleep, eat, have conversations, argue and make love.

The targeting of Palestinian homes is a war on being together in Palestine.

How does Israel lay claims on Palestinian homes? Part of the material practices is the very discourse Israel holds on homes. In the context of evictions and demolitions by Israel, homes are discursively constructed with direct consequences on Palestinian subjectivity. Knowledge about Palestinian homes is produced as either a threat to the Israeli state, or as a site of destruction and disaster. Such narratives often render invisible the realities of settler colonialism and its effects on Palestinian everyday life. Seeking to challenge and overcome knowledge production on Palestinian subjectivities beyond the fetishization of war, I want to think of ways to weave together theorizations on representation and the concept of "infrastructures of intimacy" in an effort to provide alternative ways of thinking, reading, watching and speaking of Palestinian subjectivity.

The infrastructural lens is often used to showcase the way hard politics and state violence creep into people's lives: surveillance systems, segregated roads, public infrastructures. But I want to push the idea that an infrastructural lens allows us to think about the various aspects in people's lives that become blurred because we get too caught up in popularized frameworks like the one set by the notion of human rights. In the Israeli settler colonial context, we often find an interest in reporting the ways in which settler colonialism steals land, territory, histories, and abuses Indigenous people's rights. These are all true and important. But more is at play. Just like feminist geographers tell us to pay attention to attachment, and to respect that the personal is political, intimacy shows us how power travels well beyond the spaces we think of. Infrastructure of intimacy allows us to see what gets taken away in these analyses. I think it is important to reinstate the relations of kinship that I argue are



under threat in the Palestinian context. I share Ara Wilson's enthusiasm that intimacy as analytic rubric makes visible the ways in which political conditions have profound effects on human relationships (*The Intimate Economies of Bangkok: Tomboys, Tycoons, and Avon Ladies in The Global City*, 2004). **How receiving a notice of home demolition affects people's psychology. How harassment in their homes has made some men and women incapable of being intimate with their significant other. How rebuilding your home every time it gets demolished can drive you mad. How being asked to demolish the home you built has strong affective consequences on how people continue to live their lives.**

In the context of Israel's settler colonial occupation of Palestine, intimacy attends to

often overlooked complexities of Palestinian subjectivities framed through settler colonial violence. Indeed, accessing the everyday of Palestinian life through the intimate is not meant to turn away from the structure of dominance, but rather, as Ann Laura Stoler argues, "relocates their conditions of possibility and relations and forces of production" (*Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, 2006). With my work on Palestinian homes, I want to demonstrate how attending to Israel state violence is a more intimate method of shedding light on the ignored ways Palestinian have to endure settler colonialism.

In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Palestinians homes are regularly evicted, demolished and raided. In quantitative terms, 2016 and 2017 witnessed both a record number of home demolitions and evictions



owners of the property with ownership that dated back to 1948 (“Israel Evicts Palestinian Family from East Jerusalem Home to Make Way for Pre-’48 Jewish Owners,” *Haaretz*, Sep. 5, 2017). In neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, Tag Mehir (translated as Price Tag) is a Jewish settler movement supported by the government, a sort of vigilante group that proceeds through an economic analysis of security to target Palestinian communities and spaces. They bully Palestinians around their homes and raid their premises, without any repercussions from the state of Israel. They have been effective at getting Palestinians to leave their homes in East Jerusalem and settle in Ramallah to flee the harassment.

When children get arrested by the Israeli army, it is often done through a home raid. This will imply physical altercation with the parents and violent ransacking of the premises by the soldiers. Hence, the Israeli State dismisses the historical connection of Palestinians with their homes. It puts them in a place where they end up physically demolishing their own homes and authorizes Israeli settlers to harass and bully Palestinians who remain in their homes. These examples — many more could have been chosen — illustrate how the Israeli state targets intimacy at varying levels of Palestinian everyday life.

This violence is translated in the way in which Israel represents Palestinian homes. “When is a House a Home?” is the title of a 2014 infographic created by the Israeli army. It was disseminated via social media to an English-speaking audience during its last major assault on Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip during “Operation Protective Edge.” The infographic presents different rooms of a generic family home, replacing their function with a military lexicon. A bedroom is showed as an “operation room,” a living room as a “weapon storage,”

and an office as a “commander center.” In doing so, the Israeli army attempted to justify its bombing of an infrastructure otherwise registered in our political imagination as a civilian space; a sanctuary in times of war, a place of security and protection. Through this process, the Israeli state attempts to “dehomefy” Palestinians homes by targeting and destroying them, and by actively laying claim over the representation of what a Palestinian home is and is not, consequently interpreting how to portray Palestinian everydayness. By doing so, Israel’s state apparatus does not only represent a particular narrative of Palestinian homes, it produces it.

Furthermore, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) target the spatial production of intimacy, a set of affective attachments to places and people, a shared awareness and communication, tempos and configurations through affect, feeling and sensation, produced through the relationality of Palestinians with their homes. Indeed, an often overlooked and crucial component of Israel’s assault on Palestinian homes is the way in which the Israeli army tries to disrupt the intimacy that is both preconceived around homes as civilian infrastructures more broadly, and to destroy the intimacy that is produced within Palestinian homes specifically. This is done by casting Palestinian homes as an extension of warfare (or annex-ation of the battlefield).

While the violence of the Israeli state has been extensively documented, there are other implications of this type of manipulation of representation of Palestinian homes. Yet, it is not exclusively the state of Israel which attempts to lay claims on how Palestinian homes should or should not be perceived in our public register. A Google Image search of “Palestinian Homes” will

gather thousands of pictures of homes being or already demolished. In the recent cinematographic production *Junction 48*, for example, the final scene consists of a home demolition in East Jerusalem, where a group of Palestinians attempt to resist the Israeli bulldozer but fail in the end to stop the demolition. Produced by Israeli writer Udi Aloni and starring Palestinian hip hop artist Tamar Nafar, the story is loyal to the mainstream narrative of Palestinian resistance amidst hardship, with little insights into the intimate lives of the characters outside this frame. When Palestinian homes are not identified as a threat to the Israeli state, they are seen and documented as a site of disaster and destruction in the political imaginary of those who write (journalists, academics, novelists, etc.) for and about Palestine. Yet, despite this fascination with Palestinian homes, little attention has been paid to the stakes involved in the production of knowledge about Palestinian homes as spaces of threat, tragedy, resistance or dispossession. In this sense, homes are not only spaces of intimacy, but intimacy is constantly threatened to be removed as part of representing Palestinians as victims (media) or illegitimate and thus removable (Israeli State/Israeli public). Palestinians’ lived experiences are thus left choking between different but limiting gazes.

In the 1986 book *After the Last Sky* — a photography collection by John Mohr on Palestinians’ everyday lives — Edward Said writes that Palestinian representation is “a very crowded place, almost too crowded for what it is asked to bear by way of history or interpretation of history.” As early as 1986, less than 40 years after the creation of the State of Israel, the sense of crowdedness

“When is a House a Home?” The re-signification of civilian spaces into military targets. / Israel Defense Forces blog (2014).

for Palestinian families, on one hand, and an increase in the number of illegal settlements built, on the other. Israeli journalist Amira Hass reported that the weekly average of home demolitions in 2016 was 20 structures (“Israel Demolishes Homes of 151 Palestinians, Almost Four Times Last Year’s Average,” *Haaretz*, Jan 07, 2017).

Today, in East Jerusalem, Israeli courts offer the option for Palestinians to demolish their own homes once an order is issued, arguing that this constitutes the most affordable option for Palestinian families who can’t afford a demolition by the state. In early 2017, Palestinian writer Ramzi Baroud documented how the Palestinian Bedouin village of Al-Araqeeb was destroyed over 116 times (“Israel Demolishes Arab Village for the 116th Time,” *Middle East Monitor*, August 1, 2017).

There is also eviction and systematic bullying. In September 2017, *Haaretz* reported that the Israeli police evicted a Palestinian family in East Jerusalem from their home in which they had lived for decades, making way for Israelis deemed by the Israeli Supreme Court to be the lawful

was felt and noticed. The traffic in and about Palestine was visible and yet, the story of Palestinians remained invisible. “Yet the problem of writing about and representing — in all the senses of the word — Palestinians in some fresh way is part of a much larger problem. For it is not as if no one speaks about or portrays the Palestinians. The difficulty is that everyone, including Palestinians themselves, speaks a very great deal. A huge body of literature has grown up, most of it polemical, accusatory, denunciatory. At this point, no one writing about Palestine — and indeed, no one going to Palestine — starts from scratch.” For Said, the traffic in and about Palestine was visible even back then in 1986, and yet, the representation of Palestinians was limited to images of disaster or victimhood. The rest was deemed not only invisible, but non-existent. **To me, this practice of writing the human into the story, into the analysis, into the understanding of complicated processes such as globalization, citizenship, colonialism, and imperialism is the appeal of infrastructure of intimacy as a conceptual lens.** Home-making takes place at different scales: through the actual physical building of the infrastructure that is the house, the decorating, the social relations that take place in and around it, but also through its representation. In Palestinian society, a home is often the first thing you invest in before marriage. Most Palestinians will be directly involved in the physical building of their home, putting in the bricks. Families will build next to each other and often an entire street or enclave of homes will be a residence for the same family.

Thinking about the spaces Palestinians share with a respect for this sensitivity is crucial. The salience of the infrastructural lens is not limited to its capacity to deconstruct systems of power, global structures of transport and logistics, or the mapping

of cities. The infrastructural lens has the potential to make us put on a new set of glasses; one that understands and allows us to consider that what makes an event such as a home demolition tragic is what comes both before and after the three-minute news package. The home is an infrastructure of the social, political and economic fabric of individuals, families and communities. It is for this very reason that they are attacked. Beyond documenting the number of demolitions and rebuilding, the home evictions and the change in population, we need to privilege writings on Palestine that also recognize the lived experiences of individuals and people. If people who write about Palestine are willing to invest their time in drawing images of war laboratories, choking points and fragmentation, there needs to be an acknowledgment of the type of political subjectivity it produces and the type it dismisses. ■



Jesse Mumm

BIOGRAPHY

Jesse Mumm is a cultural anthropologist teaching in Latin American and Latino Studies at DePaul University, with a doctorate in anthropology from Northwestern University. He has won grants from the National Science Foundation, and teaching awards for his work in urban ethnography interrogating issues of race and racism. He grew up in Chicago, went to public schools, and taught high school at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. He has been involved in critical pedagogy, solidarity work, immigrant and refugee rights, community development, and social justice for 30 years. His original fieldwork asked: how does gentrification reveal and construct race?

STATEMENT

We live in an age of a profound misreading of humanity which, at the core, is white supremacy. I am a cultural anthropologist who interrogates race and racism in Chicago — through the lenses of social interactions, whiteness and *latinidad*, displacement, and the historical political economies of cities — at the university, at public events, and in the media. I grew up in the Logan Square neighborhood, and spent a decade immersed in liberatory pedagogy, and worked reporting on immigrant assets, reintegrating the formerly incarcerated, and researching human rights abuses.

I put the toolbox of anthropology to use where I came from, exposing gentrification as a process of recreating whiteness by appropriating land, property, wealth and culture from people of color, who counter this with protest, recognition, exchange, culture, love and organizing. Recently this has meant a digital ethnography of racist online discourses; working with a local artist on an exhibition project called The Peoples' Museum; and being the Historian on the #BrownInChicago Project with Latino youth decolonizing their origins' narratives.

VOICES
OF
CHICAGO #2

Battle for the Near Northwest Side: Ground Zero in the Chicago Gentrification War

Battle for the Near Northwest Side: Ground Zero in the Chicago Gentrification War

UNATIERRA LINDA (BEAUTIFUL LAND) ///

“So we just move to the next neighborhood and get pushed out of there? Then do it all over again? When does it stop? When do we get to *choose to stay*?” Janeida Rivera asks. The self-proclaimed Queen of Humboldt Park — poet, performer, and teacher — sent the drama of gentrification across Chicago radio airwaves in her poem *After All*. Our city, notorious for the violent segregation of the Black community, has made Latinos the primary targets of the present era of gentrification, and the Near Northwest Side is ground zero in the war against displacement. This majority Latino area comprises the Humboldt Park, Logan Square, West Town,

Hermosa and Avondale neighborhoods, cradling the heart of the Puerto Rican community and their cultural corridor known as Paseo Boricua. Major wins in battles to build affordable housing gave us Zapata Apartments, the “Borinqueneers” Veterans Housing, 12 rental buildings known as *Tierra-Linda* (“Beautiful Land”), and just this spring 100 affordable units in the Emmett Street Project, near the “hottest” intersection in Logan Square. Residents organized to end the private occupation of their public park by the corporation Riot Fest, and prevented the closing of Humboldt Park Beach, preserving a natural bathing lagoon that was the brainchild of local activists in the seventies. This year saw the election or re-election of aldermen firmly against displacement, including Democratic Socialists Carlos Ramírez-Rosa, Rossana Rodríguez-Sánchez, and Daniel LaSpata. And the City Council adopted Alderman Roberto Maldonado’s proposal to designate a longer stretch of Division Street as “Puerto Rico Town.” Here, not far from the downtown Loop, wedged between the largely white and gentrified north lake-front, and the largely Black and impoverished West Side, Latinos articulate a claim to space that has big implications for the future of Chicago.

THE MARCH OF UNSUSTAINABILITY ///

Humboldt Park has lost thousands of Latino families, shifting the Puerto Rican geographic center northwest of the park, and Logan Square has ceased to be a majority Latino neighborhood after two generations. At the edge of the Loop in West Town, the majority white population is more than double the remaining Latino population, and the evictions of the nineties are a recurrent traumatic memory informing the present. In the First Ward, former alderman Joe Moreno, currently under indictment, received thousands in campaign dollars from millionaire real estate developers, and approved huge

high-rise luxury complexes with rents over \$3,000 per month. Now, dark, 11-story glass and metal towers shadow two-flat A-frame homes where on some front porches neighbors can no longer see half the sky. These monuments to affluence cap long years of white newcomer arrivals renting, remodeling, and buying, while the real estate industry, the city, and business interests drove a familiar settler narrative of “up-and-coming” neighborhoods. By the 1990s when local groups first united in the Humboldt Park Empowerment Partnership, plans to plant two 40-ton Puerto Rican flag gateways over Division incited a host of projects to prevent displacement. No other group has been so constantly evicted from the urban landscape than the Puerto Rican community, pushed out of ports of entry in Old Town, Lincoln, Park, Lakeview, Uptown, and West Town, a history that drives the stand to hold Humboldt Park. But their work informs the entire Near Northwest Side, a destination also for Cubans, Mexicans, and Central Americans, Polish and Ukrainians who remained, and my own childhood, in a community decidedly mixed but richly Latin American, fiercely proud, and conscious of its loss.

Cafetería Puerto Rico closed, famous Cuban sandwich spot Marianao moved away, along with Pancho’s, where the scent of Caribbean café no longer wafts under the elevated train station I took to high school. White-owned galleries, design shops and boutiques occupy the storefronts of former corner stores named for Puerto Rican *pueblos* like Yabucoa Grocery. As buildings lost families and hosted single professionals, former mayor Rahm Emanuel’s policy of punitive school closings hit Humboldt Park hard, and it lost Lafayette, Von Humboldt, Ryerson and

Duprey Elementary Schools. As both symptom and cause of displacement, neoliberal school policies devalue then shutter institutions serving lower income Latinos, pushing families further west to find rentals near a school within walking distance.

Here proximity means *proximity* — the sharing of time, money, food, repairs, advice, child care, *help* — and displacement means the loss of social networks, relationships, stores, credit, institutions, symbolic spaces and iconic places, for people embedded in dense networks of mutual assistance. It also means *re-impoverishment* as rents and property taxes escalate, as rent goes from \$800 to \$1,400, and money for food, clothing, and medicine for a family below the poverty line shifts all toward simply remaining in the apartment they call home. Luz Padilla saw her house assessed at triple its value in less than ten years, taxed so high that she joked she was “paying rent” just to stay in the home she paid off years ago. Realtor operatives target older residents with City complaints of unsafe back porches or loose windows, and after an inspector’s visit mandating thousands in repairs, hopeless *viejos* and *viejas* are visited by the same realtors with a “lucky” offer to buy. Latino residents often face the crisis in affordability by doubling up families to share costs, while suffering overcrowding — but many are simply forced to sell.

What replaces their homes? An unforeseen era in Chicago architecture: bland, flat, rectangular boxes of cinder block and drywall, with arrow-slit windows that do not open, tricked out inside with luxury finishes, and accessorized with largely unused balconies overlooking parking lots, alleys, and

trash bins. Developers largely dispense with porches and front stoops, where private space mingles with the public way, and the “stoop stories” and greetings that form one cornerstone of community are replaced by remote-operated gates, cameras, and electronic call boxes. Neoliberal whitewashing — free enterprise rhetoric, deregulation, and privatization, wrapped in the language of progress, nature, and connection — results in city subsidies to build this luxury housing as long as it is called “transit-oriented development” (TOD). These nodes dot the separate, unequal and upscale consumption corridors of the white Near Northwest Side where a small group of investors reaps huge profits by charging high prices to a restricted class of people with a narrow taste range. Gone from a mile of Milwaukee Avenue are the laundromats, corner stores, gift shops, clothing stores, furniture stores, bakeries, and light manufacturing and food processing companies. This also means gutting working class jobs, along with working class needs, all in service of a single activity: consuming craft beer, high end cocktails, and upscale “bar food,” specialty French fries with aioli — a fancy word for mayonnaise with garlic. Despite the hype, this is not a renaissance or a quirky niche corridor, but a cautious, zero-risk replica of every other gentrified strip in every U.S. city and many suburban entertainment complexes. This economic monoculture is not even sustainable from the standpoint of free enterprise, and it could not have happened without massive state support, tax breaks, and direct funding by our tax dollars.

DISPLACEMENT AS GEOGRAPHIC WHITE SUPREMACY ///

Chicago is a global city today but it has always been a land speculator’s city. Before we were “hog butcher for the world,” before steel, meatpacking, railroads, or candy, elite fortunes were made in trading *paper*.



Speculation on previously devalored land prices in the wetlands of the wild onion led to over-inflation and big profits even in the 19th century, and this remains the single most profitable industry today. Famed planner Daniel Burnham, who made “no small plans” to build a city supposedly to benefit all classes, was a true aristocrat whose vision of urbanity was driven by a marketing pitch to the gentry. “The best welfare of the city demands that the town should immediately put on a charming dress,” he wrote, in order to “bring rich people here.” Bringing back the (white) middle classes became a core aim of the Department of Planning in the era of Urban Renewal — popularly called “Negro Removal” — whose projects to segregate, then displace, Black and Brown Chicagoans became hotly politically contested starting in the sixties. After 1980, the City appeared to abandon the housing sphere, but quietly supported early gentrification along the north lakefront, finally revealing by the millennium that state-supported gentrification is the central urban policy script. “I believe gentrification has all of the elements of the recolonization of the city,” says José López, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Humboldt Park, “and again, if you study how the western part, or most of the United States, was colonized, it was colonized by displacing through spatial deconcentration.”

In Chicago, gentrification makes legible the distinct racial histories of whites and nonwhites, and derives its profitability

A House on Parade. A house walks through the Puerto Rican Parade adorned with stickers proclaiming “Humboldt Park is Not for Sale!” and painted with the message “Preservando nuestro hogares comunidad y cultura [preserving our homes community and culture].” / Photograph by Jesse Mumm.

from previous regimes of racial devaluation and exclusion. This is visible in practices of “flexible racism,” — the mixed deployment of overt racism, covert racism, racial tolerance, multiculturalism, and colorblind discourses. Flexible racism enables and depends on “intimate segregation,” the new racial regime in which whites and non-whites live in the same neighborhoods but in separate and unequal social worlds, which further rewards white privilege. White newcomers engage “moral credentialing,” deploying their residence in a Brown neighborhood as cache and badge of their anti-racist status, while taking part in the erasure and denial of the presence of people of color around them. Gentrification then amounts to a “racial fix” in the speculative housing market — a consensus-building process that enables white newcomers to invent a market to secure benefits and returns from histories of racial disparity. Gentrification is in fact embodied white supremacy.

NOT FOR SALE ///

This very real threat to Latino communities that had weathered the storm of city neglect, disinvestment and abandonment, police brutality and failing schools, and begun to rebuild, has spurred on a wealth of local organizing and cultural production. Urban Theater recently produced a play called Not For Sale that examines white entitlement and the activism of Black and Latino residents in Humboldt Park. The Logan Square Neighborhood Association hosts DJs, break-dancing, salsa dancing, and youth art hangouts at the Illinois Centennial Monument — locally known as “the Eagle” — for youth claiming the space where they grew up. Their #BrownInChicago Project began as youth led protests against luxury construction, and in

discussions on how and why their neighborhoods became Latino in the first place, they proposed a workshop series on the origins of being “Brown in Chicago.” The youth worked with a youth director, a genealogist, and a historian, and produced interviews, writing, posters, panel presentations, photography, family trees, poems, ritual, and two public festivals, in a process recognized by scholars as “decolonizing education.” Centro Cultural Ruiz Belvis sold its iconic Wicker Park warehouse building to buy further west in the Hermosa neighborhood, reinvesting in musical equipment, people, and a gigantic performance space. The recently reformed Casa Puertorriqueña continues to host their annual parade and the *Fiestas Patronales of Semana Puertorriqueña* (“Puerto Rican Week”), and the community celebrates *Fiesta Boricua* in September, and another parade on *el Día de los Tres Reyes Magos* (“Three Kings’ Day”) in January. ChiResists mobilizes art and public spectacle that links battles against displacement with migrants’ rights, Indigenous rights, and action on the debt crisis in Puerto Rico. Words of love and preservation emerge in spoken word shows, innumerable online videos and interviews, murals and art openings, hip hop lyrics, memes and marches.

Nonprofit builders Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, LUCHA, and Hispanic Housing have continued to build affordable housing on the Near Northwest Side, and to challenge city policies that advance gentrification. They often coordinate through the Puerto Rican Agenda, an ad hoc group of community leaders, nonprofit workers, activists, scholars, business owners, and elected officials that has met monthly for over twenty years to promote a stable

and thriving Puerto Rican Chicago. “We’re looking at the fact that we have been able to transform this space into a Puerto Rican space,” José López says, “that this has become part of our historical legacy as a people.” The Agenda is now mobilizing to raise money and support to rebuild Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane María, and are going to D.C. to protest the economic recolonization of the island by Wall Street — linking defense of homeland in Chicago and *el Caribe*. The struggle against gentrification on the Near Northwest Side has already been transformative. It has driven the building of protected affordable housing, and generated an organizing sphere for systemic change in the property, taxing, and zoning nexus, that inflects every local election, every political decision, every change in a square inch of land. It has also evolved into incredible cultural production and deep soul-searching about origins and sovereignty among Latinos.

ENDING GENTRIFICATION IN OUR LIFETIMES ///

Will any or all of that save community here? Chicago is one of the few large cities in the U.S. that is hemorrhaging people. Immigrants are displaced from their historic ports of entry, years of racist exclusion pushes Black residents to inner suburbs or back to the South, and a housing affordability crisis makes the city increasingly unlivable. This state of affairs helps build the case for accountability, compensation — or even *reparations* — for displacement in cases where the City is clearly complicit. This has led to the Chicago Housing Initiative, a citywide coalition of community based organizations united around the push to end the 1997 statewide ban on rent control, and a push to confront the abuse of rent speculation. Local leaders are calling for residential buying assistance for long-term residents, priority support to minority-owned businesses,

local moratoria on luxury construction, land trusts, and community budgeting. At issue is local control of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds — the third of our City budget that is routinely handed away to millionaires and outside developers to build condos and brewpubs, instead of serving the needs of Chicagoans. Momentum has built for the notion of creating Historic Cultural Preservation Districts: recognized zones where culture is threatened with erasure due to economies of displacement. Provisions in these districts could include income-based property tax exemptions and priority buying for long-term residents, and a revenue-based tax on large real estate developers.

The Near Northwest Side is hearing the call to “make gentrification illegal” — under the legal doctrine of “collective harm” evidenced by a strong portfolio of research on the local effects of displacement. Precedents emerge from battles against polluters, the establishment of Chicago as a nuclear free zone, and legal protections against fracking. A legal test case mirroring the Gautreaux housing decision that made public housing segregation illegal could force the City to confront its ongoing role in displacing its own residents. Former alderman Billy Ocasio famously downzoned his entire 26th Ward in order to force all developers to petition for a zoning change to build; he was repeatedly sued for this but repeatedly won in court the right to protect housing affordability. What the Community Reinvestment Act of 1975 did to target discriminatory banking practices could be reimagined to hold the private sector accountable for extending racist impacts in the present day. Newly elected Latino aldermen in the Latino Caucus are political independents drawn from grassroots movements, and those allied with the Machine and its disgraced Hispanic Democratic Organization have resigned, lost election, or lost leadership

positions. Its Chair, Roberto Maldonado, has moved to take more progressive positions against displacement, and Byron Sigcho-López and Michael Rodríguez are allied in preserving Southwest Side Mexican communities against displacement as well.

These strategies parallel a challenge to white newcomers to gentrifying Latino neighborhoods. Our message to them is to please cease to engage in free advertising by recruitment, which inflates the market artificially through the social promotion of outside settlement. Task yourself with collective work in solidarity rather than in a missionary approach, lending aid to existing endeavors originating in the acts of predecessor people of color. Buy from predecessor businesses, seek services provided by Latino and Black residents, and intentionally give business to entrepreneurs of color. Seek employees for your business, your workplace, or your flexible work projects among nonwhite people around you, in recognition that the racial division of job access is a cornerstone of racial disparity. Enroll your white children alongside Black and Latino families in their local schools and then fight to improve them in the interest of equity, and work against the racially divided two-tiered public system. Vocally advocate for affordable housing, and when white newcomers organize to prevent it, speak up so that they do not by default speak for you. Speak about how you oppose gentrification and support Brown and Black residents’ right to remain, and to define and transform their community on their own terms, while recognizing that your own white presence still affects the property market.

If Latinos win any part of this battle, and hold on to their neighborhoods, it will signify

the first time in Chicago history that an ethnic group has decided without coercion to grow their community and their power in place. In 182 years we have only known disruption for profit — in the forms of confinement, flight, or displacement — manifesting in segregation, disinvestment, white flight, Urban Renewal, and now gentrification. We have no idea what it is to have a community overcome and prosper and become sustainable while remaining in place for three generations or more and multiplying our social capital and local assets. At stake is a shift in the nature of neighborhood sovereignty, and the establishment of the right to community, the right to remain, the right to the city. ■





The Politics of Canals, Gulfs and Straits in Maritime Freight Transportation

INTRODUCTION BY ANA NAOMI DE SOUSA ///

"It is not down on any map. True places never are."
(Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 1851)

In May/June 2018, *The Funambulist* published the transcript of a conversation between editor Léopold Lambert and academic Laleh Khalili.

Khalili's account of her ethnographic research into maritime shipping infrastructure is intriguing; the interview is based on two long voyages she spent on container ships travelling from Malta to the Persian Gulf, on which she took copies of *Moby Dick*, *Das Kapital*, and Fernand Braudel's *History of the Mediterranean*. Khalili weaves together the ghosts of Captain Ahab with Marxian economics and Napoleonic history in a way that is neither frivolous nor over-intellectualized ("It is an extremely cliché thing to do, everybody who has taken a container ship has also taken *Moby Dick* on board with them," she says), but serves to build an ethnographic account that functions on several levels.

The interview appears in the Weaponized Infrastructures issue of the magazine, and Khalili's principal focus is the "dual usage" of the logistical infrastructure of maritime shipping for military purpose — i.e. war — undressing the power configurations behind the construction of this traffic "in terms of blood and treasure." Through this lens, Khalili is able to contextualize the ways that "trades make securitization possible," for example in the Gulf of Aden. An account of masses of tankers huddling near Fujairah waiting for oil prices to go back up is both uncanny and revealing; it also highlights the importance of her research in making visible practices that are so significant to contemporary global politics, yet so rarely accounted for.

As a filmmaker and a woman of color, and "tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote" like *Moby Dick*'s antihero (and perhaps also like Khalili herself) — I'm also enticed by the sheer adventurousness of what Khalili has done.

Ana Naomi de Sousa is an independent filmmaker and writer who works on questions around spatial politics, colonial histories, and resistance. She is the director, among others, of *The Architecture of Violence*, *Guerrilla Architect*, and *Angola: Birth of a Movement*, and was the filmmaker behind *Saydhaya*, a collaboration between Amnesty International and Forensic Architecture.

The Politics of Canals, Gulfs and Straits in Maritime Freight Transportation

This conversation, recorded in London on May 18, 2015 with Laleh Khalili for The Funambulist podcast, evolves around her ongoing research about the geopolitics at work in the capitalist and military ship transportation around the Arabian Peninsula. This interview is structured in a geographical manner, reproducing her February 2015 trip on a container ship between Malta and Jabal Ali (Dubai's container port).

A conversation between Laleh Khalili and Léopold Lambert.

LL Before we describe your research trip on a container ship, could you tell us how civilian infrastructure has always been intertwined with the logistics of war?

LK At the beginning of the 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the first military strategists who decided to use logistical material coming from behind the lines, rather than being requisitioned from whatever place to which the military marched. His strategic decision to, in fact, use railways to bring in material, food, medicines, medical and military equipment from behind the lines changed the face of war-fighting. He is often thought of as being an amazing tactician, an amazing strategist, but part of that was also the ways in which he completely transformed the face of operational sites of warfare, which people often don't talk about, but which was crucial to his military successes.

The subsequent Franco-Prussian wars, which went on intermittently and episodically all the way through the 19th century, drew on Napoleon's logistical experiences, on building these railroads that delivered materials to fighting armies across western Europe. Building railways and of course laying down roads were incredibly labor-intensive processes and required buying from communities that lived alongside the roads or railroads, or actually coercion of communities that lived alongside it, requisition of vast amount of lands, of huge amount of labor going into laying down rails. So, the rails that we use today have their origins in many of those tracks that were laid down during the Franco-Prussian war. I think that reading that work by Van Creveld was really interesting to me, because it seems to me that logistical thinking, which is to develop dual-use forms of infrastructures, which can very easily be converted from civilian use into military use, has been crucial to the policy-making of states.

States always have this logistical reason in mind when they build infrastructures, particularly transport infrastructures: roads, railroads, and ports. **Certainly, the U.S. Military has constant planning for what they call "strategic transports assets," and sets out policies and regulations for, for example, requisitioning or contracting civilian airlines for their various wars.** So not only transports of materials and soldiers, but also requisitioning civilian airlines, American Airlines or United Airlines or whatever, for the work of the military. Roads are similarly considered to be dual-use types of infrastructures, and in fact, there is a lot of research being done right now about how the U.S. road-building projects in Afghanistan, which are ostensibly supposed to be humanitarian projects, are in fact very easily convertible into military infrastructures. Looking at this kind of traffic between military and civilian transport infrastructures has been of great interest to me, but I am now focusing mostly on the maritime side of this.

This dual usage element in maritime transport is not always as clearly on view. When one reads about the various U.S. wars in the Gulf area, one reads about how the U.S. made enormous contracts with commercial maritime shipping companies, with U.S. merchant marine but also with foreign shipping companies to transport its material. It becomes very clear that this use of civilian transport as strategic assets is an ongoing project. When you look at the way that the U.S. was moving out its material as it was

slowly drawing down from Afghanistan for example, the way that it works is: material is moved from Afghanistan via planes, to the Emirates, to Jabal Ali port in Dubai, put on ships and shipped home to the U.S. from Jabal Ali. The Jabal Ali port area in Dubai acts as this kind of logistical hub: it is the eighth largest container port in the world and the largest port in the Middle East, but it also acts as this kind of military storage and transport facility for the U.S. military. This is also part of why I became really interested in this project.

LL Now talking about your research trip on this container ship and slowly aiming at something I like to call "the politics of narrowness," which here would be the passages through the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz, three key points in the infrastructure that you're describing, we can first address its personal dimension. Could you tell us how you ended up climbing on a container ship carrying not much more than a copy *Moby Dick* and *Das Kapital*?

LK And Fernand Braudel's *History of the Mediterranean*! I've been blessed with a nice research grant, which gave me lots of time to do research on the project so I do have time to incorporate lots of research methods, including archival work (in business archives as well as national archives of the U.S., the U.K. and any other that I can get into), interviews, data collection, business reports, and various other kinds of approaches. However, I found some difficulties in getting into container ports to do port visits. Some ports are much more welcoming than others. So that was one of



the attractions of actually taking a container ship which dropped you off at these inaccessible ports. Another part of it is also that, for my undergraduate work, I was trained as an engineer and I have always had this unhealthy love of the massive technological kind of structures; a fascination with enormous buildings, bridges, ports, container ships. When I discovered that I could actually take a container ship trip, I took that chance. It was probably the best research experience of my life. I managed to repeat it again the following year and it was also amazing, to get on a container ship in Malta, to go through the Suez Canal, through Bab-el-Mandeb and the Indian ocean, and then through the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. It was absolutely fascinating.

LL You've been writing before, while and after this trip on this online platform: *The Gimming*.

LK Yes, I set up a blog, to allow me to think through the things I was interested in and to keep a record of it.

LL Parts of it are academic research proper, but other parts are more incarnated. For instance, you describe the birthday of one of the crewmembers, doing a karaoke, or other events of the kind. At another moment, you make a Marxian reading of the ship as a factory. Could you tell us more about how the ship is part of the

LK added value production system?

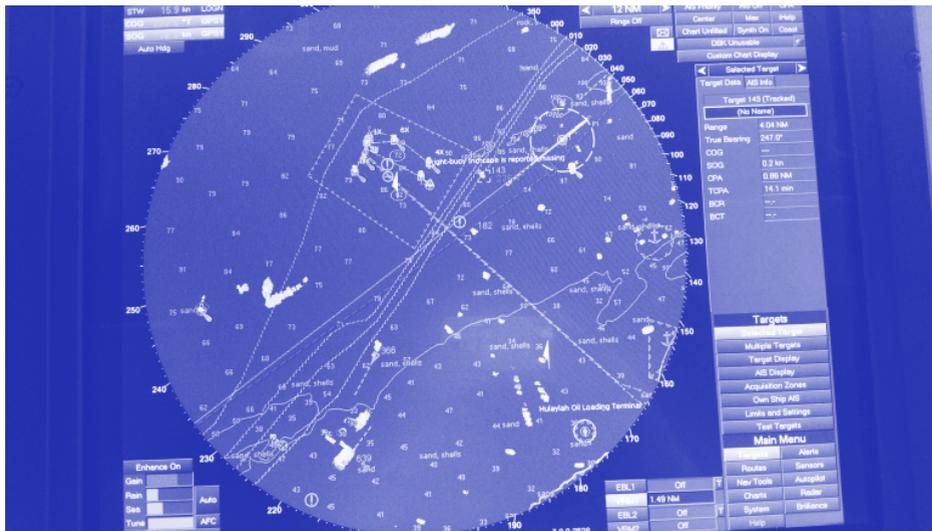
I mean, part of it was doing straight-up ethnography, so being there with the crewmembers, while doing karaoke singing, is ethnographic, but it also says something about the leisure practices onboard this ship. It says something about the way that there are now nationally distinct divisions between officers on this container ship, who tend to be European, and crewmembers who tend to be from the Global South, that permits for example dual-wage systems. As for the question of transport being part of the value added, Marx in both *Grundrisse* and *Capital Volume II*, which I took with me on board, talks about how this kind of transportation actually adds to the value of a good, because it takes it from a place where a good would have cost less, a smaller exchange-value, to another place that has a higher exchange-value and therefore there is a value added. So that is unsurprising. But what was striking to me was the kind of factory style conditions of particular forms of work on the ship: the engine room in particular seems to me to be the one that most closely conforms to a kind of a Marxian platonian ideal-type of proletarian work, physical, requiring skill, a set of workers who were particularly proud of this work. Of course, this is not an original observation at all. Trotsky wrote about this when he wrote about battleship

Potemkin, where he talked about the engineers on ships being the real proletarians. And the great and irreplaceable Allan Sekula wrote about this in his wonderful *Fish Story*, where he has a very long discussion of the ways in which engineers onboard ships are often seen as a kind of a proletarian aristocracy. For example, the European officers who work in the engine room have a set of skills that are perhaps more easily transposable and transportable outside the business. But their work is also much more arduous; they don't get to see the sea because they're bound up inside the belly of the ship. **They have to constantly deal with this environment, which is physically, corporeally, affectively, a very different sort of space than the deck, where you have a view of the sea and a sense of horizon that is very far away, whereas when you're walking in the engine rooms, it is extremely loud, extremely noisy, very hot.** You're essentially like Jonas in the belly of a metal whale. It's an amazing place to be! There is also an exciting younger scholar named Charmaine Chua who has written a series of blog posts about the same sort of experience, around the same time as I was taking my trip. She took a trip from the West coast of the U.S. to Taiwan. She actually worked onboard the ship, she put on a boiler suit, and emptied buckets of oil, cleaned things. Her account of the physical labor she did on the ship is much more exciting than mine, because she had a sense of the tedium and the difficulty of the work, which was totally experienced by her because she did the work, that

LL for me was slightly more abstract or at least, observed kinds of qualities.

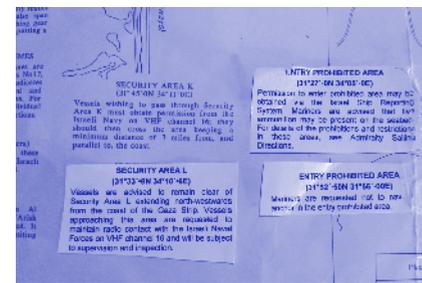
You seem to be fascinated by Melville so I'd like to go back to it and ask you: LK what did he add to your reading of the situation you were in?

I grew up avoiding reading *Moby Dick*. Every time I tried it when I was very young, I just couldn't get through it. I found it very difficult. But three or four years ago, I picked it up again. This time I read it all the way through and I was completely blown away by *Moby Dick*. I thought that it was, it is in my opinion, the greatest novel written in the English language. There is no comparison, nothing else compares to it. It is extraordinary in its richness, its depth in the ways in which it can be read in a literal sense but also in an allegorical sense, in a historical sense, and in an ethnographic sense. It is an amazing book, and it's also very funny! It's one of the funniest novels with all sorts of slapstick humor, a kind of cinematic humor and a subtle and ironic humor. Anyway! I had read this and at the same time, I was developing my interest in the port project. When I decided to go back on the ship, I decided to take the book with me. It is an extremely cliché thing to do, as apparently everybody who has taken a container ship has also taken *Moby Dick* on board with them. But I am really glad I did, because, talking about the ship as a factory, of course *Moby Dick* is the first book in which it very explicitly uses that language. Whale ships were not only ships for catching whales, but also for processing the whale already, in order for them to be able to transport the



the whale — the whale oil, various bits of it, bones etc. — back to whichever home city their port was. There are these wonderful chapters in *Moby Dick*, in which he talks specifically about these massive fires being built, in which the whale fat is rendered in order for it to be liquefied, and then of course solidified into barrels and stored in the ship. C.L.R. James, the great Caribbean Marxist historian, writer, essayist and revolutionary, also actually thought that those *Moby Dick* scenes in which this kind of labor happened were some of the first proletarian literature ever written. I completely agree with him. What makes *Moby Dick* so wonderful is that Melville, having been a sailor, on the one hand conveys something of the romance of being on a ship, but doesn't shy away from showing what incredible back-breaking dangerous labor it is as well. It was great reading it onboard because I was reading about the *Pequod*, crossing the Indian Ocean at the same time I was going through the Indian Ocean, and I found that serendipity quite lovely.

- LL Since you brought up C.L.R. James, I think we can also make a connection in how the ship is not only a facilitator of that system but also very much a necessary active part of it, as we can see in his introductory description of the slave ship at the beginning of *The Black Jacobins*. Without the slave ship, without this piece of design, there just couldn't be any slavery; one cannot kidnap twelve million African bodies and forcefully displace them from Africa to the Americas without the ship. A similar analysis can perhaps be made between the container ship and the global capitalist system. Remembering this, could you begin to describe your journey, first by talking about the Suez Canal, which, I learned through your writing, is incredibly expensive for ships to cross, is that right?
- LK Yes, they have to pay some outrageous fee to cross the Suez Canal; 600,000 or 700,000 euros.
- LL It is a man-made canal and was nationalized in the 1950s by Nasser. Because of its narrowness, when the canal was closed during the wars of 1956 and



1957, you wrote that it took 16 extra days to actually go around the African continent, which doubled the trip. Could you tell us about the tension that is occurring at this very specific point of the earth?

- LK This canal is very interesting. There seems to be at this very moment a rush of canal making. As you know the Egyptian regime is now trying to build a parallel canal to the existing Suez Canal, in order to facilitate two-way travel [this new canal was opened in August 2015, a few months after this conversation]. Because at the moment, the only bit of the canal where two-way travel can happen is the Great Bitter Lake, in the middle of the length of the canal, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. There is also of course a widening and deepening of the Panama Canal on the way, as well as talk of another canal being built in Nicaragua, and another canal being built, that is going to cut some of the length of Malaysia or Indonesia — I can't remember which — but there is a canal that is supposed to cut off four days of travel time through there. This latter canal would actually end up circumventing Singapore, so Singapore is not too happy about it.

What is interesting about the narrowness of these places is that this



narrowness is partially constructed, in a sense that if the ships that were going through Suez were not as big as the ships that I was on, or the ships that followed behind us — there was a very large chemical carrier behind us — then Suez would not be seen as so narrow. At the moment, ships are becoming larger and larger, because of the shipping companies trying to save money through economies of scale. What then becomes an issue, with something like that, is that as the ships get larger, larger and larger, the fixed infrastructures end up becoming unable to deal with this.

It's not just the canal that now has to be dredged in order to facilitate deeper and deeper draughts on the ships, and wider and wider ships, but also ports for example. Certain kinds of super big ports are now unable to handle the width of some very large ships. So, on the one hand, the physical narrowness is there and it is real. **There is no question that Bab-el-Mandeb is so very narrow, but part of it is also that this narrowness is constituted, constructed through a whole series of processes, of war making, commerce making, and regulation making.** I was speaking to somebody who is an expert on the Aden port, and he was telling me that, for a long

time in the 1980s, the water between these little islands off of Aden and the Yemeni coast were mined. And they did not know who had mined them, which country in the world had actually mined these waters! So, the entire shipping route had to be shifted around. In some senses, the shipping route becoming much narrower precisely because some unknown country, which they now think might have been Libya — God knows why! — had mined these parts of Bab-el-Mandeb and narrowed down the shipping lanes. Again, that's a very constructed thing. On the one hand, yes Bab-el-Mandeb is narrow, but on the other hand it's made much narrower by the human hand. There is a kind of a politics that goes into this, which is about economies of scale, geopolitical calculations, and route-making processes, which pushes people through certain routes. It is out of trying to sort out these power configurations that one begins to realize how such infrastructures are constructed, who benefits from them, who pays for them, and what is the human cost in terms of blood and treasure that go into the labor in building these places, and the blood and treasure that is spilled in defending them or trying to conquer them. It ends up making these places so incredibly significant in human politics and geopolitics.

LL To go back to this idea of dimensioning, it's interesting to see that this entire infrastructural system can only function if the dimensions are uniformized, as they were between 1968 and 1970. Through the uniformization of the container itself, the boxes that go inside the container are calibrated, but also the cranes, the ships, the highways, the trucks, etc.

LK Of course, the original standard containers were 20-foot equivalent units (TEU). The vast majority of containers are now 40 TEU, so they have doubled the size of the original containers. And there are now also 45-50 TEU size containers being built. So, on the one hand you have these processes of standardization, but on the other hand there is also the impulse to save through having larger and larger containers. There is going to have to be a breaking point on this. As I mentioned, one of the striking things is that, as the ship draught becomes deeper and deeper, this becomes a problem of dredging for ship channels, or ports, or harbors. In some of these places dredging is cheaper or more efficient than in other places. It shows that what we think of as "nature" is being constantly remade, constantly redone, so it is really not natural at all.

LL That's what really differentiates the two next geographical sites, the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz: they are not artificial and their narrowness is geologically incidental. In this regard, it is very interesting to see how the laws of the sea were changed internationally, to go from three nautical miles of national water for each country from the coast, to 12 — this is not recognized by the U.S. itself because it would compromise their right to bring their ships to closer coasts than other countries. A particular aspect of your research was about the militarization of the zone of Aden. That's also something that we can put in parallel with Deborah Cowen's work and these invisible routes for ships that they're all using, which are considered as more or less safe, with dozens of military warships from so many countries, which I think most people including myself don't really realize.



LK The Strait of Hormuz bristled with warships, but almost all of these warships belonged to the littoral countries. But in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the warships were truly international: China, Djibouti, the European countries, the Dutch, the Italians... The aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* was in that area at the time, in January 2015. This particular section of the route, from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea through Suez, seemed to be the most militarized segment of my trip, even though we often hear about the Strait of Hormuz being a kind of a security zone. This Indian Ocean area was just astonishing; the number of warships that went through there. That was partially interesting because it was before the Saudi war on Yemen, and it is long after Somali pirates had been construed as a problem for that area. The number of piracy attempts has gone down from something like 400 a year to 40 a year. So that was not an issue at all.

And yet these ships were there and this is where Deborah Cowen's argument becomes true, which says that the securitization of this route is constitutive of this whole process of trade, it's significant to it. **It makes trades possible, but trades also make securitization possible. There is a co-constitutive relationship between war and trade there.**

This also happens of course through a whole set of other processes which completely normalize this. For example, and it appears in the Admiralty Charts, there are now zones within the Gulf of Aden in particular where the international maritime bodies recommend ships to convoy together in order to prevent the possibility of pirate attacks. This zone goes right in the middle of the sea and that convoying actually allows better surveillance by warships, because of course the warships also travel in this particular channel. Our ship didn't travel



in this particular route. We actually stayed very close to the Yemeni coast all the way up in the Indian ocean. It was a very interesting experience because of course in the area we were going through, which was away from the channel where all the big ships would go through, there were no other ships! We had gone from the Red Sea where at any given moment, the RIS system — an electronic ship tracking system — was showing something like 200 ships, to go down alongside the Yemeni shoreline where, at some moment, the area showed maybe two ships. At one point there were no ships on the RIS screen. So, there is this interesting way in which the sea is populated in this variable way which corresponds very closely to the geopolitics of the space. Again, you don't learn about these things unless you're on the ship, which is part of the reason why this ship trip was such an exciting experience, because I was learning things I would have never imagined before.

LL In this context of the density of ships taking place, and before arriving to Hormuz, there is this particular port of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, which is useful for the entire region as it is a big port, but also a place where many connections to submarines Internet cables reach land on that spot. Do you happen to know the geopolitics mobilized by that space?

LK I don't know that much about these geopolitics of submarine cables there, but I suppose the location is very useful because it is on the Gulf of Oman, rather than on the Persian Gulf side, so it avoids having to go through the Strait of Hormuz. Fujairah is the site of most of the oil and chemicals coming from Abu Dhabi. I think it is the main

oil and chemical terminal for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It is also, on the land-side, as you mentioned, a very sparsely populated area. In terms of questions of security, I'm sure it's a much easier place to monitor, surveil, and maintain a security umbrella over. What was really striking about that was that, on the RIS screen, when we were approaching Fujairah, the entire sea was like one huge mass of tankers either waiting at anchor, or staying on there. Apparently, tankers, if the price of oil is volatile and quite low, remain anchored until the price of oil goes up and then they heave anchor and travel wherever they can sell the oil at better prices. So, there were hundreds of ships that were anchored near Fujairah. I suspect that part of it was ships waiting to come in and because of port congestions, part of it was ships simply remaining on anchor until the price of oil became either more stable or went higher.

LL A little bit north of Fujairah, we find the Strait of Hormuz, between Iran in the North and, surprisingly enough for those of us who are not familiar with the region, the southern coast is in Oman, not in the U.A.E. As we said earlier, the territory of maritime sovereignty is of 12 nautical miles, which obviously creates a 24 miles width of sovereign maritime national waters for Oman and Iran, while the strait is only 21 miles, so you're obliged to go through either one or the other sovereignty, and I'm guessing that it might be more towards Oman than Iran in general?

LK Probably so, but also, what is interesting about that region is that maritime territorial sovereignties are divisible, they are overlapping, as Toby Craig Jones argues. They are constantly fragmented, defragmented and reset

by new configurations of power into which the U.S. always has a hand. Now, one of the interesting things about the Strait of Hormuz is that Iran and Oman have had a more or less friendly relationship for several decades. So, this question of overlapping sovereignty has not mattered, unless of course the U.S. or other U.S. allies have tried to destabilize it.

But there are also geological reasons for one to be closer to the Omani coast: the Persian Gulf is a remarkably shallow sea in relative terms. As ships get bigger, it becomes more and more difficult to navigate them in certain parts of the sea. **The channels that leads to Jabal Ali need to be dredged often, both in order to accommodate the draught of the ships and also to attenuate the effects of shifting sands on the floor of the sea.** The ships that I was on kept at the center of the channel, mostly because they were very big ships with very deep draughts. I'm not entirely sure how they negotiated, which territory waters they were going in, I don't think I asked any questions about that, but certainly for the entire length of the trip, once we were in the Persian Gulf, you could hear on the ship radio the Iranian navy demanding recognition, names and information of the ships we were passing. You could also hear Abu Dhabi authorities, you could hear Dubai Jabal Ali port control, you could hear lots of different kinds of people demanding information about the ship. There are multiple and overlapping maritime authorities that feel they have something of a role to play in controlling who

passes where, and in what direction and to what end.

LL Something that I find very illustrative of how this entire transportation of goods is perceived as part of the national sovereignty of each nation, is the particular example of Japan. Japan still constitutionally has an army that can only be an army of defense, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, probably one of the most war-minded Prime Ministers since the last World War, has been stating that if Iran were to shut down the Strait of Hormuz, the Japanese Navy would be involved in the demining process, which would also be perceived as a strong military action. Given that Japan is several thousand kilometers away, it is interesting to observe how this little strait of 21 nautical miles wide would constitute such a crucial point for as far as Japan would be.

LK I suppose part of this is because oil trade is 12% of world trade, that partially explains why everybody feels like they have a stake in the Persian Gulf. Part of it is also the imaginary construction of what the Persian Gulf is, this kind of narrowness, which is construed in an imaginary rather than in an actual sort of way. There are lots of narrower places, many much more difficult to navigate than the Strait of Hormuz, but of course this has become now a kind of geopolitical and imaginary map, which is supposed to be a particularly dangerous spot. Part of this Japanese sort of sovereignty over ships, coming out the Strait of Hormuz several thousand miles away from its own borders or from its own maritime waters is



perhaps more of a performance of both Japanese warrior masculinity, if you will, in a larger international system. Part of it is an assertion of alliances with the U.S., and part of it is a way of wanting to “reassure market.” There is an entire language of reassurance of security, of safety, of insuring all of that, that happens around oil, which is astonishing; I don’t think a huge amount of work has been done on the kind of discourse that is deployed in order to justify all sorts of military actions. While that language goes on there, what is again striking to me is that the discourse around the Strait of Hormuz is often far more belligerent than the actual practical presence of warship in the Gulf of Aden.

There are so many ships in the Gulf of Aden, and not nearly as many warships in the Strait of Hormuz or at least not so many that were visible. While there is a lot of talk about the Strait of Hormuz, there is a lot more practical securitization in the Indian ocean, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. This kind of a fragmentation of sovereignty, and the assertion of sovereignty

over spaces that are thousands of miles away, of course this is one characteristic of imperial types of sovereignty. But this is also something that the U.S. did when, during the tanker wars of 1980s, it flagged certain ships as its own and then claimed that any attacks against U.S. flagged ships would be considered an attack on U.S. sovereign territories. It’s an interesting way of redefining flagging. I mean flagging has always, ever since its establishment as part of international maritime regulatory practices, had an element of territorial sovereignty to it. But the way flagging becomes a part of a belligerent landscape of U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf in the 1980s, it provides a significant model for Shinzo Abe.

LL I know that makes us drift further away from your actual trip that ended in Dubai, but something that we don’t necessarily always have in mind when we don’t know the region so much is that Iraq has around 20 to 30 kilometers of coastline on the Persian Gulf. Deborah Cowen’s book *The Daily Life*

of *Logistics* show us how a particular city of this coast that used to be a U.S. military base and also operated as a prison in the so-called “war on terror” by the U.S., has now been privatized and functions as a container city for what you call trans-shipments, but a sort of securitized private logistics.

LK Deborah Cowen has written about this very beautifully. Camp Bucca was one of the three major detention centers in Iraq; it was incidentally also where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the caliph of ISIS, was detained. When the U.S. was withdrawing its main military divisions out of Iraq (and leaving behind advisors and contractors), it advised the Iraqis to transform Camp Bucca into Basrah Logistics City. And this area is sitting as you say, on the very tiny bit of coastline that Iraq has on the Persian Gulf. It’s privatized, there are contractors, and many of the people who have businesses in there have ties to the regime in Baghdad. **So, you’ve gone from a detention center in a counter-insurgency hub to a logistics hub. Again, this traffic between civilian and military functions is fascinating and pernicious.** An afterthought to add to this is that the Kuwaitis are planning on building a very large container port on the island of Bubiyan, which sits right across from Umm Qasr. Should this port actually ever be built, it will definitely affect the ability of the ships to go to Umm Qasr and it will probably take business away from it. So old political rivalries are also playing out in Bubiyan, which itself was a major point of contention between Iraq and Kuwait; and one



"Sunny Island Set in the Sea": Singapore's Land Reclamation as a Colonial Project

INTRODUCTION BY LADIPO FAMODU ///

In order to accommodate Singapore's increasing population, the government has decided to terraform coastal regions of the island by dumping millions of tons of sand into the water. This article examines the political implications of this act, likening it to a new form of colonization, since the sand is mined from nearby regions which have since experienced devastating environmental consequences. I find this article most useful in its ability to depict the value that sand has in its many applications, and to expose the contradiction of using a material to combat climate change, when the extraction of that material is actually accelerating the process. I also appreciate the brief critique of the co-optation of the word "reclamation" in describing this mass movement of material. Avoiding climate catastrophe will require a paradigm shift in how sustainability is discussed and acted upon. I predict that this co-optation of language will become more common, to disguise attempts at maintaining the status quo as radical solutions. Therefore it is important to understand the ideologies behind words being used. This critical understanding can be gained by keeping up with publications like *The Funambulist*, and by embracing interdisciplinary collaborations. My developing practice aims to address the present and future threats to social equality and environmental sustainability by weaponizing art, design, and technology in a creative, subversive manner. My charge to young architects and designers is to take on these wicked problems by leveraging their abilities in storytelling, data analysis, trend forecasting, and most importantly, their imagination!

Ladipo Famodu is a researcher, artist, and futurist. He believes in the power of creativity and is an advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration. He is based in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago — once known as the Black Metropolis.

"Sunny Island Set in the Sea": Singapore's Land Reclamation as a Colonial Project

The ground on which I am standing did not exist 15 years ago. On the 47th floor of a glass building near the central business district, I am standing in a skyscraper whose foundation was once ocean. Below me is artificial ground solid enough to hold the weight of an endless profusion of high-rise buildings. Beyond the glass windows, I am gazing towards the coast at a large, oblong piece of land that protrudes three kilometers into the ocean. This, the friend whose offices I am visiting tells me, is Phase 3 in the massive \$3.5 billion Pasir Panjang port development project. In the distance, dredging ships are pulling sand from the seabed. Barges are dumping continuous loads of

sand into the water. Vast tracts of pulverized, dredged, and piled silt sit in heaps on a perfectly rectangular coastline. Land, in other words, is being created before our eyes. "Because the port thrives, so Singapore thrives," Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong would declare at the unveiling of the terminal three months later (June 23, 2015). He was then articulating a common refrain in the national imaginary: if the economic and social future of this tiny nation-state hinges on the continuous expansion of its markets, so too, does it require the expansion of the spaces in which they operate.

Until recently, territory has been largely regarded as the unassailable material limit of sovereignty. To rule, in the modern conception, is to have authority over a bounded space; to exercise control over a people within the seemingly permanent features of landed territory. Of course, rulers have long sought to expand the zones of operation through which they could exercise their power, shifting the borders and boundaries of rule through acts of bloody conquest and dispossession. But what if today, rather than taking over already-existing territory, one could literally *create* it? What if land, rather than being an immovable geological fact, were actually a mobile commodity — conjured through an accretion of the most granular of forms: sand?

As a desperately land-scarce nation, the island state of Singapore has, for much of its young history, been engaged in what is known as land reclamation projects, in order to increase the living and working space of the island. In the fifty years since its independence, its population has more than doubled, requiring the continuous construction of both private condominiums and the high-rise public housing that serves 80% of the population. Vertical growth, however, has not been enough to sustain a burgeoning populace; so too has the state sought horizontal expansion since its independence. Singapore's land

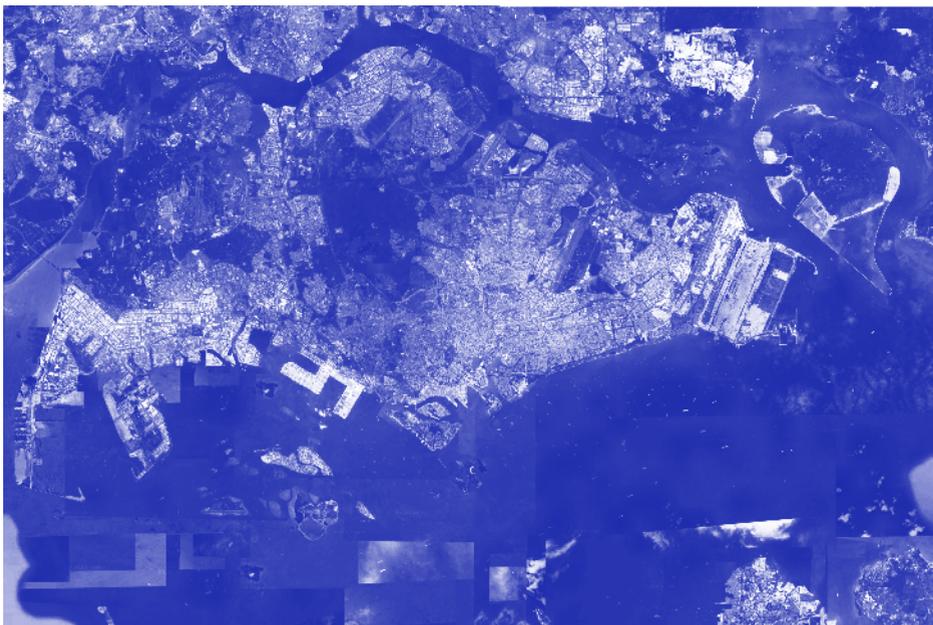


area has grown from 581.5 square kilometers in the 1960s to 723.2 square kilometers today, an increase in territory of almost 24%. By 2033, the government plans to increase its land area by another 100 square kilometers, making the island a full 30% larger than its original size. Most of Singapore's reclaimed land occupies patches of sea that were once part of the Singapore Strait separating the island from Indonesia, demanding a shift of maritime boundaries every time new territory is claimed.

To achieve these monumental acts of creation, colossal amounts of sand are required. Sand may seem a fairly innocuous particulate in its granular form, but this granularity is precisely what makes sand a valuable medium. Both liquid and solid, sand possesses a softness and scalability that allows its easy transportation across great distances, whether moved by truckload, bargeload, or spadeful. To note its malleability

is to make more than a literal statement about its physical composition: sand is used in multiple applications from the rudimentary to digital, in the fine river sand used in concrete for its soaring skyline; bound with bitumen in the roads that line the feverish grid of city blocks; and as the base material from which silicon and rare earth elements — key components in smartphones — are mined. In each of these applications, sand, itself a form of territory, skews and transforms notions of territorial space, conquering vertical space with concrete or aiding the annihilation of distance by technology. **Yet none of these applications reconfigure territoriality more than when sand is terraformed in enough quantity, turning it into the most foundational infrastructural form: land.**

Acquiring enough sand to create these new landmasses is a colossal task. To supply itself with reclamation material, Singapore



first leveled most of its hills in the 1960s, transforming an undulating island into a largely flat surface. Then, it dredged its coastal seabed. But local resources were barely sufficient to support the massive need, and so Singapore began importing sand from neighboring countries starting in the 1970s. In the last 20 years, Singapore has imported a reported 517 million tons of sand, making it by far the largest importer of sand worldwide (UNEP, 2014). To give this mammoth figure some context, terraforming 0.6 miles of new ground requires 37.5 million cubic meters of sand fill. This is the equivalent to 1.4 million dump trucks' worth of sand — a line of trucks so long that it would snake from New York City to Los Angeles, and back again. Until 2007, the largest sources of sand imports were Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, but as the environmental impacts of sand mining increased, these countries began reporting the depletion of marine life, landslides and river erosion, and the erasure of at least 24 Indonesian islands since 2005, prompting these countries to restrict or ban exports

of sand to Singapore (*Asia Times*, 2003). **Today, most of Singapore's sand fill needs are supplied by Myanmar and Cambodia, which have in turn begun to report the devastating effects of the sand trade on local populations.** Accompanying Singapore's increased demand for sand has been a huge boom in illegal sand mining. In 2012, a total of 120 million tons of sand were reported missing, a variance in import-export figures that suggest illegal mining and black-market smuggling play an integral part in the expansion of a city-state which often prides itself on a record clean of corruption (*Global Witness*, 2010).

Accounts of sand smuggling have accordingly become preoccupied with two aspects of the sand trade. First, noting the massive amounts of sand which change hands through illegal means, journalists such as Chris Milton expose its seedy underbelly, with the implicit hope that an awareness of the sand trade's illicit economies can bolster efforts at better regulation, placing limits on states' capacity to destroy crucial environmental resources (*Foreign Policy*, 2010).

Aerial view of Singapore (bottom of the frame shows Indonesia while the top shows Malaysia). / Google Earth (2018).

Second, scholars have noted that such large-scale movements of sand throw into question the legality of practices of terraforming under international law, as they exacerbate geopolitical conflict in encroaching on the territorial jurisdiction of neighboring countries. These geopolitical tensions are no more evident than in China's terraforming excursions into the South China Sea, a form of "reclamation" that has provoked heated territorial water disputes between multiple nations, provoking threats of retaliation and even war. Both these approaches attempt to rein in the expansionist tendencies of state terraforming by appeals to accountability under international law. In doing so, they misrecognize the issue as a jurisprudential one, rather than one in which geopolitical imperatives shape and reconfigure the law itself.

Take, for example, Singapore's neighbor across the Johor Strait. For decades, since sand mining began, Malaysia has bristled at the slow creep of Singapore's soil into their coastal waters, demanding at each instance a reapportioning of the lucrative territorial waters and sea trade lanes that lie between the two states. Yet, these demands have relatively little legal backing. Unlike the Spratly Islands dispute, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Singapore can legally "reclaim" sovereignty around existing islands, reefs, and archipelagos. What the ostensible legitimacy of land reclamation practices suggests is that we are experiencing a form of volatile sovereignty quite different from pre-existing modes.

With land reclamation, states are geophysically engineering the globe at a scale which shifts the very ground on which sovereignty is thinkable. The geophysical follows the geopolitical, rather than the other way

around. Joshua Comaroff notes, for instance, that because the "physical basis of the state can be incrementally eroded or expanded," land reclamation inaugurates a "flow of territory" quite distinct from other forms of territorial expansion such as war, military occupation, or colonial expansion (*Harvard Design Magazine*, 2015). What the unchecked phenomenon of land reclamation highlights is no less than a shifting *lebensraum*: a legal expansion of the territorial space through which a sovereign may govern through the slow violence of terraforming; not simply appropriating land, but conjuring it from the water.

The viscosity of coastal borders augments a key insight. Far from a finite and unchanging resource, territory in its modern conception is, as Stuart Elden argues, a particular *technology* of sovereignty rather than an objective fact: a "distinctive mode of social/spatial organization" that is "historically and geographically limited and dependent, rather than a biological drive or social need." (*The Birth of Territory*, 2013). **To think of land reclamation as a distinctly new form of appropriation would miss the fact, therefore, that territory has always been a political mode and logic of spatial organization.** Territories have never been the fixed, immobile delineation of the physical extent of a state's bounded jurisdiction. In the rearrangement of borders and states, ostensibly "new" territory has always *come from somewhere else*. This is as true of terraformed land as it is of its older precedents of colonialism and military conquest. All assert the right of acquisition, conquest or settlement through proprietary claims to the means of production provided by the earth itself. Often left unexamined in an emerging scholarly interest in large-scale



geo-engineering projects is the question of what is removed or lost in these acts of sovereign making. It is easy to forget in the spectacular emergence of “new” landmasses, that these very acts of movement and creation also require their barely traceable other: concomitant acts of extraction, erasure, and dispossession.

To pause over the term “reclamation” for a while, one might recognize that dubbing an act of terraforming as “reclamation” designates a misnomer. In its deverbative form, reclamation suggests an act of restoration or return in which one is retrieving something that was once one’s own. This works as a fiction on two registers. First, it presupposes that the coastal sea itself acts somewhat as an *aqua nullius*, “empty” space that has no history or value, except to be turned into the property of the state, with the corollary that reclamation is coextensive with an active dispossession from elsewhere. This naturalizes a thoroughly human process of dispossession as a form of natural right. Second, to name the process as a form of “re-claiming” centers the spatial locus of activity on the site in which land is being

created, rather than from where it is being taken away. **In the logic of reclamation, a state deserves to procure or cultivate a site for habitation or commerce; few questions are asked about the sites from which material has been extracted, and which are therefore made increasingly uninhabitable.**

Some historical context, then. In 1819, as Sir Stamford Raffles, the colonizer of Singapore, wrote excitedly about his “discovery” of Singapore’s potential as an *entrepôt* hub for the East India Company, he wrote to the secretary depicting Singapore as a “fulcrum upon which empire shall thrive.” This narrative — that an island’s primary function is to serve a transitory role as a nodal point in global trade and shipping — has long been the imagined *raison d’être* of Singapore’s existence. From education foci that shift each time the ruling party determines the next big industry in which it can gain competitive advantage, to its tourist marketing strategies that proclaim Singapore as the “Gateway to Asia,” the logic of the nation always-in-transition, grateful for its colonial past, runs deep into

(1) Barge of sand in the bay of Singapore. / Photograph by Ria Tan (August 2009).

(2) Land reclamation in Johor Bahru, between Malaysia and Singapore (December 2017).

(3) Expansion of Changi Water Reclamation Plant (June 2017).

(4) Float at Marina Bay stadium and stage (December 2017).

its national identity. Today, a gleaming white statue of Raffles stands at the landing site where he first set foot on the island. With one leg planted in front of the other, arms folded across a tailcoat tuxedo, Raffles gazes into the distance at the river’s mouth. The plaque below his feet reads: “On this historical site, Sir Stamford Raffles first landed in Singapore on January 28, 1819, and with genius and perception, changed the destiny of Singapore from an obscure fishing village to a great seaport and modern metropolis.”

The geophysical term “backwater” often accompanies this description of Singapore’s origins as a fishing village. The narrative is always the same: Singapore’s place in the world would have been inconsequential had it remained an undeveloped “backwater.” The teleological movement from obscurity to prominence hinges not only on the colonial founding, but also on a geophysical transformation. The geological dimensions of the “backwater” metaphor are thus not a coincidence. Prior to colonization, Singapore’s shores were primarily marshland and swamp, which provided fertile ground for the Indigenous *orang laut* to fish for mudskippers. The transformation of this “backwater” fishing village not only removed their livelihoods, but also altered the structure of the earth itself: leaching the water from mud, pulverizing Indigenous ways of life, dredging particulates and removing wildlife from the marshes in order to lay the foundations for a port. Colonial theft through terraforming is thus at the very center of Singapore’s story of nationhood and, by extension, at the center of the global trade it facilitates.

But what is perhaps new about the modern terraforming project is that, in transporting sand from neighboring countries, it quite literally *removes territory* from

them. Rather than doing this through occupation or settlement, however, this theft of land is practically untraceable; islands that one might once have been able to map with coordinates now disappear — or rather, disintegrate — into the fragmentary, fungible particles — sand from a disappearing island in Indonesia practically indistinguishable from sand from a seabed off the coast of the Philippines. In this sense, the national imaginary in which Singapore sustains an articulation of itself as an ever-expanding, modern, thriving center of trade and digital life literally requires a theft of territory, and a theft of land — war by other means — war by means of terraforming.

Perhaps most perversely, sand is being leached from the very countries from which Singapore extracts most of its hyper-exploited foreign labor. It is Cambodians, Burmese, Bangladeshis, and Indonesians upon whose construction work the state relies to build the terraformed habitats in which Singaporeans live. These are the very people whose communities live on or around disappearing islands and depleting marine life: in some Indonesian islands such as Riau, fishing communities have reported that incomes have plummeted as much as 89% since the sand trade began (Indonesian Forum for Environment, 2003). Experts have likewise reported extensive damage to coral reefs, exacerbated coastline erosion, and the destruction of ocean environments that will take decades to be restored.

There is a morbid irony in noting these environmental impacts of extraction: the very anthropogenic changes caused by such forms of extraction have become part of Singapore’s justification for land reclamation. Officials have cited sea level change as a primary motivation for raising the level



of reclaimed seabeds, portraying Singapore as an entropic victim of climate change, even as the sandy bulwarks that ostensibly protect the island from such processes play a key role in exacerbating their effects. Not least, the labor hired to do the work of such infrastructural development are often precisely those driven from their own communities by such predatory practices of extraction — hired on short-term, contingent, and extremely low-waged contracts to perform highly dangerous work. In this, the workers charged with increasing the value of Singapore's sovereign and commercial space — by building the highways, condominiums, and business hubs that make Singapore an attractive site for foreign investment — facilitate their own dispensability by constructing the very infrastructure that contributes to the decimation of their lands and the dispossession of their ways of life. There is a more direct connection between the exploitation of foreign labor and the terraforming of land than I have indexed here. From Hong Kong's port

to Dubai's palm-shaped archipelagoes; from Macau's casino-jammed Cotai strip to Singapore's landmark Gardens by the Bay, reclaimed land constitutes such a lucrative site of state investment not only because of its ability to expand *lebensraum*, but also because of its commercial value. **Terraformed land pays hubristic testament to the ability of human hands to remake their environments, turning artificially-shaped land into spectacles of economic growth.**

Every towering hotel or palm-shaped bay thus obscures the unevenness with which reclaimed land becomes a fictive commodity: land becomes financialized as real estate at the same time that the labor that builds it is treated as a dispensable, exploitable commodity, easily replaced by the next reserve army made precarious through such acts of dispossession. The contradictions that follow abound. Foreign workers seldom help to build, except perhaps to maintain their infrastructure. They are indispensable

to Singapore's workforce, but only precisely as surplus populations who can rarely hope to gain citizenship or long-term employment. Meanwhile, the price of terraformed real estate grows as states display them as markers of sovereign wealth. In this way, the exploitation of labor, the spectacle of sovereignty, and the financialization of real estate go hand in hand.

It is in the disposability of these workers' bodies that I hear echoes of the coolies who worked the ports of Singapore during the colonial era. There is a national song that begins with the words: "We built this nation, with our hands; the toil of people, from a dozen lands." Those lyrics resurface often when I think about the foreign workers who effectively serve as Singapore's fungible coolie labor today. I wonder, had they heard the song blasting through speakers during last year's unveiling of the port from their squalid housing quarters in the corners of Singapore, whether they would recognize themselves in those words — "We built this nation with our hands" — and the quite literal, geophysical dimensions in which acts of violent dispossession are concealed under anodyne celebrations of nation-building. ■

Translated from French
by Liduam Pong



State of Exception Neighborhoods in the French *Banlieues*

INTRODUCTION BY GAL KIRN & NILOUFAR TAJERI ///
 Hacène Belmessous' article contributes a critical and investigative light on policing, weaponization and spatial control of the *banlieues* in Paris. The text is of major use for understanding how residential spaces are turned to enemy territory and how fear is injected into bodies by means of police control and urban renewal. Plans to bring more "security" result in increasing insecurity for local residents, leaving us to wonder: "security" for whom? The personal experience of police control and contempt does something to your body and mind, to the body and mind of whole communities, every day, and is only visible to residents. Belmessous manages to capture the depth of structural weaponization and securitization of the *banlieues*, because he did a study *with* the residents, not a study *about* them. As a researcher, he makes them heard and seen, which is in radical opposition to the pervasive logic of urban renewal giving priority to the demands of the police, and thereby establishing what Belmessous calls a state of "police democracy." For us, this text became a major entrypoint into our research on (sub)urban riots that works on the intersection of memorial practice, urban theory/architecture and political analysis. The text has the rare strength that points out how critical researchers can tackle both a critical investigation and a long-term engagement with communities, in the critical spirit and attitude that we strive to imitate in our own praxis on riots.

Gal Kirn is currently an open topic fellow at TU Dresden, where he is finishing his book *Partisan Ruptures and Contradictions of Market Socialism in Yugoslavia*. He is a co-editor of the books *Beyond Neoliberalism, Encountering Althusser* and *Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema and its Transgressive Moments*.

Niloufar Tajeri teaches at the chair for History and Theory of Architecture and the City (gtas) at the Technical University of Braunschweig and she is working on her PhD at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. Her research focuses on large-scale housing estates, the housing question, and urban riots/revolts. She is co-editor of *Small Interventions. New Ways of Living in Post-War Modernism* and *Nights of the Dispossessed. Riots Unbound*.

State of Exception Neighborhoods in the French *Banlieues*

Since December 2014, I have been conducting a public investigation on the social resilience of young adults in Vaulx-en-Velin. Located in the east side of Lyon, this municipality of more than 45,000 inhabitants endured several nights of violent revolt in October of 1990 following the death of a young man in the heart of a ZUP (Urban Development Priority Area); a police vehicle had rammed into his scooter. This study follows, through extensive interviews, the trajectories of individuals immersed in a constrained social environment who are experiencing discrimination in employment, housing, leisure activities, etc. Naturally, it is much too soon to draw conclusions, since this investigation is not yet finished. That being said, my early observations have uncovered an implacable inequality that discredits all Republican rhetoric — equality, as we should not have to point out, is one of the three principles on which the French Republic was founded — and revealed individuals

who remain resentful and disenchanted by politics. Worse still, the collective desire for equality, which has been undermined to the point that many of the people I encountered have settled for demanding just fairness, declines with every new social revolt.

This investigation comes 10 years after the suburban riots of 2005, repeatedly referred to as “our May of 68” during an investigation I conducted in 2010 and 2011 in two communities in the region of Île-de-France (Vitry-sur-Seine and Grigny). It reveals that the social separatism that continues to marginalize these groups is no longer brought into question. This is in part due to the retreat of the welfare state from these neighborhoods, since city policies that were championed at the end of the 1970s are now gone, replaced since 2003 by urban renewal projects implemented with “forceps.” Another reason is the trivialization of factors that erode the social space: discrimination, segregation, and racism.

It is no longer in question that the State, by orchestrating the segregation of these neighborhoods and in turn enhancing its control over the organization of our society (barbarians in their city and modern citizens in The City), is mainly at fault for the abysmal conditions of these housing projects. Equally troubling is the sort of police democracy that has been established in these areas. In fact, since the riots of 2005, a new role has been vested on the police: to be an agent of social cohesion in these neighborhoods. This new role of the police was supposed to be the last public service to be offered in a violent social area, assigned to law enforcement by a political power at war with these territories. Since 2005, their actions have been restructured in this regard, becoming part of a system of repression that does not shy away from extreme measures.

Consider the following grievances, time and time again gathered in the course of our investigative work: **expedited identity**

checks, constant use of disrespectful pronouns when addressing young adults, police checkpoints surrounding the neighborhoods that, at times, crowd all of their access routes, the frequent refusal (according to what I've been told) by the police to record formal complaints brought to the police station by citizens, etc. Apart from these transgressive practices, the most striking conclusion we've drawn is that we are dealing with a police force that has become more and more spectacular in its methods. Operating in small groups, outfitted in a manner worthy of military units, often supported by a helicopter hovering over the city, equipped with technology capable of providing the chain of command with instant images of the scene taken at night and from the vantage point of temporary structures, these men occupy, or rather pacify, the territory. **Since 2005, the mission of the police has merged into this new apparatus of urban counter-guerilla, based on the belief that the situation on the ground calls for it, behaving as if they were in enemy territory.** Moreover, when inquiring about the work of law enforcement in these neighborhoods, time and time again one encounters complaints that denounce an abusive assignment of these areas to police power. By fostering a state of exception in these neighborhoods, the police are not only obstructing the daily lives of their inhabitants, but also discouraging their very existence.

For instance, at La Grande Borne, a neighborhood in Grigny (32 kilometers south of Paris's center), the massive presence of CRS squads (riot police) gives the population the impression that they live outside of the national community, and furthermore, that they constitute a menace to



the national community. It is not surprising, then, that the most basic displays of civility that facilitate city life and the recognition of *the other* (people saying hello, respecting each other, being able to speak to one another affably) are inexistent between the police and the citizens of these areas. The vast majority of the people I interviewed confessed to having no contact of this type with a member of the police. They explain that the current atmosphere of tension and submission to police arbitrariness makes such civil interactions impossible. It is essential to point out that, for the inhabitants of these neighborhoods, the police are often the only available representative of the State. In the case of La Grande Borne, for instance, with the exception of a small post office, there is no other government agency with offices in the area, not EDF (Electric Company of France), GDF (Gas Company of France), France Telecom, the Public Treasury, the National Police, etc. L'Opievoy, a public developer that used to own more than 3,000 dwelling units in La Grande Borne, recently moved its offices to a neighboring community. As a result, this vast community of more than 13,000 inhabitants, the equivalent of a small city, is only serviced by humanitarian associations, most of them run by volunteers, and by the most basic public services, such as kindergartens, primary schools, daycares, etc. From this perspective, the

absence of state services and the omnipresence of the police suggest that these areas, designed in a way like a separate society, are nothing but a primal vice of the French territory, a collection of separate communities. They are strangers to collective life and stand outside of the destiny of the nation.

Police domination of these neighborhoods is further present in a social field that is *a priori* outside of its jurisdiction: urban renewal. Prevention and security services have been in effect since 2003, in concert with the developers and architects who are in charge of these operations. The promoters of urban renewal have imported the Anglo-Saxon concept of crime prevention into France, which states, in a few words, that the reconfiguration of a public space must above all be aimed at the protection of people and property. In doing so, they have transformed the very essence of city policy with the adoption of the police interpretation of “the problem of the *banlieues*.” From this point forward, the outlook of these neighborhoods is their integration into an absolute urban scheme, one without gaps or blind spots. As part of this new decor, the police emerge as the mechanism to make individuals, projects and ideas coexist. So, they request that a row of low-rise buildings be demolished in order to open up space to operate more effectively? No problem, it will be done. They ask for new entry and exit points from a neighborhood so that it can be better contained? No problem, it will be done. They finally demand that surveillance cameras be installed in the buildings, in spaces that are considered private, such as lobbies, corridors, elevators and landings? No problem, it will be done.

To achieve their objectives, the police have made themselves heard by all parties involved: architects, local housing authorities, and local elected officials. They have claimed so many times that they are the ones to do the “dirty work,” that

they have managed to achieve total control of urban renewal operations, even if their vision of a space that is first of all “defendable,” and only then suitable for living, completely alters the social life of a neighborhood. I think of this when considering what’s currently at play in La Grande Borne. Built by the architect Emile Aillaud in the 1960s, this housing scheme is atypical because it relies on a spatial organization that is enclosed in itself. The architect wanted La Grande Borne to escape from a chaotic urban life that subjugated people’s behavior by offering them a living environment that differentiated between the outside world and the world of the city. To this end, cars were not allowed to circulate inside the neighborhood; drivers had to park them in lots in the surrounding area. At the heart of the city, Aillaud had laid a central Prairie, a landscaped space that suggested a low-rise zone (there are no towers in the vicinity), a place conceived for men, women and children, pedestrian inhabitants of a neighborhood planned like a village. It is this same pedestrian space that the police now want to modify. They demand that a road cross it. The justification given to the local population is that the fire department needs to be able to act quickly if they’re called. **However, nobody is fooled: the modification of the central Prairie was ordered to facilitate police interventions.**

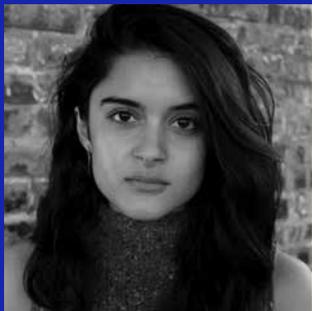
Restrained populations and hindered mobility produce images of a disciplined neighborhood. If security is to be from now on at the heart of urban renewal projects in these territories, there is a factor that remains a sideline in these post-riot projects: the constant link made between the “renewal” of a neighborhood and its public image. Changing the image of these neighborhoods is not a new idea. Already in the 1980s, the parties responsible for developing the project expressed that the architectural transformation of a building would be



insufficient in these areas unless it was accompanied by a communication campaign aimed at improving their public image. Some of them went as far as requesting the use of advertising campaigns. More recently, following a similar logic, public housing authorities have modified their names, removing the acronym HLM (low-income housing) from their identity because they perceived it as synonymous with lower class tenants, mostly immigrants and the poor. The social revolt of 2005 accelerated this process. The campaign to deconstruct the public image of suburban cities is at the heart of a “reconfiguration” effort that has already led to numerous demolitions. In order to reset the reputation of these areas, they have also changed their methods of regulation to attract new “active” populations into their midst. This movement is being amplified more than ever with the advent of the “Greater Paris.” **Numerous suburban mayors hope not to be entirely**

discarded through the creation of this new atlas of social and ethnic differentiation. They are also opening their land to real estate developers that, as we know, regard social housing as insufficiently profitable and therefore not a priority.

In the early 1980s, the idea that dominated these neighborhoods was that having a voice as a community was a way to achieve power, because that voice was being heard. Those times are over, laid to rest by thirty years of social revolt for nothing. As we reread our interviews, we realize that the most difficult ordeal might be yet to come for these neighborhoods. ■



Maira Khwaja

BIOGRAPHY

Maira Khwaja is an educator and multimedia producer based in Chicago, Illinois. At the Invisible Institute, a non-profit investigative journalism production company on the South Side, she interviews young people about their experiences with police, produces events and workshops, and guides outreach communications. She co-directs a political education project, called TM Productions, to engage traditionally disenfranchised Chicagoans in civic conversations.

Maira is a first generation Pakistani-American, born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She studied history at the University of Chicago, focusing on the relationships between gangs and churches on the South Side of Chicago.

STATEMENT

My ongoing dialogues on policing are grounded in the practice of the Youth/Police Project at the Invisible Institute. Our primary objective is to build conversations with teenagers about how their lives are affected by the character of the police presence in their neighborhoods. Each year, I meet a set of teenagers in a broadcast media class, discuss their questions about the law, and commit to being a regular presence in their lives as they grow into young adults. We often use video production tools to deepen our conversations, and we focus our inquiry on everyday encounters rather than egregious instances of abuse.

At the Invisible Institute, I work to enhance the capacity of citizens to hold public institutions accountable. Among the tactics we employ are investigative reporting, multimedia storytelling, human rights documentation, the curation of public information, and the orchestration of difficult public conversations.

Our work coheres around a central principle: we as citizens have co-responsibility with the government for maintaining respect for human rights and, when abuses occur, for demanding redress.

VOICES
OF
CHICAGO #3

Policing Grief in Chicago: Restrained Mobility and Surveillance on Social Media

Policing Grief in Chicago: Restrained Mobility and Surveillance on Social Media

The students cited in this article have chosen to use pseudonyms.

On a Sunday downtown this summer, I witnessed four Black teenagers crying outside of a fast-casual restaurant as a group of Chicago Police officers handcuffed them to each other, frisked them, and arrested them. The owner of the restaurant called the police because they took too long to order; he thought they might have a gun. They did not have a gun. They were arrested for loitering. They were questioned without a parent or lawyer. They were not read their rights.

During Mayor Rahm Emanuel's first term, 2011-2015, the police department deployed many officers downtown during the summer, focusing on public transportation stations where groups of young

Black people congregate in the shopping areas of Michigan Avenue and State Street. Police would then surround and follow large groups and steer them back on to public transportation. There were many reports of unconstitutional police stops and searches.

The new mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot, announced in May 2019 a similar plan to "flood" downtown with officers, and to anticipate the annual summertime spike of gun violence: add 1,200 additional police officers to work overtime, add 50 additional police on public transportation, remove graffiti, repair street lights, and break up gatherings of outdoor block parties. Mayor Lightfoot stated her intention plainly:

"These are challenging times for us in the city. We've seen as the weather has warmed up. It's not the warmth. It's the fact that people come outside and that's where conflicts can happen."

It's true that our city's struggle with gun violence is the most grave and challenging in the hottest months. I am stuck on the Mayor's analysis, though, that young people being outside is the inherent problem and solution.

Among the various, urgent needs I've learned from working with high school students is their continued need for playtime. An unexpected question in my work became: how can I support their freedom of play, movement, and expression? I take very seriously, then, the importance of opportunities to travel with them outside of Chicago once they graduate. On the second day of a trip to Washington D.C., as we rode bikes past the monuments at night, a 19-year-old yelled: "I haven't had this much fun since I was six!"

The young people I work with graduated from a public high school on the South Side of Chicago. Of the 850 students enrolled in the school in 2018, 98.7% are Black and 98.7% are below the poverty line. As part of my work at the Invisible Institute, a non-profit journalism production company on the South Side of Chicago, a team of journalists, educators, and civil rights attorneys spend every Tuesday in a broadcast media classroom to assist the students with their video projects, and along the way, discuss their police experiences and constitutional law. The school holds a population in Chicago that face routine police encounters, mundane or severe, near daily.

For teenagers in the South Side who do not test into a high-performing public school — which might routinely create opportunities to play after school, in neighborhoods across the city without as much fear — their lives become much more restricted by the age of 13 (or younger). For students at this school, their daily routine looks more like commuting to school, to work, to sports, and then directly to home, to provide child care for other family members.

Their transportation routes to school are long and strategic, to avoid areas where they might encounter violence or harassment. They know exactly how to observe their surroundings as they walk (directly to a predetermined location), to travel in groups (but not too large of a group), to prepare with self-defense (e.g. taser, mace, or knife), and to avoid waiting around for public transportation. Each of our students can identify the age, after losing a loved one to gun violence, that they stopped playing openly

outside of their homes or in Chicago's vast parks.

Diane, age 21, has been a student with the Youth/Police Project since 2014. She is studying early childhood education, completing her second year of college, and works at a day-care center and a grocery store:

"I'm from the South Side of Chicago. I went to school in [one gang territory], but lived in [another gang territory]. So when I went to school, I'd have to take the long way home. Kids would call me the 'ops' [like a spy]."

There's a lot of shooting where I live. People die everyday. Growing up in Chicago is hard, but once you learn how to stay safe, it's okay. To stay safe, I do extracurricular activities in school, or be around my family, and not hang out around a lot of people. It's dangerous to leave my house at certain times. Where I live now, in the Southwest Side, it's basically a war zone. There's one gang on one side [of the block], and another gang on the other side. I know when it's 12 o'clock in the morning (midnight), wherever I am, I'm going to stay. I won't go outside. Bullets don't got no name. Innocent people get shot everyday. People shoot for no reason. A lot of innocent people die. I've lost people."

Faced with the threat of gun violence and unconstitutional policing, many of our students tend to stay indoors to stay safe, especially after graduating. Whether the threat is perceived or imminent, the pressure on many young people to stay inside is strong. The most common effect I observe in

my former students is isolation from their peers, which affects their mental and physical health.

Many young people from this high school, after graduating, feel the loss of a physical space to gather. While many 18-year-olds move on to community college or a university, the majority of our alumni cannot afford to live in the dorms, nor are academically and financially stable enough to make it past their first year of school.

The lack of institutional support is a dramatic loss. Most support programs end at age 18, and most job development programs tend to focus on college-enrolled students.

Facebook and Snapchat, then, provide a virtual public square, or at least parallel a school hallway, for the passing interactions of “reacting” to posts, sharing photos of each other, comments, and saying hello when they click in to a friend’s Live video.

Diane: “When I go on Live on Facebook sometimes, we just do it so people could talk to us. Like when me and my friend, we do our makeup and whatever [on Facebook Live]. We just get on there and just look good for the compliments sometimes. I would take down a video like that afterwards. I would also go on Live on my birthday. You know, some people go Live only on special occasions. Some people go Live every day, like every day. Sunup to sundown. Like they just be: ‘Yo, what’s the word,’ and stuff like that.”

This virtual social space in Chicago, though, is heavily monitored for new predictive policing research and early intervention systems. In a similar way that a reference to “Chicago” in the national political arena has

been a code word for Black poverty and violence, the social media landscape of Chicago has become the standard testing ground across the world for researchers who are trying to predict shootings. Chicago’s young people on social media, unwillingly, have become the research subjects.

Chicago has long been treated as a laboratory to study gun violence and develop predictive policing methods, with or without young Chicagoans’ consent. University researchers across the country currently compete with each other to develop the most accurate method to predict shootings, based on Twitter activity, before they happen. Many young Black Chicagoans, though, do not know the extent to which emerging research uses their social media to map a landscape of violence in Chicago.

Tyree, age 21, has been a student with the Youth/Police Project since 2014. He films drill rap music videos and produces comedy videos, and works full-time at a factory in the suburbs: “Everytime something [violent] happens, the first thing [people] do is run to [post on] social media. A real street nigga leave street [activity] in the streets, though.

Researchers gotta make that money somehow [when they research violence that stems from social media]. But I gotta ask, what’s their purpose? What are [researchers] doing it for? Are they trying to make it easier for people get locked up?”

In 2017, Forrest Stuart and Alicia Riley at the University of Chicago presented a research plan to develop an “early warning system” to alert “violence intervention workers, community stakeholders, school personnel, and concerned residents about

pending gang violence,” triggered when a gang’s Twitter activity crosses a threshold.

They provided Twitter with keywords, based on over two years of fieldwork research. In the early stages of this research, the focus was on aggressive keywords words and emojis, hoping to map a connection between violent tweets and shootings, and to predict an impending shooting based on tweets. Stuart learned from fieldwork, though, that so much of social media is posturing and performance, and an aggressive pose with a friend’s gun might be more of a glamour shot than an immediate threat.

The team found more accuracy, then, with keywords that focused on mourning instead of aggression. Keywords like: Rest in Peace, angel emojis, crying emojis. This approach is also embraced by a peer researcher, Desmond Patton of the SAFELab at Columbia University.

When I learned of this approach, I immediately thought of Trinice, whose family has been devastated by gang-related killings, and whose grief for her brother and niece filled my feed in the year after she graduated. Her grief could be made into keywords for social media analysis: to profit from, to police, to incarcerate.

For the first two years after high school, Trinice was mostly stuck in the house, like many young adults on the south side of Chicago, for safety and a lack of transportation. She cannot drive, does not feel safe taking the bus, and is not walking distance from the train. She is also a primary child-care support for her niece, her brother’s daughter. Instead of isolation, she has a

whole life through social media. Thanks to Facebook Live, she celebrated her 20th birthday with friends who joined the chat, while she babysat.

And so of course, when a family member is killed, where else to turn but social media? To express grief and collect condolences. In the comments of posts and pictures of the deceased, she and others share memories, offer support, and talk down an angry uncle from seeking revenge.

The seeking revenge part is the key for researchers’ analysis. An angry friend or family of the deceased could shoot someone for laughing about the killing, celebrating the killing, or being the killer. A flurry of grieving tweets could signal a recent death, says the hypothesis, and might correspond with a shooting soon after. Access to geo-location of tweets seems to be the biggest hurdle for researchers who want to build precise early warning systems.

Tyree: “Most of the people I know don’t really be on Twitter. They be on Facebook. Facebook is more of an interactive platform. It’s more of a social [space] than Twitter. Twitter is basically used for promotional things like clothing and TV shows and famous people. You go on Facebook to find out who just got married and stuff like that. You go on Facebook if you want find out who just got shot.

I sometimes tell friends to take down posts. Sometimes, you got the hard headed people who say ‘I don’t give no fuck about [police].’ For the most part people would take it down and say

'awe yeah bro, good lookin', I tweaked,' and stuff like that. Even then, I wouldn't inbox them [on Facebook] and tell them because [police] can see the messages. [The government] is watching everything. [Facebook] Messenger is specifically for the [federal government surveillance]. People know that, though, and still do all the dumb shit on social media."

In April 2019, Stuart published an article in *Social Problems* that critiques the premise of research like Desmond Patton's, director of the SAFElab at Columbia University, and other peer research. Based on his fieldwork, focused largely on understanding drill rap music videos effects on offline violence, he says that researchers mischaracterize how social media is used, and they overstate the effect of social media on violence. He writes that many of his contemporary researchers operate from the belief that young people transfer street code directly to social media, and treat social media as a direct parallel to violence that could unfold in the streets.

Tyree: "I don't think people make music videos just to diss another group or another gang. I think they do it just tell their story. Especially in Chicago, we use rap as a way to get things off our chest. It's a form of expression.

I know people who have pulled up on by police for something they posted online. A smart street nigga wouldn't say nothing at all [on social media]. The streets is in the streets, not on social media. It be the clout chasers [who post on social media]. People who want fame who do dumb stuff like that."

Instead, researchers should consider the ways that social media have a role in de-escalating or transforming, rather than

amplifying, offline conflict. Stuart warns that prosecutors and police increasingly monitor social media for aggressive content as evidence, and this practice reinforces the "myth of Black criminality," leading to discriminatory treatment and the reproduction of social inequality.

In conversations with our current and former students, the news of police and researchers monitoring their social media comes with no major surprise. Overpolicing is a familiar circumstance. Most upsetting, though, is the strategy of Patton and others to monitor and tag their expressions of grief, like "RIP" statements and sad emojis. That strategy is a new concept to them. There is something about policing grief and mourning on a public forum, assuming retaliation from their sadness, that feels particularly cruel.

The industry of technology for predictive policing is not new, though, and mostly reiterates old forms of discrimination and prediction. Made popular in the 1990s, the "broken windows" method of predictive policing aimed to prevent more serious crime by detecting and policing lower crimes, like vandalism and prostitution. Until 2015, PredPol's communication materials claimed its technology was based on the broken windows method of policing.

I wonder about what is different about this modern iteration of predictive policing. Does the blind trust city officials have in man-made technology make predictive algorithms potentially more damaging than the past iterations of racist policing? Americans claim a constitutional protection against illegal search and seizure, but these technologies — which often standardize and perpetuate existing biases, as their algorithms were built on biased data — might make it easier for police officers

to claim reasonable suspicion to perform a search.

Kristian Lum and William Issac of the Human Rights Data Analysis Group found in 2016 that the PredPol model does not correct for apparent biases in police data, but instead reinforces these biases. On the dangers of lending legitimacy to predictive policing, they write:

"Whereas before, a police chief could reasonably be expected to justify policing decisions, using a computer to allocate police attention shifts accountability from departmental decision-makers to black-box machinery that purports to be scientific, evidence-based and race-neutral. Although predictive policing is simply reproducing and magnifying the same biases the police have historically held, filtering this decision-making process through sophisticated software that few people understand lends unwarranted legitimacy to biased policing strategies."

Where does the seduction of this current era of predictive policing come from? The goal to prevent deaths and stop a shooting before it happens is an understandable and necessary one. I imagine it stems, too, from a human desire to put our trust and responsibility in a more omniscient and objective power. Imagine a system of policing that could become desirable to even those who have been unconstitutionally policed or incarcerated. For many people, the idea of an efficient algorithm to detect crime before it happens is the peak ideal of safety. In this imagination, police could

be alerted by an algorithm's detection, and have a machine that tells them what to do (instead of taking it upon themselves to subjectively determine who is suspicious, and how to enforce). Police officers' current role of creating, enforcing, and breaking the law could be curbed, and instead of a whole race feeling threatened by police, a subset who are prone to violence will be intervened on, before crime happens.

This is not what happens, though. In reality, data is poorly gathered to make those predictive systems, just further entrenching existing racial disparities and apartheid systems of justice — this time, justifying them with the promise of the machine.

What about when algorithms are improved? Correcting the data so that prediction gets more effective probably won't fix the problem of how our students might be data points in the first place. To police based on how closely a young person touches violence seems unfair, given how in segregated Chicago, nearly everyone knows each other through two degrees of separation. Can we police our way out of crime? If we try to identify the people who necessarily need early intervention, it's very likely we will return to basic root causes we've long neglected, and need the government to re-prioritize in their budgets to address: poverty, housing, jobs, schools, and freedom of opportunity.

It seems that the trend of policing will continue to keep young people in their homes and surveil them there. Police use of electronic monitoring devices (i.e. ankle bracelets with GPS or radio frequency) has

grown by 140 percent between 2005-2015; there are more than 2,700 people on electronic monitoring in Cook County, Illinois. With the growing movement to reduce jail populations and eliminate cash bail, devices to surveil house arrest has become increasingly common. In Cook County, all children on electronic monitoring now have ankle bracelets that can transmit or record audio (at the time of this writing, the Juvenile Probation Department stopped using the communications function on ankle monitors, pending further review).

African Americans are migrating away from Chicago at a startling pace of thousands per year, and civic forums to discuss this historic trend focus on the lack of housing, jobs, and safety. Routine policing practices, like the arrest of the four teenagers downtown, only validate and encourage this exodus, though, too, sending a strong message about who is welcome in this city.

Diane: “I have no intention of leaving my city. It’s dangerous but I know how to keep myself safe. I know my ways in and all around my city. The only reason I stay is my family. I’ve tried leaving; I went to college in Mississippi for two years, but I came back for financial and family reasons. Most likely I won’t leave.

You familiar with gentrification? There’s a lot of people who want to move in to where I live and take over. It’s happening. White people live in Chiraq! You never hear about white people getting shot where I live. It’s so segregated. You got white people on the North side, and Black and Brown people on the South and West sides. White people are coming to where I live, too, and they’re building condos and schools. [The last mayor, Rahm Emanuel] closed a lot of schools in Chicago, like in the

Englewood neighborhood and in neighborhoods that Black people are familiar with.”

When and why should teenagers be forced to limit their mobility? Being indoors robs teenagers of joy and freedom, while their very legitimate fear of policing and violence has already robbed them of their joy far too often. Is the answer to Chicago’s public safety question of gun violence simply that Black teenagers have to stay indoors? It can’t be; our imagination cannot be so limited.

The industry of predictive policing is seen as cutting edge. Why are investments in root causes of violence, like poverty and health, seen as an idealistic approach? As secondary to policing?

As Chicago sets new boundaries around surveillable private and public spaces, we must interrogate the architecture and protections of social media, where our young people continue to live out their lives. We can create safer physical and virtual gathering spaces for us to be free. ■

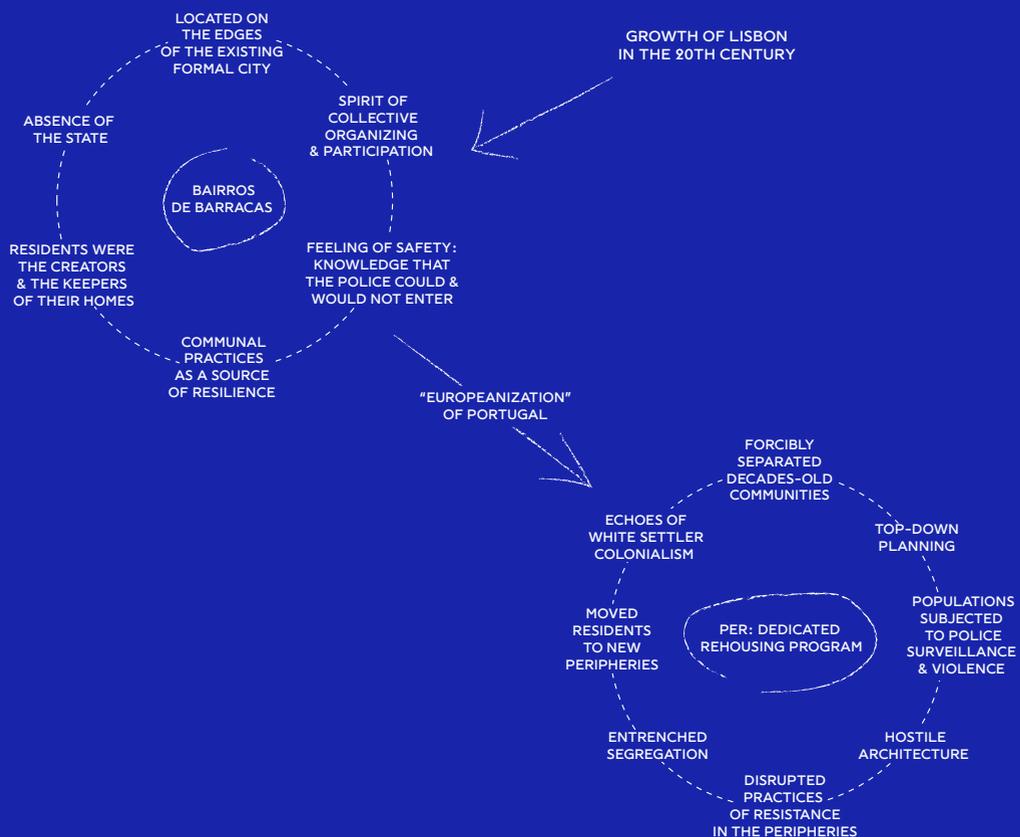
Ana Naomi De Sousa & António Brito Guterres

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Existence and Resistance in the Peripheries of Lisbon

DE SOUSA & BRITO GUTERRES

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The Invisible City: Existence and Resistance in the Peripheries of Lisbon

INTRODUCTION BY AKIL SCAFE-SMITH ///

Amidst *The Funambulist's* fantastic plethora of works, it is Ana Naomi De Sousa & António Brito Guterres' incredible account of resistance and self-organization in the peripheries of Lisbon that perhaps resonates most with my practice, RESOLVE. Over the last years, we had been exploring ideas of African Caribbean Diasporic aesthetics, urban resilience, and the notion of heuristic urban construction in London through our first project Rebel Space and in other projects and research in Brixton, South London, where we were based. Concepts of participatory construction, (in)visibility, resilience networks, and the intersection of creole dialects and political resistance had particularly inspired us during this time and, in De Sousa & Guterres' work, I found incredible parallels and precedents for what has and can be achieved for diasporic urban communities that have been marginalized in Europe. For me, the piece articulated the topology and rhythms of violent colonial housing practices at "home" and "away" with such clarity that I began to feel the struggles of the Moinho das Rolas neighborhood echo in neighborhoods closer to home, such as Brixton, Peckham, and Hackney. Inspiring accounts of community solidarity, identity and resistance through the Crioulo and Romani infused Portuguese dialects, and the prominence of rap music in undoing the "invisibilization" of these communities read as a both an account and a roadmap for numerous other diasporic struggles, and elements of each of these we've attempted to explore through our consequent work. Finally, De Sousa & Guterres' piece exemplifies the importance of documentation in making visible — and audible — histories that have been purposely obscured, which is, as ever, an imperative first step towards empowerment, negotiating equitable change, and the sensitive facilitation of social and physical infrastructure in places and for people made peripheral by design.

Akil Scafe-Smith is a co-founder of RESOLVE, an interdisciplinary design collective that aims to address social challenges by combining architecture, art, technology and engineering. They have delivered a series of projects, workshops, and talks in South London and across Europe.

The Invisible City: Existence and Resistance in the Peripheries of Lisbon

The neighborhood officially known as Moinho das Rolas lies 20 kilometers from central Lisbon — six concrete apartment blocks, three either side of a dead-end road, each five stories high. Less than 300 meters to the south is a business technology park, where some residents work as cleaners and service staff. To the north, a vast expanse of shrubland lies purposefully vacant, increasing daily in real-estate value. Under their shadow, to the west, a sloping green bank leads down to the Ribeira da Lage valley; on the opposite bank, the ruins of an old farm are visible.

Within this estate, residents have informally occupied the maintenance spaces of their buildings for some 15 years. In the early days, a group of young people created a social center, “Braku Bagda,” with

space for meetings, communal eating and freestyle rap battles. The ceiling was adorned with the building’s sewerage pipework; but the walls were decorated with graffiti. Later, the larger, adjacent maintenance space was also occupied — festival floats and banners are now stored alongside a makeshift gym, dance hall and party venue. The ongoing occupation of these spaces is an alternative to renting the estate’s commercial units — of which there are many, lying empty. Meanwhile, people run small informal catering businesses from their homes or provide services such as hairdressing. The residents of Moinho das Rolas have also used the green space around the apartment buildings to create farming allotments. To reach the other side of the valley, a wooden bridge has been built, along with a pump to fetch water from the river.

The murals on the outer walls of the estate offer some important cultural and historical markers; the tag of a well-known homegrown rap group, TWA; a black panther; and the name Mirafior, locating us in the Portuguese-African Crioulo language, within the resistance of the Black movement, but also in a neighborhood originally situated 10 kilometers away from here — and long disappeared. For Moinho das Rolas is a rehousing project, home to some 900 residents, almost all first-, second- and third-generation immigrants of African (mainly Cape Verdean) descent and, moreover, descendants of the *bairros de barracas*, the “shanty town” settlements that defined the peripheries of Lisbon for most of the 20th century. The autonomous practices of Moinho das Rolas, expressed in the occupation and subversion of space, are not limited to this one estate. The peripheries of Lisbon, often overlooked and constantly invisibilized by processes such as mediafication, tourism and real estate speculation, contain deeply resilient networks and a rich history of self-building, urban farming,



community activism, cultural resistance and informal education.

Lisbon grew rapidly in the 20th century; between the 1960s and 1990s, its population swelled from several hundred thousand people to three million. From the 1950s there was a rural exodus in Portugal as people flocked from the impoverished countryside to the capital in search of work. Following the 1974 Revolution, which spelled the end for both the Fascist dictatorship and Portuguese overseas colonialism, settlers returned from the newly-independent former colonies, alongside immigrants fleeing war, political instability, and economic insecurity.

During these migrations, it was on the endlands of the city that new settlements were created — close to industry, on vacant plots of land, on the edges of existing municipalities, or on disused military roads. New arrivals to the city tended to follow family and community ties. These emerging neighborhoods were often characterized by their residents’ origins, be they in Santiago, Cape Verde, or Beira, Portugal. Forced to the edges of the existing formal city by social and economic exclusion, the

bairros de barracas, as they became known — often pejoratively — were never legalized, but nonetheless patronized by the State: people were pushed onto specific sites, construction material was subsidized, and taxes were collected on occupied land. The periphery nonetheless emerged around the formal city with almost no official planning. It was shaped by the hands of community organizations, local constructors and informal architects, who produced self-built neighborhoods of brick and tin. For many years, one of the most important forms of construction in this “Great Imperial” city was in fact self-building. “Our parents built their houses from scratch; when they arrived in Portugal it was all shacks — shacks made of wood and plastic,” recalls Jose Maria “Sinho” Baessa de Pina, who grew up in the Fontainhas neighborhood. **“When I was young, if you saw a truck bringing sand into the bairro, you didn’t need to be asked — everyone would grab a bucket and go help, there was solidarity; you’d have a cousin who would paint, another cousin who’d lay bricks... everything was done by the community, that’s how the bairro was built.”**

In the almost total absence of the State, these neighborhoods developed communal practices, as a source of resilience. These practices drew both on the strength of the community and on the local environment. Urban farming for example, in small (often shared) allotments, became incredibly important in many neighborhoods. This land was not only used for subsistence farming (including raising animals — mostly chickens, goats and sheep) but also provided a means of cultural expression: Cape Verdean communities grew sugar cane for their traditional grog whilst the Cali Gypsies living in Curraleira and Queluz kept horses. On many sites, such as the *bairros* of 6 de Maio and Pedreira dos Húngaros, football pitches were constructed.

Within the *bairros*, informal economic activities specific to the needs of communities thrived, such as community creches enabling local women to work. In Cape Verdean and Bissau Guinean *bairros* like Marianas and Pedreira dos Húngaros, some women pooled a portion of their salaries into crowdfunds that could provide for larger investments such as plane tickets, construction materials, or white goods. A similar arrangement existed in many communities for the collective funding of funerals or repatriation of bodies, and funeral wakes were held in communal spaces. Most bars, cafes, restaurants, shops provided not only services and goods, but also meeting spaces, as did cultural centers such as the Moinho da Juventude in the Cova da Moura neighborhood.

Such practices, specific and relevant to their geographical locations, have survived in some of the areas that participated in the short-lived, utopian rehousing program SAAL (The Local Outreach Support Service), created after the 1974 revolution. Under SAAL, residents formed associations that collaborated with architects on participative projects to create better housing conditions, resulting in the creation of communal property. Organizations like the

Horizonte housing cooperative and residents committee created by the community of Curraleira would have been impossible in the years of the dictatorship, and nurtured the spirit of collective organizing and participation. Under SAAL, Curraleira gained public bathrooms, a football pitch and some housing; however, the program came to an abrupt end in the political upheaval that followed the revolution.

In the decades following the collapse of SAAL, the Portuguese State's approach to housing can be defined by the more-or-less total absence of social housing policy until 1993, when the government launched the audacious, nationwide and ongoing Dedicated Rehousing Program, PER, whose specific objective was to “do away with the *barracas*” once and for all. It was based on the principles that demolishing inadequate housing could solve the social inequalities associated with it, and that new housing could influence lifestyle. A miserable interpretation of the Portuguese Constitutional Article guaranteeing the “Right to Housing,” its greatest legacy has been the creation of ghettos and the concretization of social exclusion. Whilst the *bairros de barracas* had suffered from poor infrastructure and a total lack of government support — unlike the SAAL program which provided for participative self-building with the technical expertise of architects and engineers — their residents had nonetheless been not only the creators but also the keepers of their homes, with a real sense of community ownership. Community entrepreneur Silvino “Binu” Furtado from the (self-built and still-standing) Cova da Moura neighborhood, lives in the house his father built in the 1960s: “It’s as if the *bairro* is a part of you. Every corner is a piece of history, every house has a story.” In neighborhoods subjected to the PER, however, the government turned residents into paying tenants of the State: it also disrupted and often

destroyed practices of resistance in the peripheries.

There are, in these later rehousing policies, echoes of the white settler colonialism which Portugal practiced to a greater extent than almost any other European colonizer in Africa. Spatially, the “civilized” city was the beating heart of Portuguese settler colonialism; the urban centers of Luanda (Angola) and Lourenço Marques (Maputo, Mozambique), for example, were highly coveted territories — and were popular among other European colonials in Africa — known for their sophistication, leisure and cosmopolitanism. Access to these cities, under colonial rule, was based on the politics of assimilation, with a kind of “Portuguese-ness,” or whiteness, as the ultimate goal: Africans wanting “in” were expected to renounce African languages, dress and religion, in favor of Portuguese, Catholicism, and European attire. Outside the main cities in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, large-scale rehousing programs (*reagrupamentos*, or regroupings) were attempted, destroying communities by interrupting social, economic and cultural networks and imposing cultural norms.

Back in Portugal, under the PER, the State proceeded from the mid-1990s to demolish the *bairros de barracas*, largely home to racialized communities, which were now seen as both “illegal” and “problematic.” They replaced them with concrete housing blocks, concretizing the racial hierarchies already well-established in Portugal. That the PER was introduced soon after Portugal joined the European Union is not a coincidence; the 1990s were a definitive moment in the europeanization of Portugal, as it sought to shed its image as the poor

man of the region and assert its European (and white) credentials.

While it can claim to have forcibly rehoused tens of thousands — its original catchment included almost 50,000 families nationwide — it is abundantly clear that the PER has not alleviated social exclusion; much to the contrary. From its outset, the program had two major shortcomings. Firstly, unlike the SAAL project, it was not participative but based on top-down planning under which residents had no power to contribute to their rehousing. Secondly, since the PER took place at a time when Lisbon was growing, many *bairros* were no longer as peripheral as they had been, and the land on which they lay was rapidly increasing in value. Many local councils took the opportunity to free up valuable land by moving residents to new peripheries, far from the areas where they originally lived. Both of these mistakes have left a lasting legacy.

As a consequence, the PER rehousing process was bureaucratic, chaotic, and traumatic for many. Families, especially those spanning more than one dwelling, were separated, and entire communities were rehoused far from their original homes. During the televised demolition of Pedreira dos Húngaros in 2003, dozens of tearful residents sheltered from the pouring rain in a marquee with a brass band and a spit-roast pig and watched their former homes being torn down. This perverse, state-orchestrated spectacle recast the demolition of the shanty towns as a mark of Portugal's progress, as the country strived towards “modernity” — despite the continued elusiveness of economic stability.

There was little in the way of social housing in Portugal on this scale before the PER began, and so the rehousing estates

— *bairros sociais* — were purpose-built. One of the reasons communities have struggled with the move into housing blocks is the architecture itself. Unlike the *bairros de barracas*, which were not only community-built but also comprised a complex overlapping of private and communal spaces, the apartment blocks closed residents off in compartmental concrete boxes. It was now possible to arrive and leave without seeing half the people who would previously have been encountered on a short walk through the old neighborhood. The loss of this particular way of socializing was felt acutely, and profoundly affected the sense of community, as well as the way communities functioned. “I consider this a ghetto,” says Sinho, who now lives in the Casal da Boba/São Bras rehousing estate. “They pushed us into here, creating segregation and discrimination. They say it’s dangerous and then they come here and police in a completely different way to the rest of Lisbon. You can see that they are scared of us.”

The layout of the *bairros de barracas* had also allowed people to feel safe within them, knowing that the police would not (and could not) enter, because of their particular morphology. However, the rehousing projects became, almost immediately, the target of heavy policing: in Casal da Boba/São Bras, for example, police stations were actually planned and built into the estates from the outset. **The state-of-exception policing in areas like Amadora is characterized by arbitrary and aggressive stop-and-search; the deployment of heavily armed, often masked special forces in tanks or motorbike convoys, and the supposedly casual policing of residential public spaces by armed policemen several times a day.** In this way, racialized neighborhoods have become a test-site for weapons and for militarized urban police training. There is an increased number of detainees and prisoners from specific areas

and police have been responsible for the killings of a number of people, including children. One of the most appalling examples was of Elson “Kuku” Sanches, a 14-year old boy who was shot in the neck at point-blank range by a policeman in 2009. The (successful) case for the policeman’s defense, despite his having shot and killed an innocent and unarmed child, depended heavily on the implicit understanding that the neighborhood where Kuku was killed, was “dangerous,” and that its residents, including children, might be legitimately suspected of a crime, at any given moment. “The only people who were punished were the kid and his mother,” says Flavio “LBC” Almada, a well-known educator and activist from Cova da Moura.

Through a program which created hostile architecture and entrenched segregation, forcibly separated decades-old communities, and subjected populations to police surveillance and violence, the PER systematically destroyed the various forms of resistance that had been mounted in the old neighborhoods, without providing a solution to the exclusion or economic precarity their residents had always faced. However, as can be seen from the basements to the slopes of Moinho das Rolas, this does not mean that communities stopped resisting.

On the eastern borders of the old city is a neighborhood still referred to by its residents as Currealeira (a name you will no longer find on any maps, another consequence of the PER), which has existed since the 1930s. A communal ethos has helped the local community, which includes many Gypsy/Cigano residents, through years of struggle. In 1975, when a terrible fire swept through the neighborhood and destroyed many of the self-built houses, displacing hundreds, the community called on the armed revolutionary group, LUAR (Liga de União e Acção Revolucionária, or United League for Revolutionary Action), for assistance. Together they went on to publicly occupy

apartments in the wealthiest neighborhoods of the city and the episode became a turning point for left-wing parties in recognizing occupation as a legitimate tactic in housing struggles. On the empty land where the *barracas* once stood, there is now an iron cross, memorializing a child who died in the fire. Fiercely protected by the community, despite various attempted interventions, it is also a point of reference to locate the former sites of houses and other spaces in the old *bairro*. Horses are still raised and ridden in Currealeira, as well as pigs, geese, sheep, and goats — despite the pressure from the sanitary institutions to put an end to these practices — and communal and family allotments are tended and farmed. For many years football games were played in the middle of the street and residents would block the roads from traffic to allow them to take place uninterrupted. One day, a local football club (from outside the community) installed an artificial grass pitch on the land, but demanded a fee for its use. On the same night, youths from the neighborhood stripped the grass from the pitch, occupied a commercial space in a building and installed it there instead.

In all of these day-to-day acts of resistance, the Portuguese spoken in Currealeira is inflected with Romanon, a Calo dialect of the Romani language. It is used by Gypsy and non-Gypsy residents alike, whether in conversation with their neighbors or with policemen. In this proud and determined preservation of language, there are parallels with the use of Cape Verdean Crioulo in other neighborhoods. In the peripheries of Lisbon, it’s the variant from the island of Santiago that is most dominant, though variants from other islands and from Guinea Bissau are also used. Because it was the daily

language of the Cape Verdean residents of many of the *bairros de barracas*, it has also become the language of many of the *bairros sociais* that followed them, including among people who are not Cape Verdean. This is partly a result of the overlapping of communities (e.g. at school), but primarily due to the importance and widespread dissemination of Crioulo rap music.

From 2005, increased access to digital media — bolstered by State-sponsoring of computers and internet connections for underprivileged school pupils — and the growth of YouTube revolutionized informal music production in Portugal. It made the peripheral locations of the different *bairros*, as well as the distances and poor transport links between them, less significant. Online, physically-distanced groups and individuals were able to create spaces of dialogue and exchange. Productions recorded in improvised homemade studios, in a non-official language, could now be viewed and shared throughout the Lusophone diaspora and beyond. Videos from stars of this circuit, such as Vado Mas Ki Az, Apollo G, Loreta, Baby Dog and Neh Jah (all singing in Crioulo) have been viewed millions of times. As well as influencing the language variants spoken in the *bairros* (introducing new words and expressions), rap has seen Crioulo becoming a language spoken and understood by many who are not themselves of Cape Verdean origin or descent.

Many of the practices of resistance encountered in the peripheries mark not only the communities’ determination to survive, but also their independence from formal, institutional networks and economies. **This is visible in a new generation of community associations which, unlike their predecessors of the post-revolutionary**

era, are not solely dedicated to the material issues of housing, but also seek to discuss suffrage, constitutional rights, antiracism, etc. This is the case, for example, in the neighborhood organizations Geração Com Futuro in Quinta do Lavrado, Passa Sabi in the Bairro do Rego, and Cavaleiros de São Brás in the Casal da Boba project. These organizations do not exist in isolation but form a part of dynamic networks, such as those behind the campaigns to reform Portugal's contentious nationality law; and for the collection of nationwide statistics based on race and ethnicity, currently outlawed by the Constitution.

There are, furthermore, a number of self-organized grassroots collectives and organizations which span different neighborhoods and communities. Plataforma Gueto, part of the Black movement, is a radical education project which organizes an informal university within different neighborhoods in the peripheries. It also translates, publishes and circulates texts, and documents and denounces racism, particularly in relation to housing, citizenship and police violence. Nu Sta Djunto (meaning "We're in it together," in Crioulo), an informal collective made up of residents of the neighborhoods in which it is active, emerged in response to the difficulties facing people as a result of the Troika austerity measures. It collects and distributes food and other items to families in need, touring the neighborhoods of the peripheries and holding public events such as children's activities and familiar, local and traditional cultural performances. There is also the umbrella organization, the Residents Council for the 6 de Maio, Bairro da Torre, and Jamaica neighborhoods. Although located far away from each other, these neighborhoods share the same problem: they are all un-regularized or self-built areas with very poor infrastructure, whose residents were not included in the PER. By organizing

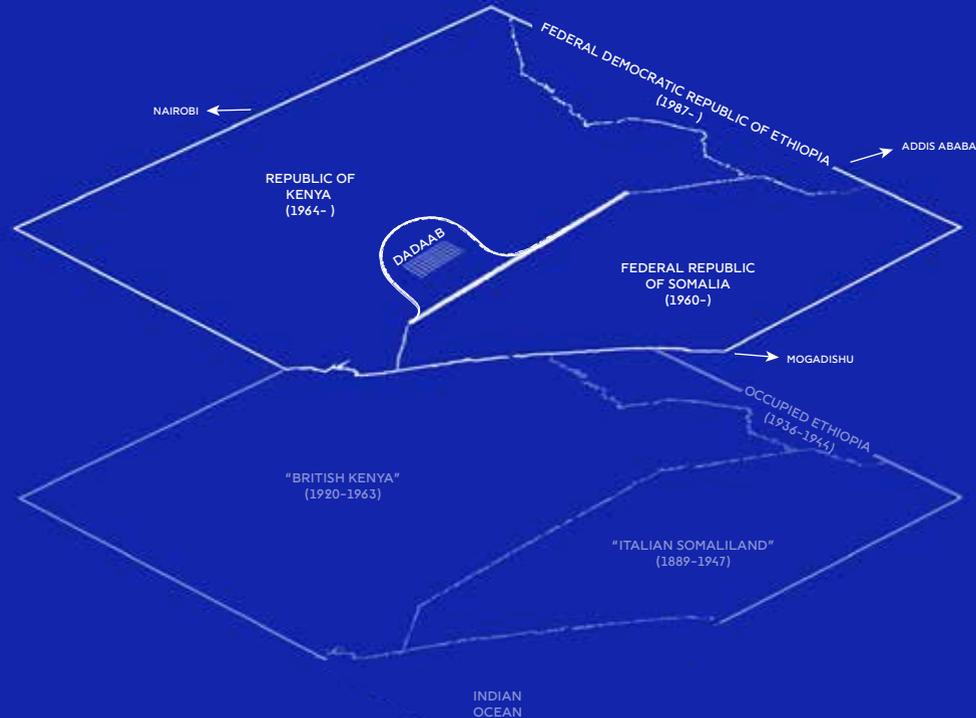
and campaigning collectively, they have increased their political power in the struggle for adequate rehousing.

As the PER nears something of an end in Portugal, the disconnect between the center and the peripheries of Lisbon feels immense. Deprived of good education, full citizenship, employment and, of course, housing; in the face of police violence and decades of stigmatization, this is the blunt edge of the State, and the city's racialized communities are disproportionately affected. And yet, the dramatic tourism boom now underway in Portugal rests very much on the image of a "global city" — "Historical Lisbon, Global City" is the motto for Lisbon's candidacy for UNESCO World Heritage status — proud of its imperial past and multicultural influences the enduring myth of "LusoTropicalism." **The continued invisibility and ostracization of the city's peripheries is, for this strategy to function and seem believable, not only convenient but wholly necessary.** But it is also impossible. The populations of the peripheries will continue, through their cultures of meaningful community and autonomous organization, to make their presence felt in the city, in their own way.

By documenting and recounting the actions and systems of resistance detailed in this piece, the authors hope to draw attention to a history which in both angering and inspiring; from which there is as much to learn, as there is to lament. A history which refuses to remain invisible; or to be silenced. ■



(1) Post boxes marking the entrance to the most prominent building of the Jamaica neighborhood. (2) Aspects of the local economy of Curraleira neighborhood. (3) Marocas rides a horse he has raised in front of the Quinta do Lavrado housing estate. (4) Residents of Adroana harvesting on their allotments. (5) Young residents from the Vale da Amoreira housing estate, in the greater Lisbon area. (6) Sinto inside Cavaleiros de São Brás, the organization he runs at the Casal da Boba estate housing former residents of Fontainhas. / Photographs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 by António Brito Guterres (2017), photograph 6 by Ana Naomi de Sousa (2017).



Architecting the Border: The Hut and the Frontier at Work in Dadaab, Kenya

INTRODUCTION BY OMAR BERRADA ///

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi looks at the world's largest refugee camp, located in Northern Kenya, notably its infrastructure and the internal and external borders that organize life within it. She advocates for a suspension of the rhetoric of emergency, which obfuscates any effective political reading of refugeeness, in at least two ways.

First, it serves as a de-historicizing tool. Siddiqi shows how well the camp's geography maps onto older colonial border-building endeavors. The humanitarian aid infrastructure as a whole, by providing "shelter through confinement," functions as a neocolonial regime of governance. Therefore, it can and should be read within "a long history of liberating and coercive settlement," including the European contribution to the abolition of slavery in Africa, which was a step toward the establishment of settler colonies.

Secondly, insisting on emergency paints Africans as passive victims. Siddiqi instead highlights architectural practices of resistance, materialized by the *tuqul*, a form of mobile dwelling that eschewed the legal and fiscal coercions of the colonial system and is still widely used within the Ifo camp and surrounding areas.

This piece is very generous for the ways it ties together heterogeneous levels of analysis — historical, geopolitical, gendered, linguistic — into a layered and materially evocative perception of its object. Ultimately, this is a call for epistemological insurgency, a plea for architecture, planning, and humanitarianism to rethink their models of intervention and to contend with the knotted complexities of seemingly ordinary objects, in order to see beyond the colonial gaze and learn beyond the colonial archive.

Omar Berrada is a writer and curator, and the director of Dar al-Ma'mûn, a library and artists' residency in Marrakech. Currently living in New York, he teaches at The Cooper Union where he co-organizes the Intra-Disciplinary Seminar (IDS) Lecture Series.

Architecting the Border: The Hut and the Frontier at Work in Dadaab, Kenya

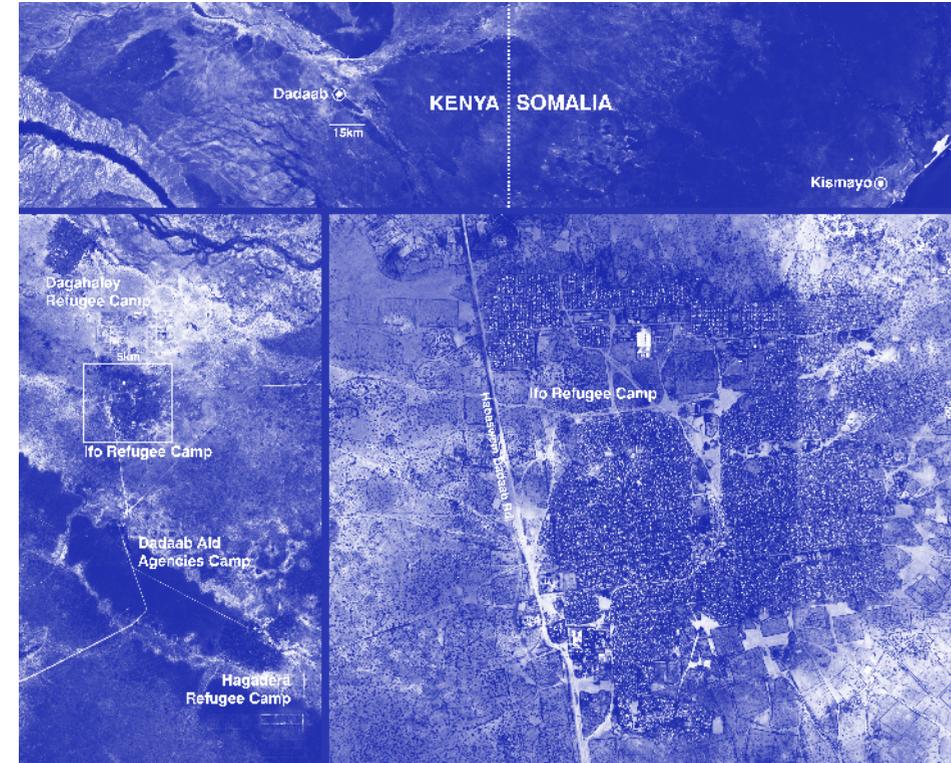
conditions, producing precarity in enclosed settings where multiple nations and multi-lateral agencies may convene and assert a muscular, asymmetrical power.

In such landscapes, architecture and territory perform work beyond that ascribed in less fraught contexts, arguably less as a function of contemporary politics than the residue of history: a modern ramification of colonial territorial pasts. The example of Dadaab, Kenya, a transitional settlement complex frequently cited in the popular press as well as in humanitarian grey literature as “the world’s largest refugee camp,” offers a case in point. **The precarious ephemerality of Dadaab’s constructed environment, represented in a pastoral borderland architecture of temporary dwellings, may be understood as seeded in a long colonial history, in which modernity was achieved through settlement, nomadism, and the construction of a reality and imaginary of each.** This essay examines these constructions through the architecture of the “hut” and the “frontier.” To think this further, to read and interpret the precarious ephemerality of this site, and perhaps to understand the complexity of this instability as a figuration of something else, requires an examination of architecture and territory in the past, of the emergency urbanism of Dadaab in history.

PRECARIOUS EPHEMERALITY: DADAAB IN SPACE AND TIME ///

In 1991, over one and a half million Somalis fled persecution during the start of a civil war, with a compounding drought and famine, eventually sending 400,000 asylum seekers to Kenya by boat from the Mombasa or Kismayo seaports, or on foot through the western border into Kenya’s Garissa district. The Kenyan government responded with an invitation to host the refugees; however, it did so through the establishment of encampments. This encampment apparatus

Many contemporary African refugee camps are located in remote, undeveloped areas of host countries. States providing asylum are often unwilling to integrate refugees into the economy or social structure, and maintain these outposts as parallel systems. The grounds that they inhabit often represent edge conditions, borderlands between competing entities and interests. The idea that they represent forms of extraterritoriality, while perhaps useful in theory, can be misleading in reality. While certain refugee contexts must be understood precisely as fracturing the integrity of the nation-state, either as sites that pose forms of refusal or that exist in a permanent state of emergency, others present quite different



produced shelter through confinement. As such, and as it operated with major assistance from the United Nations and the non-governmental organization CARE, it may be understood within a wider discourse stemming from the writings of scholars as well as aid practitioners, which sees the humanitarian regime as part of a neocolonial form of governance. In part, it suggests that, in the midst of political chaos and the displacement of the social contract, emergency contexts produce new subjects; humanitarian agencies and organizations provide a form of rule.

For the refugees who had traveled by foot and had been temporarily housed at a Kenyan border reception station in May of 1991, a site for a transitional settlement was provided just north of Dadaab, a village

of 5,000 on the unpaved highway between Mogadishu and Nairobi. The construction of Ifo camp, for 30,000 inhabitants, began there in October of that year. The field office and refugee camp at Ifo would transform radically in the following decades, acting either to protect or reject, to include or exclude, registered refugees, asylum seekers, and economic and climate migrants from across East Africa, as it expanded by the time of its 25th year into a complex that housed approximately 500,000 people within five settlements.

Restrictions on movement, employment, and education, as well as strict curfews and brutal policing interned these refugees in the designated settlements, dividing the territory of the camps politically, socially,



and economically from the space of the host nation, and hastening its dependence upon aid commodities, stocks, and services administered through the United Nations system or through its contracts with several international and national nongovernmental organizations specializing in social and medical services and physical planning. The infrastructure for these organizations would eventually include offices and staff housing, each located either within the secured central administrative compound or satellite compounds within the refugee settlements themselves. These were sited along the highway some distance from Dadaab village and the central administrative compound used by the transient labor force of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, and other agencies and international humanitarian nongovernmental organization staff. That gated station is now surrounded by a razor-wire fence and manned by an armed protection detail; meanwhile, the offices located in the camps are subject to the security curfew demanding that all international staff evacuate at the end of each workday. In this sense, the camps and attendant infrastructure are divided from their surroundings through both spatial and temporal mechanisms.

This formation produces a series of paradoxes worth delineating, as they illuminate underlying historical conditions. First, the configuration of the Dadaab settlements does not constitute a city in legal terms.

Nevertheless, the robust informal economy, emergent body politic, cosmopolitan sociability, architecture, and collective administration of the camps together mimic the aesthetic and sociocultural complexity of an urban form, particularly the informal peripheries and interstices of African megacities, such as nearby Nairobi and the informal towns of Eastleigh and Kibera that abut it. These conditions cast the Dadaab settlements as emergent, yet unrealized, urbanities. On the other hand, they also situate the Dadaab complex so that it lacks the affect of a provisional camp. No fences or other separating architectures surround any space, that is, none other than the central humanitarian administrative compound and its offices within each refugee settlement. Architecture and infrastructure arguably enact this abortive ghosting. Architecturally, areas of the camps, particularly the markets and the housing, share material and aesthetic characteristics with the Kenyan village of Dadaab. The infrastructure of social services in the camps related to health, education, physical planning, recreation, and administration, all implemented by nongovernmental organizations, mirror those of the state, if not actually duplicating them. **Together this condition of approaching a city and approaching a camp, yet not quite achieving either, gives evidence of the political, social, and economic development context into which the Dadaab refugee complex is set.** It also suggests that the shared root of “emergent” and “emergency” speaks to the

existential condition of the camps: dynamic, unstable, and unable to be actualized.

As such, a border around the camps — physical and social — becomes limned through the materials and vicissitudes of everyday life, rather than through any fence. That is to say, this condition brings into focus a breach between the normative space of the state and this parallel humanitarian environment. Furthermore, it constructs the parallel space as a shadow, within an architecture of apartheid. This arguably reproduces and refracts a set of historical conditions.

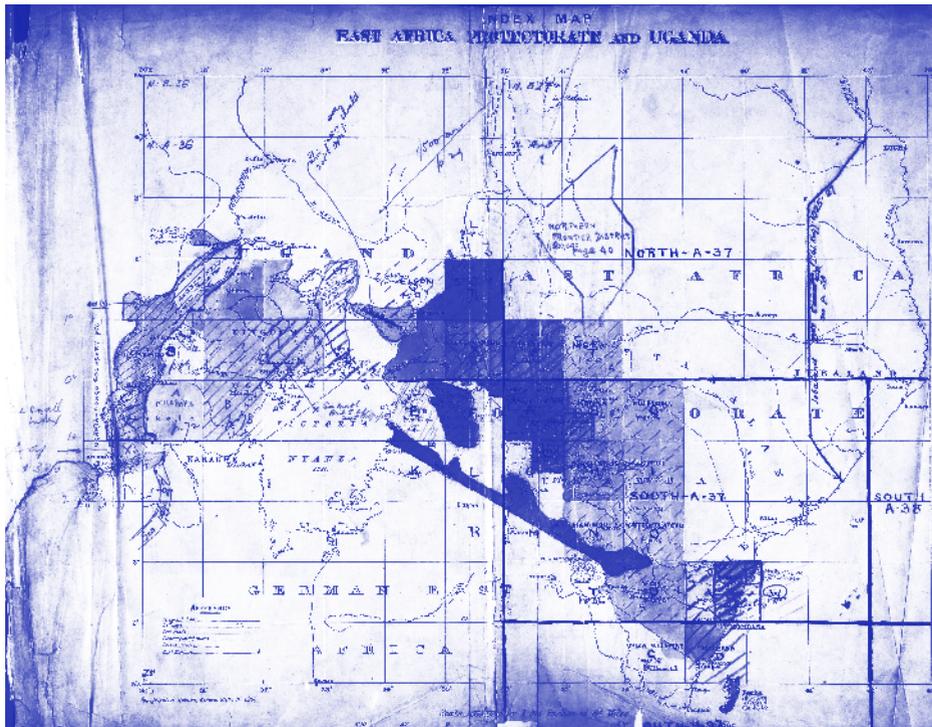
LIBERATING AND COERCIVE SETTLEMENT ///

The Dadaab settlements are located within the North Eastern Province, a territory that must be understood as central to the figuration of a frontier during the European colonization of East Africa. While the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 established trade rights and access to African resources to support the growth of European industrialization and urbanization, with the British, Germans, Italians, and Portuguese participating in the Eastern African aspect of the so-called “scramble,” the event represented a culmination rather than an initiation of British imperial or missionary activity. This had been ongoing for decades in East Africa, and modeled after over a century of practices developed in India. **The territory of Northern Kenya, which would become the “Northern Frontier” during the European colonial period in Africa, existed as a borderland between Great Britain and Italy, to be partitioned and passed along from the former to the latter in gratitude for assistance during World War I.** This fungibility indicates that the value of the “property,” as such, was ever in question.

The semi-arid lands were and are inhabited primarily by agro-pastoral ethnic Somalis — many in the same clans and families as the refugees in the camps. Their relationship to the land ties into a long history of liberating and coercive settlement, which serves as a prelude to the contemporary refugee camp in the region. One architectural iteration in the constellation of those predecessors is the 19th-century anti-slavery settlement, which proposed the cultivation and settlement of land as a colonizing principle: one that may be understood as historically linked with the ideals embedded in humanitarianism.

The Freretown establishment of the Church Missionary Society, on the mainland north and opposite the then island of Mombasa, offered a settlement model that equated African liberation with early forms of colonial practice, as suggested in studies by Robert Strayer and Bronwen Everill. The site took its name from Bartle Frere, the governor of the Bombay Presidency who negotiated the Treaty of Abolition with the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1873, which ended seaborne trafficking and enabled missions to rescue enslaved Africans from Arab dhows, as well as liberating a population of slaves on the Indian coast. These “Bombay Africans” became Freretown’s first inhabitants in 1875, and represented an aspiring group within the rapidly growing settlement: educated and trained in liberal Indian missions, multilingual, entrepreneurial, and in many ways providing assistance to the handful of European missionaries new to the African continent. They also complicated a racialized social structure that would become naturalized in colonial Kenya, in which a small number of European missionaries ruled the majority of Africans

- (1) Fortified entrance to Dadaab humanitarian compound.
 (2) Security gate at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees compound, Dagaheley Camp. / Photographs by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi (2011).



in the settlements with a brutal hand, in this case, with the Bombay Africans in employ on site in the class in-between: as teachers, preachers, interpreters, and artisans. Freretown followed the models of the Church Missionary Society settlement previously established inland at Rabai, as well as that of Freetown, Sierra Leone: producing for the liberated slave a model for living on (and off) the land, cultivating it, and taking up a range of habits associated by the missionaries with a Christian life. According to Robert Strayer, Freretown was “a well-planned settlement complete with church, schools, cricket field, prison, cemetery and mission *shambas* (farm plots) as well as individual gardens for married couples.” It reached a population of over 900 by the early 1890s. For a quarter century, Freretown provided a setting for the regional encounter between freed African slaves and European missionaries, giving the logic to a colonial structure that would radically

transform East African territory, following the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway beginning in Mombasa in 1896.

In 1895 the British Crown proclaimed a protectorate from the coast to Lake Naivasha, and expanded it to include parts of Uganda in 1902, at which time the highlands were opened to white settlers for land capitalization. Imperial territories were designated soon after, through ordinances on “Crown Lands” and “Outlying Districts” in 1902, which located areas of concern for the East Africa Protectorate, and produced the apartheid system that restricted the mobility of people through the use of *kipande* passes between designated areas: the highlands for settlers, native lands and reserves for Africans, and territories designated as outlying districts. The latter were primarily inhabited only by British patrols at outposts, and local nomadic populations that included some Samburu and others, but were mostly comprised of Somalis.

Map of East Africa Protectorate and Uganda by the U.K. War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and related bodies (1911-1942). / Courtesy of the U.K. National Archives.

This territorial process produced the vast Northern Frontier, and included the provincial area where Dadaab is now located. **Quite tellingly, that area, where the camps are presently sited, lay outside even the designated, named colonial territories.** That is to say, according to latitude and longitude as delineated in the ordinance, the region was situated external even to the so-called Outlying Districts. Namely, the area was legally and spatially figured as a margin.

Further to this process, the African “native” was drawn into colonial territorialization in direct and indirect ways in the early 20th century. Following the provision of Native Reserves, the imperial government implemented a homesteading process to contain traditional pastoralist communities, using the village settlement form of the *manyatta*, a Maasai term for native housing that is usually translated as “homestead.” **It would be perverted in the coerced vil-lageization by the British colonial government in the 1950s to repress the land and freedom struggle that came to be known as Mau Mau, for example, in the Hola detention camp and other forced labor camps across the Kenya colony, which the research of Caroline Elkins and David Sanderson brought to light.** This architectural model was reproduced by the new national government in the late 1960s. As Hannah Whittaker has noted in her study of the *shifita* conflict, former imperial officers involved in the Mau Mau detentions were seconded to help implement the sedentarization of nomads in fortified villages in the Northern Frontier District, as a technique of war against the *shifita* (an Amharic term translated as “bandit,” and a linguistic trace of the prejudice against unsettled pastoralists).

The *shifita* conflict built upon mistrust of the local population who had voted in an informal plebiscite to join Somalia after independence. As reported on the front page of the *Daily Nation*, only one year after independence, the new Kenyan government declared a state of emergency in the Northern Frontier District, and rounded up “*shifita*” in Garissa, where Dadaab is presently located, under the orders of Minister of Home Affairs Daniel Arap Moi. These events were further fueled by a Cold War tension between Kenya and its neighbor Somalia under Siad Barre’s communist rule of Somalia from 1969 to 1991. They arguably translated into a spatial strategy in the 1990s — again under Moi’s policy, and this time in his new role as Kenya’s Prime Minister — of the encampment of Somali refugees in the North Eastern Province.

TWO NATIVE HUTS ///

While these acts of territorial bordering and architectures of sedentarization suggest the calcification of practices in the colony and postcolony, another architecture may have acted instead to pose resistance. The Native Hut Tax, a nominal amount imposed in 1901 throughout the colonies, was implemented with the intention of drawing Africans into the labor economy. This patriarchal Native Hut could be forced to engage in modern economic and infrastructural systems, as suggested by the materiality articulated in the East Africa Protectorate Notice No. 18 of 1901 (United Kingdom National Archives file F.O. 881/7616), for the taxation of “Makuti huts or other huts used as dwellings and built of mud or wattle and daub.” Conversely, the vernacular form of the *tuqul*, or *aqal*, could not. This building form was crafted to be dismantled, mounted on

camels for transportation between water and grazing areas, and reconstructed with regularity.

The *tuqul* construction process is incredibly labor-intensive, and, not surprisingly, bound up with gender identity and socioeconomic roles. As several Somali women explained to me, and as explicated further by Rhoda M. Ibrahim in a study of women's roles in the pastoral economy of Somalia, the primary structural elements, made from the horizontal roots of the galool tree (an acacia) are cut from pliable green wood, with both ends inserted into the ground until they dry in the shape of an arch, forming curved elements of a strong frame. 8 to 12 of these structural members are bent into crescents over several days, arranged in a circular plan with branch ends meeting in the middle at the top of the dome. 15 to 25 longer, more elastic branches are stretched perpendicularly around them and tied at joints. These are covered with *harar* (woven grass mats) and bent green wood branches. These tasks are and have been managed by women, traditionally responsible for all aspects of the process: gathering materials, fabricating the construction elements, and erecting the structure. The skills needed to fabricate the structure build upon years of practice, beginning in puberty and culminating in building a first *tuqul* after marriage. The traditional *harar* cover for this frame has been substituted in refugee contexts with gathered elements: plastic sheeting, discarded fabric, and remnants of other non-food aid materials emblazoned with donor or agency names and logos ("USA," "UNHCR"). Moreover, the role of women's responsibility for this dwelling has persisted, even in the absence of materials and mobility in refugee settings along the border of Somalia. Najib Khalif, a former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees employee recalled in one of our 2011 interviews that the social consequences for

women included an increase in domestic violence during a windy season in the region of Afar in Ethiopia when numerous *tuquls* blew away.

Bound up as such with gender identity, it is important to note that the pragmatic and symbolic role of women in the material construction of the home extends ironically to an architecture intended for mobility and once freely crossing colonial borders, which presently remains parked in plots, blocks, and sectors designated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at Dadaab, as if making tangible the bounded conditions of the census. The *tuqul* was the first shelter type that appeared at Ifo, occasionally also housing aid workers, and would become a predominant architectural form in the morphology of the settlements, used even by refugees fleeing from urban contexts or from countries other than Somalia, because its building materials were among the basic non-food-item aid kits handed out to most new arrivals. As this suggests, on the one hand, the *tuqul* resists modernization, while, on the other, it resists its own history and architecture: signifying ephemerality, yet performing permanence.

This history of territorial form at the Kenya-Somalia borderland suggests a set of architectures that figure more significantly into political histories than it may seem. **While the colony may not have been a designed artifact, it may be understood as "architected," having left behind a residue of borders that cannot be explained by social or political frameworks alone.** It is this work that the hut and the frontier have ultimately performed, which the historian might ultimately identify through the investigation of these objects in history.

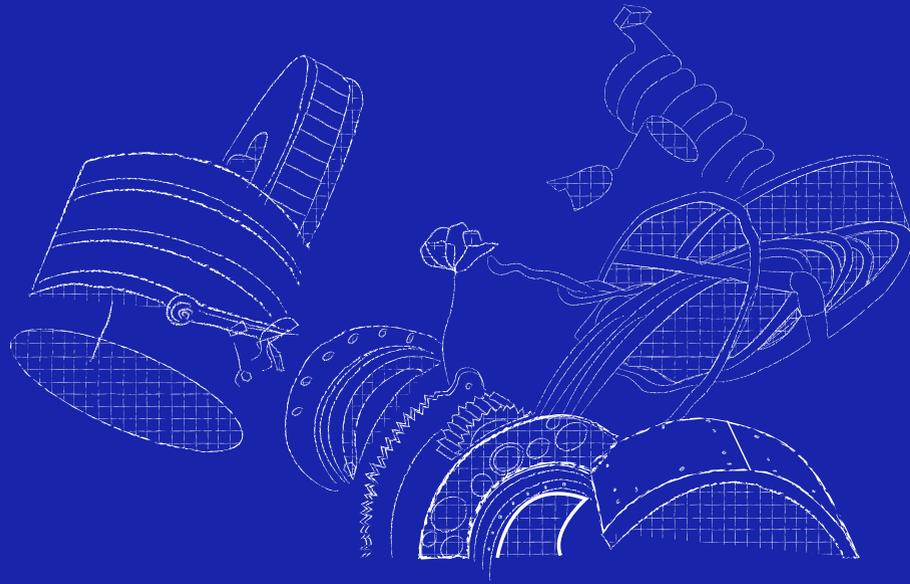
Again, because of its scale and ephemerality together, the Dadaab complex at once approaches and resists being "urban," on the one hand, and a "camp," on the other. It has become the largest hosting



establishment for refugees ever in history, yet has been absent from ordinary maps for much of the period since it was installed. The complex has occasioned significant interventions by architects as well as humanitarians, serving as a major duty station for each, and playing an important role during a quarter century of operation as an empirical basis for field study, as part of the practice of architecture and planning in and for humanitarian environments. Put another way, the complex has iterated decades of expertise-building while also providing a

significant test bed for emergency planning. However, in spite of this material and historical presence, its undergirding *invisibility* — in terms of visibility as well as historicity — produces precariousness beyond the ontological sort. Dadaab is also epistemologically precarious. Its records do not register as those of a city or town might. Its historical figures are transient, counted en masse, and even births and deaths can go undocumented.

As such, the site serves as an important historiographical model, and it does so in two ways. Historically, as an extraordinary expression of emergency urbanism that imbricates architecture, design, and planning with aid, it offers purchase on global history and postcolonial theory, thinking Africa in the world and violent migration as immanent to the human condition. Aesthetically, it offers an object lesson in the architecture of permanent impermanence — the paradox of ephemerality in contemporary emergency environments — operating here at the scale and with the affect of a city. And yet, for many reasons, we don't see Dadaab, in space or in time, in architecture or in history. **Taking this into account, the paradoxes that call into question the character of the site as urban or non-urban are, in the end, qualifications that remain beside the point and reflect only a colonial project to classify.** Conversely, the hut and the frontier remain architected objects that enable a different seeing and a different learning, through a material view of East Africa that the colonial archive alone does not provide. ■



Walks through the Scrapyard: Maybe in These Fragments There Might Be...

INTRODUCTION BY AYA NASSAR ///

In 2016, acclaimed Iraqi writer Sinan Antoon published *Index* (translated into English as *The Book of Collateral Damage*). It is a novel in which the elemental fragments of post 2003 Baghdad narrate their (hi)stories up to the moment of their destruction. It is a book about the many temporalities of disorderly existence, brought together by the destruction of Baghdad's famed street of letters. I chose "Walks through the Scrapyard: Maybe in These Fragments There Might Be..." by Tentative Collective from the issue on *Designed Destructions* because it poetically resonates with the political violence inherent within this seeming disorder and fragmentation of cities, spaces and architecture. The article assembles and mends the city through indexing its fragments: the discarded; the excessive; the superfluous and the ambitious. Writing with fragments is a political message against the masterful gaze of modernity's order which seeks to organise lives, bodies, histories and spaces; to have a place for everything and for everything its place. A walk with indexed fragments challenges this violent desire for order. It strips its façade of neutrality and control. It allows us to practice the politics of reading differently, perhaps as an invitation to subvert writing, to hold debris complicit, and to think of ruination as a process with multiple temporalities and effect. The discarded elements of city making and breaking never disappear, and are never innocent; they retell the politics of our lived spaces that remain getting undone under multiple assaults of colonialism, neocolonialism, dispossession and epistemic violence. To think about spaces and bodies with fragments is to insist on finding meaning within the designed politics of ruination.

Aya Nassar is a teaching fellow of Human Geography in the University of Sussex. She holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies from the University of Warwick. She is interested in understanding the materiality of cities and storytelling the politics of the postcolony. Her research focuses on Cairo and, sometimes, Coventry.

Walks through the Scrapyard: Maybe in These Fragments There Might Be...

Shershah Scrapyard. 2017

There is a sludge
beneath the earth
moving with cohesive force;
gaining momentum
with the burial of
discarded fragments.
It moves to find its way,
to find its place
to find its meaning.
How long will it remain there
discarded and hidden
under the ground
underground
beneath the grating hatchways
beneath the many decks?

There, on the fringes of the city
within its landfills
inside metallic scrapyards
are collections of discarded things
gathered in unlikely lists
There are pieces of Karachi
telling stories of a city;
of many cities within cities-
as they press against its walls.
There is an acid fracture
an air drill
an annular blowout
an artificial lift
an automatic slip
a bailing
a belly buster
a bit
a blind ram
a block
a blooey line
a blowout
a bore hole
a bullet perforator
a casing
a cathead
a catline
a cementing
a chain drive
a choke
a christmas tree
a completion rig
What will happen when
100,000 cubic meters of sludge
slides down a hill,
gathering dust
and rock
unidentified objects
and bodies,
towards you?
Towards all
that you have collected
and built
into a semblance of some sort;
a semblance
of something you call home.

There is a deadline
a derrick
a drill collar
a drill pipe
a drill stem
a driller
a finger
a fish
a foaming agent
a geronimo
a guy line
a hoist
a hook
a jackknife mast
a kelly
a kick
a pipe ram
a rathole
a reeve
a rig
a shale shaker
a shear ram
a sheave
a slurry
a sour gas
a spinning cathead
a stab
a stabbing board
a swab
a swivel
a whipstock
a wildcat
There are houses on the move



houses on the run.
They lift themselves up and glide effortlessly
on land and over water
avoiding moments of impending loss
to enter places full of promise.
Sometimes they are seen
hovering over ground
and over the seas
where they gaze, they float, they climb, and
they finally descend
to rest the weight of their loads.
Lest, upon a strike
they scatter into fragments
There are Kings Lavish
Apartments
King's Garden
King's Luxury Homes
King's Dream Villas
King's Hill View
King's Excellency
King's Galaxy
King's Skyline
King's Cottages
King's Classic
King's Luxury Apartments
Offering all the amenities and facilities
of modern living.
Blue Bell Residency
Chapal Skymark
Diamond Tower
Gulf Towers
La Grande by Al Ghafoor
Marwa Palace



Metro Twin Tower
 Omega Heights
 Pyramid Residency
 Royal Luxuria
 Seven Wonders City
 Breathtaking lifestyles to the common people.
 Shumail Heights
 The Arkadians
 The Orchid
 Tricon Tower
 Bahria Sports City Karachi
 Bahria Farmhouses Karachi
 Bahria Golf City Karachi
 Bahria Homes Karachi
 Bahria Apartments
 Bahria Heights
 Bahria Town Karachi (Overseas Block)
 Bahria Hoshang Pearl Karachi
 Bahria Opal 225 Karachi
 Bahria Diamond Bar City on Kutta Island
 Enchants residents by the grace and amazing acrobats of Dolphins in an interactive show.
 DHA City Karachi
 DHA Oasis
 DHA Creek City
 DHA Creek Vista
 A gated community monitored by DHA professional vigilant staff.
 Karachi Waterfront Sugarland City
 Navy Housing Scheme
 Fazaia Housing
 Defence Regency
 Emaar Crescent Bay

Emaar Pearl Towers
 Emaar Reef Towers
 Emaar Coral Towers
 Emaar Canyon Views
 Emaar Prados Villas
 Emaar Alma
 Emaar Mirador Villas
 Life, the way you have always wanted
 There are Xtreme Bars G-500W
 Deformed Bars G-60
 Billet
 Sarriya
 Sand Chenab
 Sand Ravi
 Silica Sand
 Bajri Margalla
 Bajar Dina
 Natural
 Portland
 PVC
 Clinker
 Blast Furnace
 Rapid Hardening
 OPC 42.5
 Quick Setting
 Colored
 Sulphate Resisting
 White Portland
 High Alumina
 Block
 Plain
 Reinforced
 Prestressed
 Reinforced Brick
 Fiber Reinforced
 Lime



Polymer
 Sulphur Infiltrated
 High Early Strength
 Water proof
 Common burnt
 Sand Lime
 Engineered
 Lucky
 Dewan
 Attock
 Bestway
 Dadabhoy
 Pakistan Slag
 Javedan
 Al-Abbas
 Zeal Pak
 Pioneer
 There is CORE (Client Oriented Real Estate)
 Dream Ambassador (Pvt) LTD
 UR Property
 Z.S Associates
 Universal Property Network
 Rayyan Real Investment
 Rajput Enterprises
 Athar Associates
 Icon Real Estate
 Al Rafay Associates
 New Rockwell Associates
 Zakria Real Estate & Marketing
 Estate Bank Property Advisor
 Karachi Real Estate
 Sonata Properties



Buy N Sell Realty
 Takaful Estate
 Kazmi Associates
 Home Land Enterprises
 Kainat Associates
 Hallmark Estate
 Tabani Real Estate
 Munawar Estate & Builders
 Land Masters Real Estate
 Real Investment Consultants
 Luxury Properties
 The Estate Arts
 Infinity Properties
 Geo Real Estate
 Aslam Brothers & Sons
 Abuzar Estate
 Splendour Homes
 Al Hafiz Estate
 Online Enterprises
 Wasif Associates
 786 Estate
 Advance Properties
 Sunset Properties
 Pardesi Real Estate
 Al Tawakkal Enterprises
 Khurram Enterprises
 DR. Estate
 Defence 4 U Estate
 Jinnah Estate
 Tricon Associate
 Shaheen Builders & Marketing
 Falak Enterprises
 United Country Real Estate



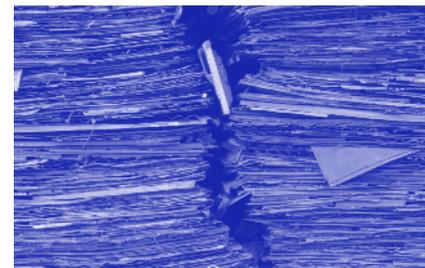
Hi-Land Estate
 Sky Line Real Estate
 Syed Zada Enterprises
 Makaan Realtors
 Arafat Estate And Marketing
 Best Property Solution
 Al Wahid Associates
 Sahara Properties
 Harem Construction Co
 Lakyari Estate
 Universal Estate & Builders
 Sheikh Estate Dot Com
 Shah Global Enterprises
 VIP Estate
 There is a Platinum Estate Agency
 and Shackles Enterprises
 There is iron scrap
 and nigger scrap
 and ms melted
 and chaddors
 and bundles
 and local bundles
 and nigger bundles
 and light bundles
 and beerh
 and loha
 and silver
 and steel
 and cast steel
 and cast iron
 and gunehgaar loha
 and gunehgaar steel
 and parchoon
 and goolli
 and bhangaar
 and aaru
 and chikni mitti

and SS (16-4) solah chaar grade
 and SS 118 aikso athara grade
 and SS Indian grade
 and garrari
 and chotta makkah
 and rassa
 and light scrap
 and dharra
 and purchoon
 and ship plates
 and 7up plates
 and chira plates
 and gates
 There is red sludge
 unidentified object 8
 Chinese Baijui Liquor
 off-brand smartphones
 bubble blowing wands
 plastic molded items
 unidentified object 43
 window grills
 900 Fushan I keyboards
 63 unpaired shoes
 PVC ceiling tiles
 embossed stationery
 unidentified object 208
 58 bodies
 33 buildings
 14 factories
 2 office buildings
 1 cafeteria
 3 dormitories
 13 sheds
 100,000 square meters
 special economic zone
 151 rescue cranes
 There are white flowers on debris



no exact number available as yet
 There are scraps of broken, fragmented and
 used metals
 from the freighter ship *Elizabeth II*.
 They are making their way up north
 from the shipbreaking yard at Gadani
 to build a city
 to build many new cities.
 Cities like forts
 forts that fortify themselves against all the
 residue
 they have rendered waste around them.
 There are paranoid walls of paranoid cities
 which extend to great heights
 in their wish to not confront excesses of
 their own.
 There are excesses
 excesses that flow, heap, gather, collect,
 stack, assemble, bundle,
 pile, jam, clog, rise, tower, and spill beyond
 each gate
 beyond each encircling boundary.
 There are
 grated hatchways

breast hooks
 boom jaws
 burden boards
 sculling notches
 rudder gudgeons
 rising ribs
 (hanging) knees



two and two.
 right leg of one
 left leg of other
 right hand of one
 left hand of other
 legs in legs
 hands in hands

There is the world in your palm
 connecting people
 with fingerprint scanner
 OmniVision:
 daily, weekly, monthly, 45 days, & yearly
 a bold statement
 with smart pause control
 infinity touch
 world's slimmest
 snapdragon.
 Billowing from a star
 a million years ago,
 there is scatter
 of decaying shrapnel.
 It accumulates,
 building a mass,
 bundling together
 interstellar sand
 from nebula in curved space.
 The sound of its arrival
 registers on the crust of the earth. On the
 Congo craton there are
 rare earth minerals
 dug out of igneous rock
 embedded in the myriad layers of time.



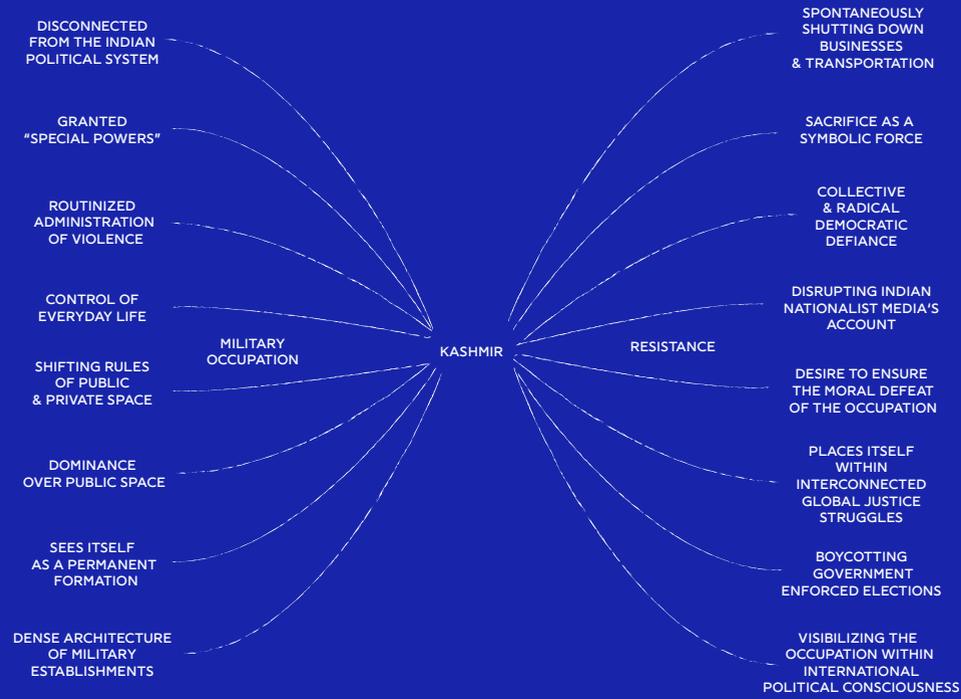
Columbite–tantalite, Tantalum, Coltan;
more valuable than gold-
mined with bare hands
and bare skin.
Smuggled to
special economic zones.
Dullblack
lustrous grey-
ever increasing in value
reduced in size,
smelted to powders and tubes
capacitors and circuit boards.
Encased in glossy armatures,
and rose gold rectangles.
And there are million dollar
ad campaigns,

I'm Jacqueline Fernandes
I Noir, do you?

There is a dust rising
and it gradually
takes the ground away
a grain at a time.
It rises a grain at a time.
A grain at a time a cluster forms.
Brewing a storm within a cloud.

There is a cloud.
It stretches for rows
upon rows
upon rows,
and columns
upon columns
upon columns.
Like cities within cities
upon cities
and beyond cities.
Drenched with ambition
it does not know how to float.
All that it has accumulated
weighs it down,
chains it down.
Like decks upon decks
upon decks
upon decks

upon decks
There is a dust rising
from the polished surface
of a stainless silver rectangle
from the grated hatchways.
There is a dust rising from the sludge
beneath the earth.
It billows, escaping metallic bonds
stretching out onto the decks
into the space between bodies.
And as you breathe it in,
with every breath,
it brings you closer to the ground;
making you more like itself
more indium
more silicon
more yttrium
more lanthanum
more neodymium
more gadolinium
more praseodymium
more terbium
more europium
more dysprosium
more lithium
more magnesium
more tantalum
more antimony
more gallium
more arsenic
more copper
more iron
more lead. ■



Disobedient Bodies, Defiant Objects: Occupation, Necropolitics, and the Resistance in Kashmir

INTRODUCTION BY CHARMAINE CHUA ///

One of the distinct pleasures of reading *The Funambulist* is that it is a magazine committed to decolonial internationalism, helping its readers connect more familiar movements against the brutalities of occupation and violence in North America and Europe to ongoing struggles in the postcolonial and non-Western worlds. One of my favorite texts is thus “Disobedient Bodies, Defiant Objects: Occupation, Necropolitics and The Resistance in Kashmir” by Mohamad Junaid, in issue 21. Mapping the martial politics of police and military violence in Kashmir, the essay interrogates the multiple spatial modalities by which on one side, state-sanctioned control and suppression, and on the other, the subaltern spatial knowledge of Kashmiri independence movement, both utilized mechanisms of mobility and spatial environment, the latter harnessing its acute knowledge of space to counter the asymmetric power of the state. In highlighting Kashmiris as agents of their own history-making, in revealing the possibilities for contestation against disproportionate power of the state, and in insisting on the necessity of Kashmir’s freedom, Junaid’s essay insists we connect struggles against the police and military across international space and global justice struggles. The text highlights what *The Funambulist* does best: it grounds analysis in structured systems, while refusing to cede ground to nihilism. In so doing, it opens our imagination up and gives us a toolkit for building internationalist solidarity and resistance against the routinization of brutality and violence around the world.

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Disobedient Bodies, Defiant Objects: Occupation, Necropolitics and the Resistance in Kashmir

In 1992, Indian soldiers stationed inside a bunker in my hometown in Kashmir shot dead a teenage boy from my school. I did not witness the event, but I vividly remember how his death was described. Bilal was a year or two older than me and had been suffering from mental illness. His condition sometimes caused him visual hallucinations and other forms of sensory misperception, not to mention acute pain. During moments when his pain would become unbearable, he would run out of his parents' home and wander the streets. The evening he was shot, Bilal had walked deliriously and come close to the

perimeter of the bunker. Later that night, a few townspeople gathered and quietly carried his limp body back to his home. The next morning at school, we heard several accounts of the killing. People were angry with the callous way soldiers had shot Bilal, but beyond privately simmering in impotent rage, no one knew what to do. Many indirectly blamed Bilal's grieving parents for not restraining him.

Culturally, seeing the mad or the mentally ill wander the streets was neither unusual nor worrisome. In fact, the mad often evoked reverence and laughter in equal measure, with both built on a core feeling of empathy. But the streets had become perilous spaces. A couple of years previously, Indian soldiers had arrived in their hundreds of thousands to suppress the incipient Kashmiri independence movement. The soldiers housed themselves in hospitals, abandoned houses, and schools. They fanned out in apple orchards and positioned themselves on hilltops. **They built sandbag bunkers that jutted out onto the streets and created roadblocks and checkpoints that brought public mobility to a grinding halt.**

This military occupation of public spaces established new rules of mobility, assembly, sociality, and, in general, everyday life — rules that were violently enforced. **Under colonial-era laws that India passed, the military was granted “special powers” in Kashmir to kill or arrest people, punish views and opinions, or confiscate or destroy property if deemed as threats to the Indian claims of sovereignty over Kashmir.** The “threats” could range from armed violence against Indian installations to disobeying the military's rules of ordinary movement on the streets, and from poetry that extolled freedom from injustice to sketch-drawn maps that showed Kashmir out of India. In 1992, when Bilal was shot, Kashmiris had yet to become fully used to this new regime of control. Often,



people didn't know who or *what* to blame for deaths like Bilal's. Some still believed that if Kashmiris hadn't demanded freedom and rights, India would have allowed them to live in peace.

Bilal's death on the street was not a happenstance or a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. His death was imminent, written into the spatial code of the military occupation. This code has now been in place for the last 28 years, relentlessly and without signs of abating. What was ostensibly in the beginning a response to the independence movement, quickly became an autonomous military-political complex. The occupation grew gradually disconnected from the Indian political system. Indeed, Indian politics served as a nationalistic scaffolding for the occupation, publicly justifying its continuation, but the military occupation itself became immune from political changes within India. While different regimes came

to power in New Delhi in the following three decades, the nature of the occupation remained unchanged. The occupation on its part duly aided in keeping in place the veneer of civil administration and managing elections in Kashmir, but these were nothing more than the spatial manipulation of politics — “elections” were about international optics to deflect criticism over India's human rights abuses, and for cultivating a class of native collaborators. Structurally built on a triad of spatial dominance over public space, military control of everyday life, and routinized administration of violence, the occupation in Kashmir operated as if its permanence was assured. Kashmir as a consequence became a veritable space of exception where life could continue only at the mercy of Indian soldiers and their perceptions of “threat.”

It is possible that, all those years ago, the soldiers had warned Bilal to turn away before they shot him. At least, that is how

the military casually mentions these killings in their official statements on the counterinsurgency campaigns in Kashmir. In November 2018, when soldiers shot dead Rayees Wani, a mentally ill man from Shopian in South Kashmir, who was apparently walking toward an army camp, the official representative explained that it was easy for soldiers to mistake Wani's "intentions." In February 2018, when they shot dead 65 year-old Habibullah, also suffering from mental illness, who was barely clothed and walking barefoot toward an Indian air force station, the official said that Habibullah was warned before he was shot. The mentally ill Kashmiris were getting killed mistakenly, the official argued, because they "just roam around."

It is unclear how "warnings" appear or sound to a mentally ill person. They may or may not apprehend a warning, especially when Indian soldiers speak an alien language (Hindi) that many in Kashmir do not fully understand.

Such errors in the reception of warnings, however, mean the difference between life and death. Of course, soldiers are trained to kill in a war, and the Indian forces in Kashmir are positioned as if they are in a war, even though no formal declaration of war has been made. Their impulse is to see Kashmiris as always potentially a threat, unless they, the Kashmiris themselves, can prove otherwise.

Some newspapers have reported that since 1990 about 15 mentally ill people have been killed outside military installations in the region. These are fairly small numbers compared to the tens of thousands of Kashmiri civilians overall who have been killed or remain missing in the conflict. However, in its Kashmir Mental Health Survey Report (2015) Médecins sans Frontières found that nearly "1.8 million adults (45% of the adult population) in the Kashmir Valley are experiencing symptoms of mental

distress." The report further states that "on average, an adult living in the Kashmir Valley has witnessed or experienced 7.7 traumatic events during his/her lifetime," with such violent experiences having a positive correlation with the explosion of mental illness in the region. It makes one wonder how many civilians killed by Indian soldiers for "flouting" the military's rules of mobility in public spaces were cases of misperception, mishearing, or misunderstanding. Clearly, *deaths by mistake* are too much of a pattern to be ignored as mistakes. Like casual justifications for killing mentally-ill Kashmiris, the Indian military treats the Kashmiri deaths that it causes without any justification as minor aberrations, as if the occupation had momentarily malfunctioned. Most killings, however, are not even deemed as requiring justification — these are the dead whose political opinions and activities automatically ensure death under the "special powers."

In my ethnographic research in the region between 2014 and 2016, I found that Kashmiris did not believe civilian deaths to be aberrations or mistakes. They saw deaths under occupation as arbitrary, automated, and requiring no plausible reason to occur. **The military's rules of mobility — where, how, and when to walk, or how to associate with others — were so elaborate and constantly shifting that Kashmiris were bound to break them at some point or the other.** Mechanisms of control like curfews, cordon and search operations, checkpoint frisking, house searches, and others, frequently produced situations where rules would break, and violence occur. Most people I worked with had suffered or witnessed state violence on such occasions. Violence often took the form of beatings or other cruel bodily punishments. Many reported that they had, at several points in their lifetimes, barely escaped death at the hands of soldiers.

The occupation was, thus, not simply



inflicting violence against those who didn't or couldn't follow its commands, it was actually producing a population, through persistent violence and shifting rules of public space, who would no longer be able to understand the commands. By exposing people to death in this way, the primary mode of communication between the occupation and its subjects had become "necropolitical." The occupation subjugated life (as the political theorist Achille Mbembe describes necropolitics) to its power of death. The occupation's material infrastructure exacerbated this precarity of life in Kashmir. The violence was often administered at points of contact composed of a dense architecture of stationary and mobile military establishments. Over time, even the public infrastructure-building began to align itself with the military's spatial vision. Highways, bridges, roads, dams, and airports became "dual-purpose," with priority often given to the military's needs.

The spatiality of the occupation inevitably came into a direct conflict with

Kashmiri senses of place. Places and paths Kashmiris had known and traversed through ages, sites they considered sacred and in which they worshiped, and valleys and meadows they imagined as spaces of enjoyment, were radically fragmented. **The military's "security" grid created no-go areas, restricted-entry spaces, counterinsurgency operational sectors, and special police zones, smothering underneath a sense of how Kashmiris knew their homeland.** Even domestic spaces became the objects of the military's wrath. Every so often, houses and neighborhoods marked as rebel hideouts were blown up or burnt down in spectacular displays of animosity and firepower. The slow-moving but furious destruction of homes was explained as part of the re-establishment of "order." The catalog of destruction included the overtly defiant objects and sites of resistance that commemorated the Kashmiri dead, like water taps named after "martyrs" in public places, which were demolished as soon as

(3) Clashes near the Jamia Masjid in Shopian on February 2, 2018. / Photograph by Tawseef Nazir.

(1) Activists facing the Indian police/army after the funeral of militant Commander Dawood Salafi in Anantnag on June 22, 2018. / Photograph by Musab

(4) Activists facing the Indian police/army after the funeral of militant Commander Dawood Salafi in Anantnag on June 22, 2018. / Photograph by Bhat Burhan.

(2) Locals inspect a house destroyed by the Indian army in Kuthipura on November 28, 2018. / Photograph by Firdous Qadri.

people built them.

The occupation sees Kashmiris as an insurgent population to be kept under total, non-negotiable control. To control them, Kashmir has to be under a perpetual state of ordered disorder, in which, by instilling chaos in everyday life, people's sense of rootedness shall be gradually destroyed. Violence will be systematically administered yet maintained below the threshold of international visibility. In essence, the occupation is not a military strategy to achieve a political solution. It is a political strategy to achieve a military deadlock. Lacking legitimacy, the military occupation remains the only way India can hold on to Kashmir. Any possibility of a "political" outreach would mean contending with a people refusing to be ruled by India. Beneath the occupation, minor political set-ups operate. Yet, the political sphere remains delimited, extending only as far as the occupation allows it. Just as life in Kashmir remains in tension with the occupier state's necropower, every space of politics runs against the violent void the occupation has created.

The occupation has not hidden itself. And Kashmiris see it precisely for what it is. The people I met or interviewed during my research had a clear and coherent picture of the occupation. They saw the occupation *itself*, as a totality rather than its singular agents, sites, or legalities, as the object of resistance. Kashmiri political subjectivity seemed no longer bound by traditional India-Pakistan national territorial claims — a staple since the 1947 partition of South Asia. Kashmiris evoked the international principle of the right to self-determination, but no longer viewed through the chequered history of India-Pakistan diplomacy or wars. **While India and Pakistan continued to frame Kashmir as a territorial dispute between them, Kashmiris afforded no public credibility to these claims.**

Apprehending the occupation as an overarching system that had become a violent normality, rather than seeing it simply as an aftereffect of the national-territorial dispute that would go away if Pakistan and India spoke to each other, has been a long process. Nevertheless, it has changed the modes of protest. Acts of resistance are directed at the visible symbols and manifestations of the occupation. New resistance is more about symbolic defiance and capturing the imagination of the people, than an armed strategy of seeking control over territory. What Kashmiri rebels and activists appear to want is not so much to inflict battlefield defeat, which in any case may not be possible. They want to ensure a moral defeat of the occupation. Street battles between stone-throwing youths and fully-armed Indian soldiers have proliferated. These visually dramatic, if emotionally draining, violent events inevitably lead to bodily injuries and sometimes deaths of Kashmiris. The images of these battles circulate globally, however, as icons of the violence embedded within the occupation.

The armed militancy, which had since the late 1990s remained dormant, has also transformed. New Kashmiri rebels have emerged who depend less on their military skills — often they have no training and possess hardly any weapons — than their symbolic appeal. Each militant is popular and evokes tremendous support among the people. They survive among the sea of people around them. When rebels die in battle — many do as soon as they join — people spontaneously supply new recruits. Their self-taken images circulate widely among Kashmiri youths as objects of awe and reverence. **"Encounters" between Kashmiri rebels and Indian soldiers become critical symbolic events. The encounters are grossly unequal, with one or two rebels facing hundreds of Indian soldiers, but the encounter sites become instant**

shrines to the resistance. People drape bodies of dead rebels in varied Kashmiri flags at the encounter sites and carry them around raising rhythmic slogans for freedom, while women shower them with candies and sing lullabies and wedding songs to mourn. Armed militancy is (perhaps by design) very limited. The government estimates that only a few hundred are active. Yet, the armed rebellion appears, because of its symbolic appeal and visual power, as a larger-than-life part of the overall resistance.

While the occupation has shrunk non-violent physical and political spaces, newer Kashmiri resistance practices open up a wider space of protest, politics, and imagination. Kashmiris have been systematically boycotting the government-enforced elections. The boycotters do not concern themselves with individuals or parties, but instead with the occupation itself. Each boycott is presented as a collective and radical democratic defiance against the shallow "democracy" authorized from above. Persistently successful boycotts, despite the military's crackdowns against them, show that a meaningful democracy cannot live under or alongside the occupation.

More than ever, people try to ensure that each death counts. Each time the occupation kills a Kashmiri, the news spreads like wildfire across the region. To protest, people spontaneously shut down businesses and transportation, almost in a mimic inversion of the occupation's diktats. These shutdowns have become cathartic, as if people take pleasure in collectively standing up to the occupation's desire to control Kashmiri lives. **It is easier to deploy the military's apparatus of control to bring everyday life to a halt as a punishment, than to use the same apparatus to prevent people**

from doing so on their own as a protest.

One Kashmiri shopkeeper I spoke with last summer expressed the sentiment behind the shutdowns succinctly: "They can force me to stop going about my life, but they can't prevent me from doing so on my own."

It is hard to see how this self-inflicted pain helps the resistance — some Kashmiris indeed argue against shutdowns as self-destructive — yet defiance under the occupation takes unexpected, existential forms. Resistance, some Kashmiri activists argue, is not about "winning;" at least not in the short run. The dominant metaphor of resistance is not winning; it is "sacrifice." Sacrifice is not a meaningless loss. These are losses that gather symbolic force in the face of seeming hopelessness. Kashmiri youths fighting street battles with government forces challenge and invite them to shoot or attack them. One can misread this as a death wish, but in fact these are instances of *life itself* as the final frontier ranged defiantly against the necropolitical occupation.

Kashmiri youth activists realize that the occupation sees itself as a permanent formation backed fully by a hardened nationalism in India. Within the Indian mainstream media and in Indian social media spaces, supporters of the occupation ask Kashmiris to "go to Pakistan," live subordinate lives under India or be ready to die. Among some Kashmiri youth, there is despair as a result. For others, the occupation will end when it turns around to traumatize India's own citizens, who normally receive sanitized, nationalistic versions of what India is doing in Kashmir. The images of the occupation's violence, the activists argue, can no longer be contained within Kashmir. They spill out occasionally, and sometimes even flood the Indian public sphere itself, inflicting a psychological wound



back onto the Indian polity. While Kashmiris may not defeat the occupation militarily, is it inconceivable that they might stir enough of India's own citizenry into eventually rolling back the occupation?

Aside from resistance within Kashmir, Kashmiri activists and writers are visibilizing the occupation within the Indian and the international political consciousness. Kashmir, they argue, is a crucial link within interconnected global justice struggles. One can't express solidarity with the Palestinian struggle while supporting the Indian occupation in Kashmir; or oppose casteist violence in India while remaining silent on the state violence against Kashmiris. On social media platforms, Kashmiri activists file, frame, and filter their experiences under the occupation in ways that disrupt Indian nationalist media's accounts. Since 2008, Kashmiri writings have found a large readership both in and outside India. A flurry of fiction, memoir, poetry, and non-fiction genres of writing in English language have found willing publishers. New works of literature, most recently Feroz Rather's superb collection of stories *The Night of Broken Glass* (2018), disrupt parochial Indian nationalist imagi-

naries. Against a smorgasbord of stereotypical images of the Kashmiri in the Indian imagination — from the cinematic character as an impassive element of Kashmir's beautiful natural landscape who can be benignly ignored, to the deadly anti-nationalist figure lurking as a threat to India's body-politic who must be remorselessly eliminated — Kashmiris have emerged in resistance as a people with full personhood, a deep sense of belonging to Kashmir, and as agents in their own history-making.

But will any of this cut ice in the present? Kashmiri activists are aware that all of this is happening at a particularly cruel historical juncture for small nations and minority groups around the world. The intensified necropolitics of the occupation might even be a result of the global rise of routinized "brutality," which the sociologist Saskia Sassen has described as an everyday savage and cruel attitude toward those considered "losers." Yet, as historical evidence shows, peoples' fates are interconnected, especially in the present era. Several years ago, an Indian expert polemically asked "Will Kashmir Stop India's Rise?" in an essay of the same

title in the *Foreign Affairs* magazine (Sumit Ganguly, 2006). He dismissively claimed Kashmir will not stop the rise, if anything it will be a minor distraction. Such triumphalism has proven premature.

As national governments in dominant states are becoming harder, viciously territorial, and disdainful of human rights, nationalist demagogues have risen who use real or imagined threats to curtail the rights of their own citizens. In India, the Hindu nationalist regime led by Narendra Modi has used the rhetoric of "threats" emerging from a Kashmiri-Muslim-Pakistani associational chain to infect Indian polity with fear. His right-wing cronies have taken control of key aspects of India's social-political life (media, universities, cultural institutions). Historical narratives are no longer shaped by scholars, but by political hacks who mutate them to fuel a false sense of Hindu victimhood and a virulent desire for Hindu supremacy. Anti-minority and casteist violence within India has burgeoned, even as hundreds of millions remain helplessly stuck in poverty. Religious zealots assemble street power and a sense of political impunity to dictate what the national priorities should be.

As the country slides further into fascism, the return to a civil discourse appears remote. Many conscientious Indians increasingly realize that the movement toward a secular, pluralistic polity in India would essentially require politically addressing the Kashmir question. **India's freedom from the crony, casteist Hindu fascism is intrinsically linked to Kashmir's freedom from the military occupation.** As famous Indian writer Arundhati Roy once argued: "India needs *azadi* (freedom) from Kashmir just as much as (if not more than) Kashmir needs *azadi* from India." ■

Students strike in the village asking for the release of their teacher on May 4, 2017. / Photograph by Monontour.



Benji Hart

BIOGRAPHY

Benji Hart is an author, artist, and educator from Amherst, MA, living in Chicago. The writer behind the blog *Radical Faggot*, their essays have been anthologized in *Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief* (2017) and *Taking Sides: Radical Solidarity and the Poverty of Liberalism* (2015), both from AK Press. Their commentary has been published at *Teen Vogue*, *The Advocate*, *The Chicago Reader*, and others. They have held residencies with the Rauschenberg Foundation (2018), the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership (2018), and are the recipient of the 3Arts Award in the Teaching Arts (2015).

STATEMENT

My practice as a facilitator, educator, writer, and performance artist is grounded in my experiences as a Black, queer, femme, and gender-nonconforming individual, and guided by the values of popular education, police and prison abolition, Black feminist and queer theory, and the larger Black radical tradition. While I believe none of these practices are revolutionary on their own, I also believe no social transformation is possible without them. Education, performance, and the written word are each tools to be strategically implemented in conjunction with a host of others, working towards a collective vision for freedom. I view my work as a contribution to the struggle for the liberation of all oppressed people, necessary to the process, but meaningless if practiced in isolation.

As an abolitionist, my work is necessarily concerned with the permanent ending of all systems of harm, from policing to patriarchy, from transphobia to transnational neoliberalism. It aspires to be in conversation with oppressed communities globally, living and dead, past, present, and future, invoking our collective knowledge and defiance to both unveil the inherent violence of current social, economic, and political power structures, and to demonstrate in the moment that it is possible to live, act, and move beyond them.

VOICES
OF
CHICAGO #4

#NoCopAcademy Campaign

then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel shuttered 49 of the city's public schools, the largest single sweep of school closings in U.S. history. Of the students and families impacted, 88% were Black, and 93% lived below the poverty line. This came only a year after Emanuel had closed six of the city's 12 public mental health clinics.

In both cases, the city claimed to not have the budget to keep these institutions open. In both cases, the targeted communities protested, occupying clinics, and shutting down sham community talks hosted by Chicago Public Schools.

Stockton was one of the schools ordered closed.

The overwhelming majority of the schools were located on the South and West Sides, but a small cluster in the Uptown area — one of the few Black and poor hubs on the North Side — were lost. Because of a recent and costly renovation performed on Stockton's building, instead of being abandoned, it absorbed the population of a neighboring school, and was converted into Courtney Elementary.

I continued my observations at Courtney in my second year of the masters program. The school's population essentially doubled in size over the summer, while CPS continued to make cuts, including to teacher and counselor positions.

While observing one day in a science classroom, I noticed a table of four students who were not participating in the teacher-led activity. As I approached the cluster of desks, I realized the students were all disabled. I looked around for support staff, but all of them were busy with other students. I sat at the table and helped the group through the experiment as best I could.

They were each gentle and noticeably quiet.

After the class was dismissed I approached the teacher, asking her where the support staff for the group of students I worked with had been. She sighed: "Since they closed Stockton, there haven't been enough staff to meet the students' IEPs [Individual Education Plans]. They're assigning them based on necessity at this point. That group needs help, but they're also the least disruptive when left to their own devices."

When I got home from observations that day, I cried in my aunt's living room.

This was the backdrop that pushed me into the streets when the call #BlackLivesMatter rang out from Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. It was the devalued lives of my students, their teachers, my neighbors, and my own, that made that call so painfully necessary, and which started a fire in my spirit where there had only been exhaustion.

That fire flared up again when, the following year, Black Chicagoans took to the streets in even larger numbers after the release of dashcam video showing white Chicago Police officer Jason Van Dyke shooting Black teenager Laquan McDonald 16 times. City officials delayed the video's release until after Emanuel's reelection. In the wake of the protests, police superintendent Garry McCarthy was fired, and state's attorney Anita Alvarez was voted out of office after the community-led #ByeAnita campaign, but Emanuel remained a target of ire even as he clung to his mayorship.

Then, on the weekend of July 4, 2017 when few were tuned into the news cycle, Emanuel announced the construction of a \$95 million police academy in West Garfield Park, a poor Black neighborhood on the West Side from which Laquan McDonald had hailed. The U.S. Department of Justice, brought to Chicago by the coverup of McDonald's murder, had recently released a scathing report of the Chicago Police Department, describing "institutional racism" as endemic at every level. The final pages of the document listed some hundred recommendations for the department's reform. One of them, vaguely titled "upgraded facilities" was being cited by the city as justification for the massive construction project.

Despite little coverage of the announcement, organizers from multiple previous campaigns caught wind, and spent that summer devising a response. In the fall, with an initially tiny press conference at City Hall for which I was present, the #NoCopAcademy campaign was born.

Directed by a core of Black youth, the multiracial, multigenerational cohort of researchers, organizers, educators, and artists united disparate demographics, far-flung neighborhoods, and diverse political ideologies. The coalition, which ultimately included 105 endorsing organizations, united in the demand that the city not further increase spending on its police department — which, at more than \$1.5 billion annually, is already per capita one of the most well-funded in the U.S. — and instead repurpose those funds for resources that prevent violence, like high-quality public schools, affordable housing, and mental health care — the

#NoCop-Academy Campaign

I was brought to Chicago by my desire to be a teacher.

I moved to the city from Amherst, Massachusetts in 2012 upon being accepted into the Elementary Education masters program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and after my aunt who lives in the North Side neighborhood of Uptown offered to let me stay with her.

My first teaching observation assignment was at Stockton Elementary, a public school only blocks from my aunt's home. While majority Black, the school also reflected Uptown's large immigrant community, and included many Southeast Asian, West African, and Central American students. There was also a high number of students experiencing homelessness, many of whom walked to school from nearby shelters. Uptown has been a port of entry to Chicago since World War II, and has one of the highest concentrations of social services in the city.

In 2013, at the end of my first year in the program, and of observing at Stockton,

exact institutions I'd watched the Emanuel administration relentlessly slash in the Uptown community.

#NoCopAcademy centered the voices of those most impacted by Chicago's cuts to education and hyper-spending on mass incarceration: Black and Brown young people. Youth from the South and West Sides, some of them Austin and West Garfield Park residents, hosted weekly meetings, wrote public statements, held press conferences, led raucous protests on trains, attended trainings and workshops, and organized die-ins — all with the purpose of determining messaging and distilling their own values. I recall supporting two teens in leading an info session to progressive Jewish organization If Not Now, only to find the young leaders not only didn't need my help, but were far better prepared to speak to the campaign's necessity than I was.

Dozens of teenagers, many of whom had been displaced from multiple closed schools over the course of their young lives, developed into experienced organizers over the course of the year-and-a-half-long struggle, and were the backbone and unapologetic voice of the campaign.

The multiracial and multigenerational coalition brought together organizations that are often siloed in Chicago organizing. In our highly segregated city, communities that seldom interact — and even have historically been at odds — not only recognized the danger of the academy's imminent construction, but the need to connect their struggles in order to resist it: Muslim youth disrupted Emanuel's annual Iftar dinner at the Chicago Cultural Center, drawing connections between the militarized police occupation of Black communities in Chicago and Emanuel's longstanding support of the Israeli army in occupied

Palestine. Black leaders joined Organized Communities Against Deportations to head the #ChingaLaMigra (Fuck ICE) march in the Loop, calling on city officials to support real sanctuary for undocumented residents. Queer Asian organization Invisible 2 Invincible brought a #NoCopAcademy contingent to the Lunar New Year Parade in Chinatown, translating their message into multiple languages of the Asian diaspora.

Leading up to the final vote, young people from the South and West Sides marched in my former neighborhood of Uptown against 46th ward alderman and head of the zoning committee James Cappleman. Black youth who rarely travel to the North Side were shocked and enraged to see that one of the closed schools, Stewart Elementary, had been converted into a luxury condominium complex — it cynically kept the name of the former school: Stewart School Lofts — the doors where students once entered for class now key-code protected. Gathered in the parking lot of the complex, a stone's throw from Courtney where I'd been a student teacher, I spoke on the megaphone of the students and families in our midst who'd been pushed out of Uptown through the school closures, making concrete the connections between reparations for Black youth who'd lost access to public education, and the cutting of the police budget.

Harkening back to the DOJ's report, organizers canvassed 500 West Garfield Park residents and released their own report — proving 72% of residents opposed the construction of the academy in the ward — and outlining the kinds of investments wanted in their neighborhood. When Black youth were barred from comment at public hearings, they sued the city and won a settlement, forcing 34th Ward alderman Carrie Austin, chair of the budget

committee, to hold public comment at the next committee vote. They petitioned for government documents, and researched the flow of private money into aldermanic pockets. They led workshops for organizers and communities, educating many for the first time on the contours of local politics.

After a rare defer-and-publish maneuver delayed a vote on partial funding for the cop academy, Rahm Emanuel taunted organizers, telling the *Chicago Sun-Times*, “Between today and Friday [...] there's not gonna be a vote change.” By the end of the campaign, 12 different aldermen abstained, deferred, or flat-out voted against at least one of the proposals for the academy — a stunning 24% of a City Council known to vote with the mayor 92% of the time — and both candidates in the mayoral runoff, Lori Lightfoot and Toni Preckwinkle, opposed aspects of the project.

Chicago organizers who have led the international conversation on abolishing police and prisons can attest that the concept of permanently ending these bodies has long been deemed too radical for mainstream political discussions — even those facilitated by the left. A deep-seated belief in the indispensability of carceral institutions, and concerns about what would replace them, have regularly drowned out Black and Brown voices who have long demanded social support for their communities in place of surveillance and criminalization.

By jumping on the construction of the academy and highlighting the city's hypocritical claims of being “broke” when it closed half its mental health clinics and dozens of public schools only years prior, #NoCopAcademy

provided a concrete example of what fighting for a police- and prison-free world looks like in practice, asking: why can't Chicago find money to heal and educate our communities, yet can always find money to police and incarcerate them? What if we reversed the spending flow, divesting from the failed institution of policing, and investing in the support systems that can prevent crime and violence in the first place?

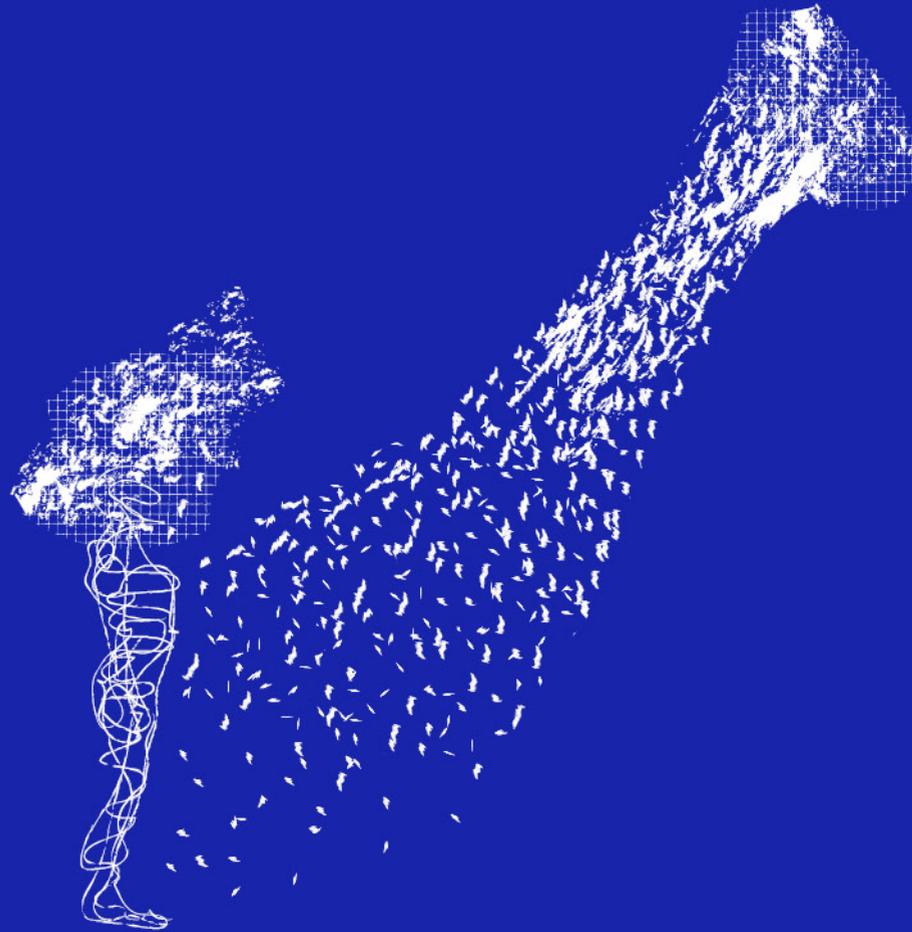
#NoCopAcademy helped illustrate police and prison abolition as common sense, and was a litmus test for “progressive” candidates' true values in both the mayoral and aldermanic elections with which it coincided. It challenged mainstream journalistic practices — which treat policing, education, and housing as separate conversations — demonstrating that a holistic approach to social and economic justice is the only answer to ending systemic violence. Multiple aldermanic races were won by candidates explicitly supporting #NoCopAcademy, a significant shift from just four years earlier when even progressive mayoral candidate Chuy Garcia ran on a platform of “1,000 more cops.”

There are more battles ahead before the city can complete its plans for this hugely unpopular project. The academy has yet to be built. AECOM, the contracted conglomerate that paid \$0 in federal income taxes in 2018, has a lengthy history of defrauding governments. Temporary construction jobs promised by alderman Emma Mitts to West Garfield Park residents have yet to materialize. But more importantly, the deep bonds built by this broad coalition are also prepared to support entirely new campaigns in a new Chicago.

With a total of five freshman aldermen who are Democratic Socialists of America endorsed, the current City Council looks drastically different than it did under Rahm Emanuel. And as battles for rent control, #PoliceFreeSchools, and an emerging effort to stop Emanuel's successor Lori Lightfoot from converting the schools he closed into police training facilities all begin to take shape, city officials are facing a more mobilized and united front opposing plans for militarization and displacement.

As a newcomer to Chicago, it has been an honor to support the youth of this city not just as students, but as active leaders, defending themselves and their neighborhoods from austerity and state violence. Though the #NoCopAcademy campaign is only one example among many of fearless youth-led activism, it is the most powerful one with which I have been connected. It has normalized conversations about the defunding of policing and the bolstering of social services, redefining terms like "community investment," "development," and "safety" in the process.

Investment in community, it teaches us, means funding the resources that nourish, not cage and kill. Development is not the raising of property values, but the strengthening of networks and relationships. Safety comes when every last one of our city's residents have access to the supports required for them to thrive. ■



Antiblack Weather vs. Black Microclimates

INTRODUCTION BY NOELLE GELLER ///

Christina Sharpe's book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* and her overall work are fundamental to expanding the understanding of atmospheres and environments as physical and impartial spaces and to instead see the anti-Blackness, both literally and metaphorically, that they harbor and create. Speaking on this subject for the Toxic Atmospheres issue, in the podcast conversation "Antiblack Weather vs. Black Microclimates," Sharpe shows the inseparability between an atmosphere's toxic qualities and the political circumstances that inflict these conditions on certain groups.

Through her concept of *the weather*, Sharpe reminds us to look carefully at how bodies move through material and metaphorical atmospheres, to interrogate how and why these situations are aimed to inflict death and suffering on Black bodies. Climate can then be better understood — not just as neutral or natural circumstances separate from and solely victim to capitalism — but also as political environments with strong connections to historical violence and continued toxicity. By understanding that anti-Blackness is a climate, it becomes impossible to detach current toxic atmospheres from the history of slavery and colonialism. The water, soil and air hold many repetitions of these violences and Sharpe is constantly thinking about how to approach these continuous toxic atmospheres in order to create microclimates of change. It is an important reminder that, just as toxic atmospheres are never neutral, neither are words, bodies or actions.

Noelle Geller is a bookseller and arts administrator based in Paris. With a BA in Literature and an MA in Arts & Cultural Management, Noelle's professional and personal passions lay in using art and narrative as tools for education, dialogue and relationship-building.

Antiblack Weather vs. Black Microclimates

The following text is a transcript of a conversation recorded on October 10, 2017, with Christina Sharpe, a Professor at Tufts University in the department of English and the programs in Africana and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is the author of the books *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* and *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2010 & 2016). As made explicit in the introduction, her concept of “The Weather” has been instrumental in the articulation of *The Funambulist's* 14th issue's editorial argument. It was therefore crucial for us to feature her words at the core of an issue dedicated to a simultaneously literal and metaphorical understanding of “Toxic Atmospheres.”

A conversation between Christina Sharpe and Léopold Lambert.

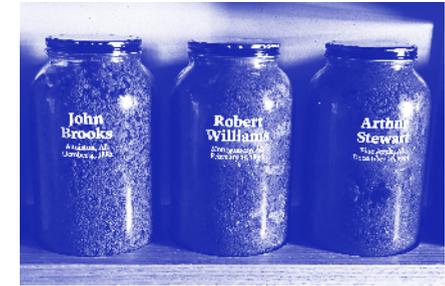
LL Your book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* was published in 2016. May I ask you how your current research continues the work that you present in the book?

CS Right now, I am completing a critical introduction to the *Collected Poems of Dionne Brand* (1982-2010) and I am in the preliminary stages of thinking through and writing a book that I am calling *Black. Still. Life*. This extends my thinking from *In the Wake*. Because as you know, in *In the Wake*, I theorize the way the ship, the hold and the weather are sort of ongoing locations and productions of Black being. In particular I wanted to stay with every aspect of the overturn, each of those locations, so I think I really wanted to stay with the wake and the weather, and I wanted to keep thinking in particular about residence time, which in *In the Wake*, I describe literally as the amount of time elements stay in the water, in the first chapter, but it sort of carries through into the second chapter and throughout. I wrote about residence time of sodium being 260 million years, I thought about that in relation to those Africans who were thrown, dumped or jumped overboard in the Middle Passage. I was thinking about the Zong, but also beyond the Zong, and into the present. I'm thinking about those Africans making transAtlantic, trans-Mediterranean and other kinds of journeys. But then, I also wanted to think about soil and sand, especially since the Sahara is becoming as large a site of migrant death as the Mediterranean in terms of tracking the deaths of people trying to move across the continent in order to get to the Mediterranean to get to Europe.

I'm still trying to think about residence time and I want to think its equivalent phenomenon in relation to sand and soil. I want to think about Black still life in which the word still carries all of its meanings: still as in the opposite of a moving picture, something that

has durations, something that's without a certain kind of movement, but I also think about still in the wake. I give different examples of a life that I call anagrammatical: the way they were shipped in relation to Black life. I want to think residence time still in relation to water, and what I've been doing after hearing the women who I spoke to when I gave a talk at the University of Miami: they told me about how whale falls (the afterlife of whales in the deep sea ecosystem) work, and how they create not only temporal connectivity but also geographic connectivity. I want to keep thinking about that. And toward that end, I know I'll be using the work of scholars like Vanessa Agard-Jones, who has an article called “What the Sand Remembers,” part of her work in Martinique, and Kevin Adonis Browne, who has a forthcoming book called *Between Still Life and Afterlife: Mas, Photography and the Self* and Richard Iton's work, particularly his crucial article “Still Life.” As I work on this book I am certainly thinking with their works and also still the work of Dionne Brand, NourbeSe Philip, Kamau Brathwaite, Rinaldo Walcott, Charles Gaines, John Keene, and many others. This book used to be called *Thinking Juxtapositionally*, which is a method for me that refuses linearity and that centers what happens when you put perhaps unexpected histories and materials together. I think, now, that that may be a different project from *Black. Still. Life.*, or that some parts of that project will enter and inform this one.

I say that because as I think about soil at this moment I turn to the work



of the Equal Justice Initiative, which was started by Bryan Stevenson. He's a lawyer who started a non-profit organization that provides legal representation to prisoners who've been wrongly convicted, who can't afford active representation, who have been denied effective representation, and his organization guarantees a defense to anyone in Alabama who's got a death penalty case. **But as an offshoot of that, he started a community remembrance project in which he invited and dispatched volunteers to go to all these different known sites of lynching in Alabama and to collect soil.** The soil collected from these lynching sites is placed in plain glass jars with black screw-on lids. The soil itself, because it's taken from different locations and the mineral content is different, the soil is all different colors, rich cinnamon brown, asphalt, gingerbread brown, and also different textures, gritty, coarse, loamy — multiple “earth” tones and colors and consistencies. But before I encountered these photos from the Equal Justice Initiative collection project, I had gone to visit Harvard's Forbes pigment collection: these rare pigments are displayed in beautiful jars and are protected. I began thinking about the Equal Justice Initiative collection project

in relation to that Forbes collection project, and the ways in which these Black people who have been so dishonored and devalued are now cared for: the dirt is collected with care and the jar is labeled with care with the name of the person lynched, and the place where the lynching took place and then the month, day, and year. Sometimes the name of the person who was lynched cannot be recovered and so in that instance the jar is labeled with “unknown,” and then the place, date and year of the lynching.

So, I started to think about these beautiful and terrible jars of soil and what that soil and the process of collection could tell us. I am very much in the beginning stages of this project but I am trying to work through the materiality of soil in the same register that I did with the water wake in *In the Wake*. I’m hoping that staying with Black. Still. Life. in the soil the same way that I did in the sea can tell us something about those elements cycling in residence time in which everything is now, it’s all now. Those are some of the ways that the current project is continuing the work of the last project. That and still thinking about care. Finally, in relation to EJI, I’m not interested in the memorial *qua* memorial. That is, I’m not interested in the instrumentalization of Black suffering for knowledge and healing. But I am interested in the very careful way that the soil is collected from the sites of the brutal murders of Black women, men, boys and girls who were really never meant to be remembered and certainly not meant to be remembered in a way that tends to them, with any kind of tenderness or care or regard.

LL The first chapter of the book, “The Wake,” presents the concept of the

wake in the multiplicity of its significations, all bringing a dimension of the condition of Blackness. Could you describe this concept to us?

CS I was really interested in thinking through wakes in all of their meanings, so keeping watch with the dead, the kinds of feasting celebrations, etc. that go along with that. I was interested in the line of firing of a gun. I was interested in the path behind a ship. I was interested in consciousness. So I wanted to keep all of these things together. **It was really important to me to try to deal with wakes both metaphorically, but also wake as practice, wake as consciousness, and how wakes actually really worked in the water.** As I say in the book, I emailed my colleague Anne Gardulski and asked her if she would be willing to sit down with me and talk to me about wakes, and told her I would like to take her out to lunch. Of course, she was curious about why but also very pleased, that I, a literature scholar, wanted to know about ocean sciences. I told her about the Zong and she did some of her own research so that when we met she had a very good sense of what exactly I wanted to know. I really wanted to think how all of these things were working together and whether it was possible to keep present and active all of the meanings of wake. To keep them present and in flux as a way to think about the ongoing conditions of being Black, everywhere in the world, not just in the U.S., not just in the Caribbean, not just in South America. When I’m talking about diaspora I am also always talking about the continent of Africa as well, since people are always under movement there, moving for all kinds of reasons, by force, economic necessity, other kinds of historical and present

reasons, people who are nomadic, etc. So when I thought that wakes are both sort of ongoing and they also change, they’re also related to the weather, but they’re always some kind of wake. It’s a very short answer but that’s how it seemed to me that then everything that follows is in the wake of that description of how wakes work in all of these different ways.

LL I think it provides a good contextualization of the last chapter of the book, “The Weather,” which enters in great resonance with the editorial line of this issue. Although most articles in it interpret toxic atmospheres somehow literally, all express the intuition of how atmospheres also describe the political environment in which we, as bodies, live. Your book makes this intuition explicit in a very powerful way. You write, “the weather is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate; and the climate is antiblack.” The climatic condition constitutes a radical detachment from the liberal narrative of a chronological progress for the Black condition. Could you talk more about this prevalence of atmospheres over linear time? Of singularity over singular events?

CS I’ve just come back from “Scenes at 20,” the celebration of 20 years since the publication of Saidiya Hartman’s *Scenes of Subjection*. I’m really thinking of the impact of that book, both on all of the works of the people who presented, the people who organized the conference, but also thinking about the impact of the work on my own work, and what her work did in terms of

disrupting that liberal chronology from slavery to freedom. It’s in sort of that register that I’m also thinking about this question. So when you say that it disrupts the liberal narrative of the chronological process of Black condition, I mean that brings the theme to Hartman, but also to others like Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Braithwaite, Dionne Brand, NourbeSe Philip, Rinaldo Walcott; I could go on and on. It seems to me that atmospheres are both continuous and discontinuous, just like the sort of movements between slavery and something called freedom, or something akin to freedom. It seems to me that because they’re discontinuous, as well as some kind of continuous, you can sort of track the effects that they have on each other, and it’s not a linear progression. I’m thinking for example, I think it’s happened twice now, after the hurricanes, in Dominica, Barbuda, and Texas, immediately afterwards there were two earthquakes: one in Mexico, one in New-Zealand. So I’m thinking about how the atmosphere, the question of the hurricane, affected the tectonic plates and caused the earthquake in Mexico. **I think that there is something about atmospheres and thinking about anti-Blackness as atmospheric, that really gets at what allows certain communities to thrive and others to completely languish.** Even as you may experience the same weather event, something about climate also allows you to experience the same weather event but in a very different register. What was really important to me, and of course so many things I think about,



came from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and specifically the ending of *Beloved*: "The footsteps and everything will be forgotten and it will be just weather." For the past 30 years, I've been thinking about that sentence until I got to *In the Wake* and I think I can really work with this in terms of weather, microclimates, because even within a particular climate there are microclimates that evolve where you also have an effect on the weather, even if it is really momentary.

- LL Listening to you makes me think of Édouard Glissant's interpretation of borders as the diffuse zone between an atmosphere and another, in opposition to the strict line-based borders that colonialism implemented, as Héléne Blais describes in the case of the French military cartography of 19th century colonial Algeria for instance.
- CS The map imposes itself so that each colony becomes its own sort of atmosphere. It becomes realized because of the imposition of French law, or British law, or Italian law, or German law within

these particular spaces, even if these spaces are otherwise continuous. That's what it's speaking to and it is very interesting; it makes me think of *A Map to the Door of No Return*; at the end of that book, Dionne Brand writes an oral ruttier. A ruttier is an oral poem that contained navigational instructions that the sailor memorized in order to be able to navigate. In these climates, one always has to internalize a geography because there may be, depending on where one is located, no external marker that says this is a hazardous place for Black people, or this is a "safer" zone, it is a completely embodied experience in that sense. **So, we move through these atmospheres quite differently depending on how the body is read, depending on what we know.**

- LL This chapter, "The Weather," invokes the entire lexical field of breathability, from the metaphors it allows, all the way to whiteness' anatomical claim that Black bodies would have smaller lungs as well as arteries that "do not

open as fast as arteries do in 'normal people'." It is not innocent that the movement Black Lives Matter immediately related to the dying scream of Eric Garner, "I can't breathe" as a poignant and accurate way to express the Black condition — the deadly relation to the police being only one dimension of it. Yet, do you think that the idea of toxic breathability could prevail on the one of unbreathability to describe the Black experience in a system that favors slow death — we can think of the toxic water of Flint, Michigan, the racialized mass incarceration system, the food deserts and lack of public services in Black neighborhoods, the structural violence of the U.S. healthcare system, etc. — on the brutal and spectacular deaths on which the liberal voices base exclusively their critique of structures they are fully part of? I'm asking the question while having in mind your descriptions of the kidnapped Black bodies of "The Hold," occasionally pushed on deck to allow them the access to fresh air, not for their own sake but to allow the breathing cargo they embody to survive the Middle Passage.

- CS The spectacular death allows for a certain kind of liberal voice about race that leaves precisely the systems in place that both cause the spectacular death but also allow for those slow deaths to be in place, and in fact may indeed legislate in a way that causes more spectacular deaths and more slow deaths. I was thinking about the relation between toxic breathability and unbreathability, like what is the level of toxicity the body can no longer bear. In some ways, it brings me back to Saidiya Hartman

and *Scenes of Subjection* and her turn away from the scenes of spectacular sufferings; and in my own *Monstrous Intimacies* I say that, following Hartman, it's clear that those kinds of scenes of spectacular suffering don't, in any way, ameliorate or cease the suffering of those who are forced to continuously enact and repeat that suffering. It's a sort of failure of empathy.

It makes me think about the push of hate crime legislation, because of the witnessing of those kinds of spectacular murders and the way in which that hate crime legislation is then turned on the very people whom it is supposed to protect. I'm thinking about Jasmine Richards, a Black woman, an activist and member of Black Lives Matter, who was arrested in Pasadena, California and who faced up to four years in prison on charges of "felony lynching." She was accused of trying to de-arrest someone. This is a case of a law that was supposed to protect Black people, being used to further subject Black people. So, in fact, the kind of liberal narrative of progress is the very narrative that insists and makes clear that Black people being brought into subjecthood is done so with a kind of violent subjectification. **In other words, I think I attend to the spectacular but also to those quotidian experiences of unbreathability where really the ability to fully live in a Black body is continually curtailed, foreclosed, continually the enclosure is being reanimated.** So, the relationship between toxic breathability and unbreathability is really a level of toxicity and a level of pressure being applied whether it's fatal pressure in the

Justice For All D.C. Rally And March in Washington D.C., on December 13, 2014, five months after Eric Garner's death. / Photograph by Stephen Melkisetian.

moment, Eric Garner's utterances of "I can't breathe," or whether it's the kind of gradual strangulation and asphyxiation or the slow violence of toxic dumps in Black neighborhoods. Think of Flint, Michigan, where a water crisis, and a public health crisis, has been going on since 2014. Think of what's going on, or not going on, in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands right now, think of the destruction of Barbuda, and Dominica. These crises are all also related to histories of enslavement and colonialism, systems in which weather was so important. Whether in relation to working enslaved people in rain or excess heat, what counted as good exercise for the lungs for the enslaved was measured differently than for the white subject. All of these things are still connected. As you say at the end of the question, being put on the deck has nothing to do with vitality for oneself, it's vitality for the market, along with the forced performances of enjoyment, in the midst of that. So much of plantation economy, plantation management, had to do with weather: lung capacity, ability to work, seasoning, etc.

LL In this context of anti-Blackness as a climatic condition, you cite Frantz Fanon's concept of "breathing combat" as a generative way of thinking the ways Black bodies "inhabit [the terror visited on Black life], are inhabited by it, and refuse it." Could you tell us about this agency that Black bodies construct for themselves, not to be solely subjects of "the weather"?

CS Thinking about agency is always interesting. I feel like everything is in reference to "Scenes at 20" right now but that's because it just ended on Saturday [October 7, 2017]! There was one panel called "Agency," and agency for

Hartman is always modified. On that Agency panel, Alex Weheliye reminded us that Hartman talks about "castigated agency" and he went on to, among other things, give the definition of castigation. While Rinaldo Walcott thinks not so much about agency but about "acts of practice." I think I want to stick with Walcott's "acts of practice" and think about the acts of practice that disrupt the weather. That's what I was trying to get at in terms of "microclimates" and thinking about some of those huge Black Lives Matter protests, or thinking about the families that protested the threatened closure of Dyett High School on the Southeast side of Chicago. Fifteen people began a 30-day hunger strike to insist the school reopen as a community school and thirteen continued it — two people had to suspend their protest because of health problems. The community rallied behind and beside them: there were activities for children, people brought food for them and supported, all kinds of support was present there. I think that in the midst of a really repressive state under Rahm Emanuel in Chicago, that's the kind of microclimate that is really working to shift something. They won. The school wasn't closed down, and while that does not mean that Rahm Emanuel is not spending millions of dollars on a new police academy as opposed to public schools, those are the organizing microclimates that really shift something for the people who live there.

They also spread possibility and imagination to other places as a model for how to do a certain kind of effective change. Another example for me is #BailoutBlackMamas, and all the ways in which Bailout Black Mamas' efforts have been organized in cities from Chicago

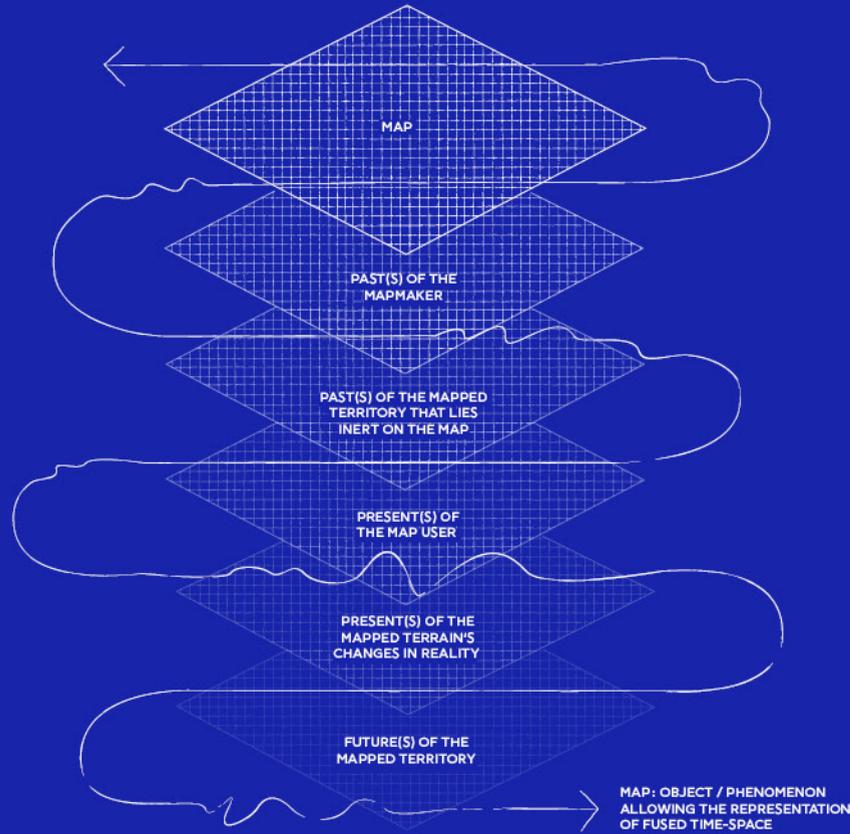
to Boston, to Baltimore, to Oakland. Since bail funds are being used as punishment and that's not how they are supposed to be used, activists and organizers set out to raise money to bail Black women out so that they could go home for Mother's Day. But after Mother's Day the efforts and organizing continue. I think those are kinds of acts of practice that fundamentally shift the weather both for individuals, and then for families, however you constitute family, for community and then for communities across space and place. **I think that's something that gets at both the climate as metaphorical but also material, and the ways certain kinds of acts can shift something so that you are not only being acted upon, but you are also shifting something about what's possible to sustain life in that place. You are creating microclimates.**

There is an example that I use in the book, that I found in a newspaper that was distributed at the 2015 Venice Biennale. The paper had no name and it was part of an exhibit on African refugees in Germany. The article in question relates a story about crossing the Mediterranean in a small boat when one of the passengers, another man, is swept out of the boat and into the sea. The man recounting the story speaks of retrieving him from the sea and placing him in the center of the boat and he says, "I like things like when we care for each other, it's all we have." I'm really trying to think through care, not in terms of the violence of the state, but in some other ways, as a kind of "act of practice" that radically shifts the



atmosphere, the weather of where we are. You see that on the Mediterranean, or crossing the Sahara, in the kinds of narratives that the Forensic Architecture and Forensic Oceanography projects surface. I think you can map that in all of these different places and so I ask, what are the cumulative effects of that outside, perhaps, of the obvious ones? There are massive climatic shifts that accompany those changes.

I'm also thinking about napalm, the aftermath of Fukushima, and again, the crisis of water and resources in Flint and all of Puerto Rico but especially Vieques, after 50 years of the U.S. using Vieques for bombing, storing and exploding munitions, all of the toxic materials in the soil, in the water, in the air. From what I understand, peoples' suffering there in the wake of hurricane Maria, now almost one month ago, is aggravated by the experiments the U.S. Navy carried out there. These are sites where weather's material and metaphorical toxicity really come together. ■



Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock

INTRODUCTION BY CHANELLE ADAMS ///

Concepts of utility always beg the question: for whom? when? where? to what end? There is no tool — of domination or liberation — more useful towards orienting human experience of memory, history, and place than that of clocks and maps.

Of the 22 first issues, I return most to Rasheedah Phillips' text "Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock." In a dense two pages, Phillips' article introduces the ways that time is involved in the "spatial reality" of place: "Clocks are themselves maps." By this logic, the oppressive cartographic reach of colonialism, terrorism, and white supremacy can also be considered an encroachment on clocks. Struggles for land and memory are fundamentally struggles for control in this terrain of horology.

To return to the idea of usefulness, a deeper look into space, time, and space-time (as a coupled unit) offers possibilities for map-making beyond white supremacy. The toolkit at the end of the article, offering "Questions to Consider When Encountering Maps & Clocks" provides resources to examine this relationship, most poignantly between time (history, nowness, futurity) and memory (individual and collective) to recover, re-draw, and project maps to allow for "future memory" and to "forecast or backcast events."

What I value most about this article is the many ways through which it continuously offers even more ways to read, re-map, and experience the world. The example of the 36°30' North line as "the inscription of linear space-time... in slave ownership in the United States" is a powerful example of the inscription of anti-Blackness on the globe, and also could more broadly be a commentary about the time-space of national borders. The multiplicity of reading experiences of the same text is a testament to the poetry of author/AfroFuturist Affair creator/co-creator of Black Quantum Futurism/founding member of Metropolarity Queer Sci-Fi collective's work. A different meaning of her message reaches me on each read, gives me pause, and propels me to read it anew from another time-space orientation.

Chanelle Adams' research considers natural history as a persistent form of colonial time-keeping. After completing a self-guided degree at Brown University, she accepted two Fulbright awards to attend the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and write about French colonial appropriation of Madagascar plant medicine. As a writer and editor, Chanelle co-founded anti-oppressive magazine *Bluestockings Magazine* and was Editor at *Black Girl Dangerous*.

Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock

Playwright Tennessee Williams referred to time as “the longest distance between two places.” To think about or refer to time (in the English language) often involves its spatialization; a tendency known in linguistics as space-time mapping. For instance, we speak of temporal domains of the past and future as being near or far, as being in front of us or behind us, and often as destinations, i.e. “returning to the past.” In the present, the “now” is “here” (spaced and placed), when you are here instead of there, you are at this point instead of that one, again invoking a sense of space or place. Albert Einstein only reinforced this sense of spatialization of the temporal when he declared time to be intimately bound up with space creating “spacetime.”

A map is an object/phenomenon that allows for the re-presentation of this fused space-time. As much as the map re-presents a geographical territory, landscape, or space, it is infused with time and temporality,

usually at the intersection of the distance between two points on it. The map is also infused with several intersecting and conflicting temporal domains. There are the past(s) — of the mapmaker, of the mapped territory that lies inert on the map — the present(s) — of the map user, of the mapped terrain's changes in reality — and the future(s) of all of those events. These interactive temporal domains fuse together as a 3D invisible hologram layered over the body of the map.

Philosopher Henri Bergson found a fundamental incompatibility with “representing time by space,” since it is not possible to “follow the process of psychic activity [...] like the march of an army on a map.” (*Time and Free Will*, 1889). Bergson's argument follows in the ancient wisdom that the mapped image is not the reality or the territory itself: it is merely re-presentation. **The map is not the land itself, it is not the rivers, it is not the place; it can only ever be a symbol of those things.** You have to walk the land to know it. Maps do not account for experience and lived knowledge. They do not account either for how more space it takes for you to walk somewhere, or your own experiences and memories of where a thing used to be or not be.

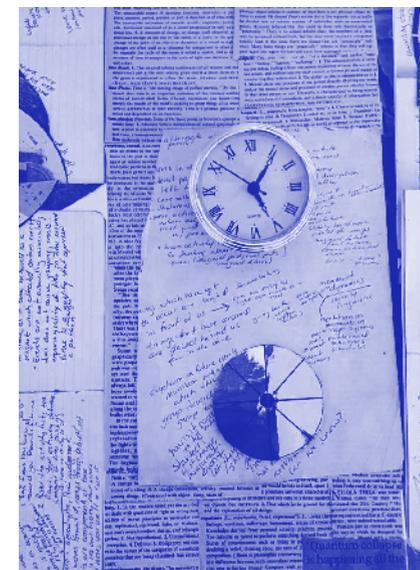
And in that way, argues Bergson, you cannot go back in time in the way you are able to turn around in space, making them ultimately unequal:

“If I glance over a road marked on the map and follow it up to a certain point, there is nothing to prevent my turning back and trying to find out whether it branches anywhere. But time is not a line along which one can pass again. Certainly, once it has elapsed, we are justified in picturing the successive moments as external to one another and in thus thinking of a line traversing space; but it must then be understood that this line does not symbolize the time which is passing but the time which has passed.” (*Time and Free Will*, 1889.)

Time and temporal experience are too dynamic to be re-presented after the fact, embodied and frozen into a mapped space. But even the idea of time “moving” and “passing” implies a spatialization. As Giordano Nanni notes: “[T]he conquest of space and time are intimately connected. European territorial expansion has always been closely linked to, and frequently propelled by, the geographic extension of its clocks and calendars.” (*The Colonisation of Time*, 2012). Clocks are themselves maps, offering another way of spacing time and timing space. **Like maps, clocks are objects that embody certain ideas, politics, notions of time, and boundaries. For example, we find that clocks, time, and slavery are also intimately bound.** Nanni describes how “the science of horology was instrumental in the exploration and charting of the oceans and in the ‘discovery’ of the so-called New World.” Some of the very first acts of slavery and colonial terrorism were necessarily mediated by time, as an accurate timekeeping device was crucial to maritime navigation and determining longitudinal measurements.

Further, the inscription of linear space-time can be discerned in slave ownership in the American South. 36°30' North is the parallel of latitude that divided the United States between where slavery was allowed (U.S.) and prohibited (Confederate States) under the Missouri Compromise. The idea of slave and master even extended into the development of mechanical clock time technology as clock makers in the early 19th century created systems of synchronization, with the concept of “master” clocks to “slave clocks.”

And just as we take for granted that a map is a true representation of the territory



it is depicting, we assume that clocks can capture the true nature of time and reality or subjective temporal experience. However, clocks do the opposite; they objectify time and render flat all experiential notions of time. Bergson's critique of maps could be made of clocks, in that they are merely symbolic of moments rather than the moments themselves. For Western society bound to the Master Clock, mechanical and digital clock time becomes the synchronizing mechanism — instead of the subjective duration of your “now” interacting with other nows. Trauma and dissociation happen in a society that negatively qualifies a departure from or disruption of mechanical clock time.

To the extent that Einstein coupled time with space and created spacetime, Black Quantum Futurism is seeking to explore that coupling, and decouple it through that same exploration. White men have conquered both time and space and then said they were the same thing, and what that has meant for Black people is a colonization of the temporal



"We Have Decided Not to Die": The Work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins

INTRODUCTION BY AMRIT JUSTIN TREWN ///

"We Have Decided Not to Die," which Léopold Lambert describes as the "philosophical scream" of Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, echoes across *The Funambulist's* archive. Over an extensive discussion covering the duo's artistic collaborations, Lambert's interview with Momoyo Homma provokes us to overcome death through creation. If the magazine's resounding call is to unsettle the gendered racial-colonial politics of space — the domination of the other through architecture — then the decision not to die is at its heart. The call is to refuse the given. For, to overcome death is to escape Western modernity's totalizing grip that produces death to sustain life while cutting the living off from the domain of the dead.

For me as an abolitionist organizer, the contributions of the interview are immense. Breaking the shackles of bondage and tearing down carceral institutions necessitate the transformation of material space — whether that be turning a New York City jail expansion program which reproduces social death into community board meetings oriented by abolitionism; or turning a monument, situated outside of Central Park, that celebrates the gynecologist J. Marion Sims into a site for mourning and remembering the enslaved women upon whom Sims practiced without the use of anesthesia or possibility of consent. The interview grounds me in the commitment to prefigure worlds where we inhabit space, understand ourselves, and relate to one another on ethical terms. This is the injunction of abolitionism: to make common cause with dispossessed and dead by forwarding the alternative, again, and again, and again.

An avid reader of *The Funambulist* since its inception, Amrit Justin Trewn is an abolitionist organizer, educator, and intellectual. A child of the diaspora, he strives to live a Black queer feminist life in the city of New York.

"We Have Decided Not to Die": The Work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins

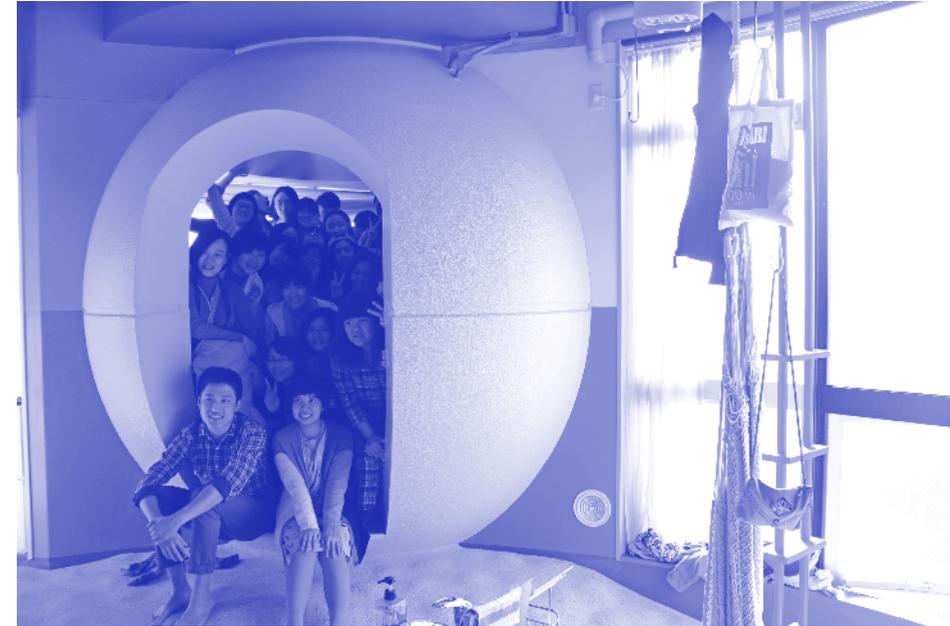
In this exceptionally long format dedicated to the transcript of a conversation recorded in Tokyo on October 30, 2014 for The Funambulist's podcast, Momoyo Homma introduces us to the artistic, philosophical and architectural work of Shusaku Arakawa (1936-2010) and Madeline Gins (1941-2014). She is the director of the Arakawa + Gins Tokyo office located in the Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka – In Memory of Helen Keller, where we recorded this interview after a visit of the lofts by 60 enthusiastic high school students.

A conversation between Momoyo Homma and Léopold Lambert.

LL The first thing we should do is to introduce who Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins were. We see that they're often described as Arakawa being an artist and Madeline being a poet, but their individual and combined works were so much more complex than that. Could you briefly tell us about their lives?

MH Well, Arakawa was born in 1936 in Nagoya, and Madeline in 1941 in New York. Arakawa started his career as an artist in the late 1950s in Japan, and he then joined a group named Neo-Dadaism Organizers. But he found that actions through the group activities were not regarded as serious things. So he left the group and started exhibiting his own artworks. At that time he was making coffin-shaped sculptures, which were quite sensational in the Japanese art scene; something that makes you feel uncertain and confront people with death.

Many art critics started chasing Arakawa's artworks. And among them, there was a very important person whose name is Shuzo Takiguchi: art critic, poet, and a friend of Marcel Duchamp. He knew Arakawa and he was so happy to find him willing to express his passion through his artworks, which seemed very new to him. So, Takiguchi introduced Arakawa to Marcel Duchamp when Arakawa decided to go to New York. Besides Takiguchi, there were some other influential people who supported Arakawa in making the decision to move to New York. **And, in December 1961, Arakawa arrived in New York; according to him, with only \$14 in his pocket and also a recommendation letter by Takiguchi for Duchamp.** He called Duchamp from the JFK airport, and immediately met with him. They got to know



each other, and Duchamp was pleased to know a young Japanese artist full of ambition, coming to see him.

In 1962, Arakawa met Madeline Gins at the art school of Brooklyn Museum. She was already known as a poet, but, at the same time, she was also making her own artworks. For the first time, it seemed they had each met their life partner. Since then, they started working/living together, and they got married in 1965. Once, I've asked Arakawa how he met Madeline, and why he started working with her. He said: "Well I met her at an art school and some friends of mine told me, 'She's crazy!' and 'Be careful!' So I became very interested in knowing her! And we started talking to each other, and we found that both of us were thinking alike, in some points, thinking in kind of the same way.

Especially about the fear of death. So we started talking about how to overcome death and how we can create things to let people know that we can probably change the concept or common sense of death because it's regarded as a destiny, already decided, which we never can change. But who says that? Probably, we have more opportunity to see how we can change destiny. So through our conversation we have decided to make a series of works which is entitled *The Mechanism of Meaning*."

The Mechanism of Meaning is a very important work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins, and it consists of more than 80 paintings together with some drawings and three-dimensional work. It was published in a very beautiful book, firstly in Germany, and then in the United States and Japan, and many other countries. But their first show



was held in Germany — the project was always “work-in-progress,” according to Arakawa and Madeline. And it was so sensational because people had never seen that kind of paintings. I would describe it as a huge notebook of exercises, diagrams, indications, and instructions about how to exercise yourself and how to make your mind in different ways. It’s hard to describe in words though... but anyway, people really liked it and it was lucky for Arakawa and Madeline because the famous physicist, Werner Heisenberg happened to see the show and he was eager to meet and know Arakawa and Madeline; that’s how they met each other. Heisenberg was amazed that the couple’s artworks contained important elements for scientists, so he decided to invite them to the Max Planck Institute, a special school for physicists and mathematicians, which is a quite unique episode in the two artists’ lives.

way we think of life and death, and death in particular. Their philosophical scream “We Have Decided Not to Die,” that appeared as the main manifesto of their exhibition at the Guggenheim SoHo in 1997 is very compelling. The way I have been interpreting it, including when I was used to seeing Madeline every day, was by using two references that were resolutely not theirs: Spinoza and Xavier Bichat. I would like to ask you for your own interpretation of this striking sentence because every time we explain that to someone who has never heard about their work, we say, “Arakawa and Madeline Gins are the artists/architects who want to build spaces for people not to die.” And people tend to immediately interpret “a space for people to be immortal,” rather than “a space for people not to die,” which, in my understanding, is extremely different: “not dying” is a continuous action, whether “being immortal” would correspond to a sort of definitive status. What would be your own interpretation of this sort of manifesto

Momoyo Homma, leading the workshop at the Reversible Destiny Lofts. / Photographs by Léopold Lambert (2014).



gathered in this one sentence: “We Have Decided Not to Die”?

MH “We Have Decided Not to Die” is indeed the title of a big show of Arakawa and Madeline at Guggenheim SoHo in 1997. The exhibition consisted in the whole contents of *The Mechanism of Meaning* along with architectural projects’ plans and models. *The Mechanism of Meaning* was the beginning of their creative life, and if you look at the work carefully, you will notice that everything in it is somehow related to our body. Arakawa once told me he wanted to be a doctor when he was very young. And he really was about to start studying medicine, but he realized doctors are just kind of repairmen: they try to repair the part which you have damaged, so doctors are not the people who would be able to achieve finding answers to make you healthier than

before. Later, Arakawa thought that maybe the concept of “overcoming death” is something very new to the world, and he decided to be an artist because artists always give us a new way of thinking and a very new aspect to the world, like to make a person immortal.

So, the title “We Have Decided Not to Die” actively showed their determination as well as their manifesto, as you say. At the same time, I am sure that they were expecting people’s affirmative reactions and appropriation of the problem. **People would say, “Well what does it mean, ‘We have decided not to die?’ It’s obvious that we all die, so, how can they say that?” As you see, it’s a kind of calling-for-a-reaction title.** And Arakawa and Madeline always used to answer: “Use your body.” Then people would say, “Well, but how? We all know our bodies

Yoro Park, aka Elliptical Field Site of Reversible Destiny, in Gifu Prefectures (Japan). / Photographs by Léopold Lambert (2014).

LL We should now address the fact that the goal of their work is to rethink the

are also aging and will die someday." And Arakawa said, "Well, maybe you're thinking of death from a very narrow aspect, because we never know what exactly death means. Why don't we start studying further on death?"

We will probably disappear from this world. But it doesn't mean that we "die"; it doesn't mean the end of everything because something of us will remain in this world. For example, we talk about our great grandmother and are reminded of her cooking. Probably it's part of her remaining in this world. So, in that moment, she's here with us. Of course she's not in the same shape as she used to be, but somehow we can feel her when we talk about her. Now, can we say that she's dead? Probably she's alive at that moment, and if we connect those moments, maybe without seeing her shape, figure, we can be with her together. But it's hard to experience that sort of thing in everyday life, because we are so busy, and belong to each person's social life in this world today.

To make people active to participate in the discussion, Arakawa decided to study architecture autodidactically, because he thought that every field of "art" has its limits/frame, and even when he and Madeline worked so hard in making artworks, they found they were always introduced/exhibited through figurative frames too: art galleries, museums, or critics' words were unable to reach people in the street. **That's how Arakawa and Madeline decided that architecture was the only way to get the people involved, designing space for them, inventing a container for their bodies.** They started concentrating on architecture from the late 1980s to early 1990s, and tried to find how they could create space and

equipment for people who refuse to die.

LL There are two quotes that I find particularly interesting and useful for this vision of death. One is coming from Duchamp himself, or rather, the epitaph on his grave: "It's only others who die." The second one is from my favorite book by Madeline, *What the President Will Say and Do*, published in 1984 and which has a chapter that is, for me, one the most beautifully and humorously written feminist manifestos. **It is entitled "All Men are Sisters," and, considering the Socratic axiom that "all men are mortal," Madeline writes, "All men are mortal, but maybe women are not."**

MH [Laugh]
& LL

LL We are now at this point of the biography where Madeline and Arakawa are interested in creating spaces for the body — what we call architecture — where this could be thought as only one thing: the body and the architecture all together. They call this combination "Architectural Body" and they wrote an entire book dedicated to this concept. In this regard, the fact that we are currently recording this conversation in the Reversible Destiny Lofts is not innocent. This collective housing building designed by Arakawa and Madeline is dedicated to Helen Keller. What's extremely interesting to me in this homage, lies in the fact that when architects design buildings, they always think of a very limited amount of bodies they're building it for. Actually, sometimes they only think of one, and it's the most normative body. It's usually a man, not a woman. Everything that takes its measure in architecture would be dedicated to this one body, this idea of a normal body. And so, we really limit

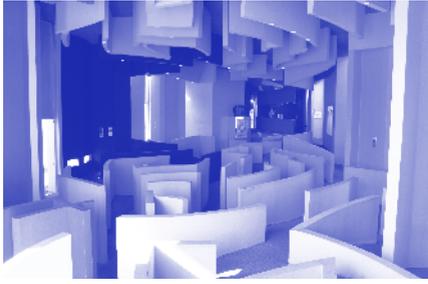


ourselves by doing so because somehow it develops a violence on every body that does not fit with this image of the normal body for which architecture has been designed.

And so, this is not to say that Arakawa and Madeline Gins don't have a body in mind when they develop their architecture. But maybe they're a little bit more humble in what a body is and what a body can do, to again quote Spinoza. But they might have one particular body they're thinking of when they're designing their architecture, which is the body of Helen Keller, which is called by society as being "blind" and "deaf." Obviously one is never "blind" and "deaf" in the absolute. There are only blind people because there are non-blind people, and the world is built for the latter. So what if there was an architecture built for these bodies

that are marginalized by society, like Helen Keller? Could you tell us more about this particular aspect of their work?

MH Madeline told me once, when she met Helen Keller first through Arakawa, she thought: "Well, this story is maybe too sentimental." But she found Helen Keller's signature one day and she was surprised because it looks quite similar to some lines on Arakawa's paintings. So she changed her mind and became interested in Helen Keller's life. In Japan, it is very popular to learn about Helen Keller's story when we are children. Almost everybody in Japan knows Helen Keller. And there is a famous theater play, *The Miracle Worker*, through which we learn her life story. Although *The Miracle Worker* is a story about Helen Keller's famous teacher, Ms. Sullivan, we regard that Helen



Keller also is a miracle-person because she lost her hearing and sight before she became two years old but she recreated her body by herself, and with great support from Ms. Sullivan, her family and friends, so that the circumstances surrounding her encouraged her to overcome her difficulties. She recreated her body for it to be able to "see" and "hear" the things using other senses, and she finally learned words to speak and write. That's what really amazed Arakawa in the figure of Helen Keller.

Arakawa thought that if Helen Keller was able to conquer her body and environment in such a way, it meant that we could do that too. It also meant that our body has an incredible ability inside, but we haven't realized its potential. Helen Keller could never see something with her eyes but using her body, using other senses, she could see things. And that means that our bodies have a huge possibility to create more number of senses, like hundreds or thousands. **Arakawa and Madeline tried to find a way to pull out the extension of your body, try to pull more senses out, a number of senses from your body using architecture.** That's why they always regarded Helen Keller as a model when they thought of their architectural projects.

LL Following the previous mention of the place where we are recording this conversation, the Reversible Destiny

Lofts, I would like to orient the second part of our discussion towards this very particular space. We are presently in one of the lofts in which visits are organized to introduce people to this architecture. Can you please describe to us the various tactics (the procedures) that Arakawa and Madeline have been using to design this space in relation to this manifesto, "We Have Decided Not to Die" that we have been talking about?

MH Ok. First of all, one may be surprised with this bumpy floor, and as you know, the Bioscleave House in East Hampton, New York, also has bumps on the floor and the floor itself is slanted. If you look carefully, you will notice that the ceiling is also slanted. Arakawa always said that these bumps will stimulate the arches of your feet. If you look at your feet, you will find that almost everybody has arches, right? There's no straight line on our feet or our bodies. So, it means that compared to the flat floor, this bumpy floor is more adapted to our body. There are also many spaces like corners in this apartment. They are elements, like safe spaces to protect yourself, as animals always find a corner-like space to rest and sleep. When we have residents who come with a cat or a dog, they always tell us that their pet really loves this floor, and looks cozy sleeping in their favorite corner-like space.

In addition to that, we've received many elderly people. At first, we were a

little bit worried about receiving them, because some people appeared here with a cane. We were about to say, "Please be careful!" But we tried to avoid saying that, because Arakawa used to say: "This loft is perfect for elderly people. So you'd better see them to learn how they manage the floor." And that's true. They came in, of course were surprised at the beginning and said, "Wow, what a floor, this is so bumpy!" But, gradually they started walking, and after having walked for a while, they all became great fans of this bumpy floor. **It was a really great experience, I took my mother here. She's disabled, she cannot walk without her cane. But when she was here, she said, "Well I don't need my cane here, because this floor is so secure for me. I can feel how my feet, each foot, is grabbing each bump. I love this floor!"** It made me very happy indeed. Obviously for children, as it seems like a playground, they immediately start running on this bumpy floor. You can see it in the photos. It's a very unique space where you can find your own way to use, or customize it as you like for all generations. But I strongly recommend coming to experience it, since it is very hard to explain in words, or by seeing only photos.

Anyway, the floor is the first thing I had to mention. Secondly, I can talk about the slanting floor and ceiling. This is Arakawa and Madeline's attempt to break your image of size and scale. For example, one day you become taller than you are. But if you move to the other side, you become shorter. This happens a lot. I mean, the angles of the

floor and ceiling make the scale of the objects always changeable. But the most important thing is who is making the scale changeable? It is your/our body, who makes the move. **We can say that the way of measuring the object's size or scale is not only one, if we move around in this loft, which also means that our body could be a scale of your world.** Arakawa and Madeline have put their thoughts and indications in these elements, trying to say that you don't have to always trust the so-called "common sense" once you use your body actively.

The hooks in the ceiling are also a very unique suggestion to make your living space more enjoyable and practical. I personally think it is a great idea for tiny housing complexes in Japan. There is no closet-closet space in this loft. You will find some drawers but you don't have a big closet as in other apartments today. Instead, Arakawa and Madeline's proposal is to try to put your things to the ceiling so that you will have more space on the floor. And looking at the ceiling, you see many hooks, silver rings. You can just hang your things from the ceiling. Each hook is quite strong; it's able to hang something like 100 or 150 kilos. Some residents have hung furniture to the ceiling and are enjoying their "reversible" space.

LL What about the sphere room?

MH This sphere room is the one and only in the world, a completely spherical room in residential apartments. Well, you can enjoy the echo of your voice inside, and it's also a space to feel your weight and the gravity. Also, Arakawa

and Madeline used to work so hard in studying an ideal space for autistic persons. And they found that something like a sphere room is perfect for them to relax. There is a scary machine developed for the purpose of calming down when autistic persons become overwhelmingly stimulated. When you see the machine, it is quite upsetting to think that a person should be clasped between two surfaces this way. Arakawa and Madeline found that the sphere room can be used instead of the machine, having the same affections to the body. Who is willing to be “sandwiched” in a machine if there is a vitamin-yellow-colored sphere room? One day, we gave the visit to a group of persons who have difficulties, some of them were blind, others, deaf, and some others were autistic. One of them was a 10 year-old child. When he was walking on this bumpy floor, he seemed very excited, to the point that he might have become a little too excited, or at least, confused. We encouraged him to enter the sphere room, which he did and, all of a sudden, he became very quiet and started singing in a very beautiful way. We were very happy to see the evidence that Arakawa and Madeline were right.

LL You were talking about corners earlier, how they are the place where animals — humans being animals as well — go to find their territory. Perhaps the effect of the sphere room is what it is because a sphere is, by definition, the inflection of a surface at every single of its points; a room made uniquely of corners if we may.

Changing topics a bit: the Reversible Destiny Lofts are also the site of the Tokyo part of the foundation continuing Arakawa and Madeline’s work

— the other being in New York. Could you please tell us a bit more about what the Foundation is doing, specifically in this housing building? I think you are hosting some tours, as you mentioned, and some workshops.

MH The Arakawa + Gins Tokyo office was established in 2002, with the purpose of exploring more projects active in Japan. Until then, as they were based in New York, they were not interested in separating their bases since their foundation had been there for decades. In 2002, there was a possible project to be executed in Nagoya, engaging Arakawa + Gins architectural plan. This project was the reason why they decided to open the Tokyo office.

After we got the project in Nagoya in making blueprints for a housing complex of seven houses, Arakawa started saying that we must start making “our” own housing complex at a bigger scale than the Nagoya project. The project was hosted and organized by Nagoya city, so we knew that there would be many issues that would compromise the design, materials, and the budget. So Arakawa and Madeline wanted to make their own, a “100% Arakawa and Gins designed” housing complex, demonstrating what the real Reversible Destiny project was like, and... that was the beginning of this Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka – In Memory of Helen Keller, where we are now.

The Reversible Destiny Lofts consist of nine apartments. Five of them have permanent residents, two others are used for workshops and short stays for visitors. The final two are for our office, the office of Arakawa and Gins in Tokyo. As the lofts are mainly used as residence, it’s hard to receive visitors all the time. I mean, we have to ask people to make a reservation to visit

us, because sometimes we don’t have any apartment available to show. So we started organizing architectural tours, which take around 90 minutes, when we have available space. We’ve been holding the tours like twice or three, four times a month. And we’ve already received more than 10,000 people from various places of the world as of today.

It’s amazing to know so many people are interested in knowing the architecture of Arakawa and Madeline Gins. And probably you may feel like 90 minutes is very long for an architectural tour of such a small apartment. But, actually, we need at least one hour or one hour and half to let visitors experience the space with their bodies, as well as to explain important elements of Arakawa and Gins’ work. On the other hand, I never want to explain all of them in words, so we try to encourage people to move around and sometimes even lie down on the famous bumpy floor. We sometimes organize workshops to put people in blindfolds and walk, so that people can experience why — well, a part of “why” — the lofts are dedicated to Helen Keller.

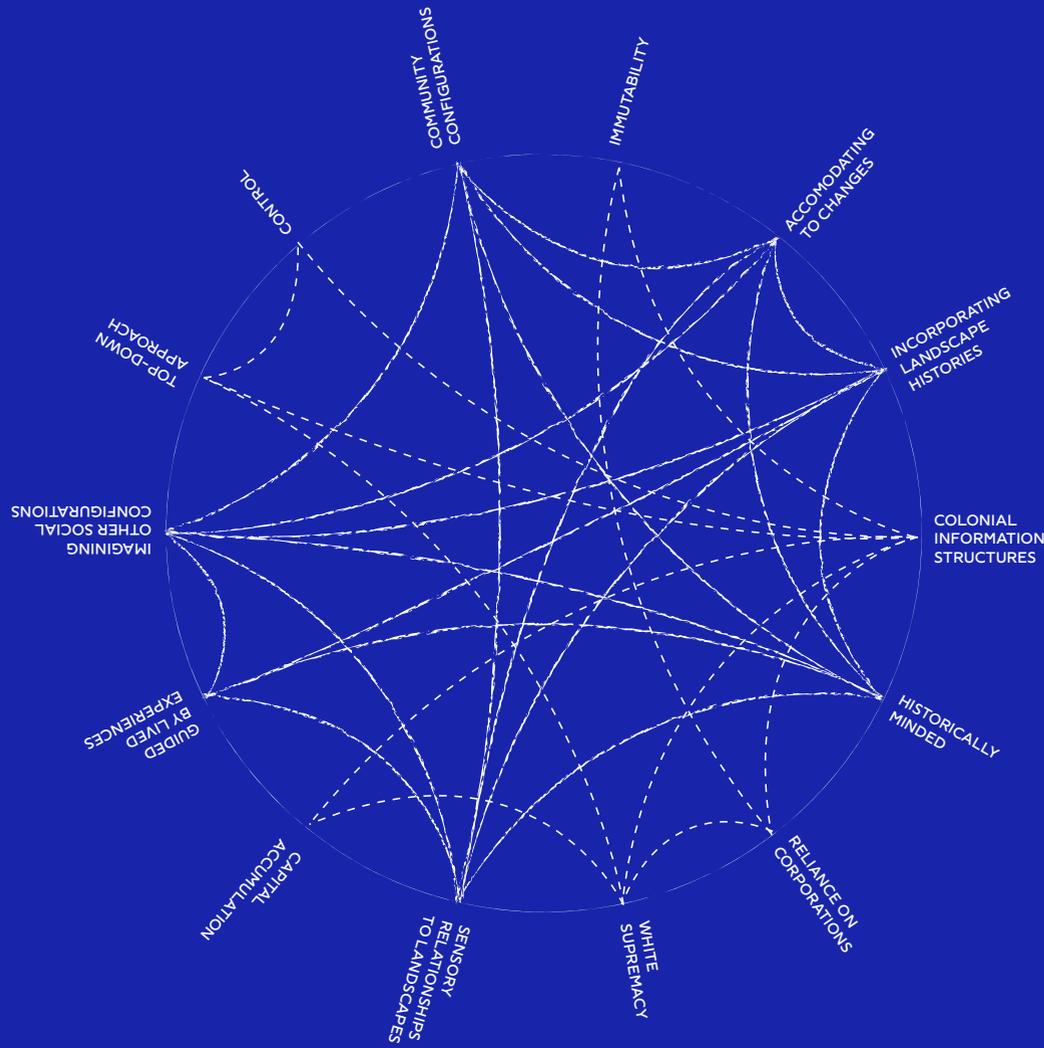
The capacity of each tour is 20-25 people because of the space. But sometimes we are asked by a big group in guiding. Like today, we were asked to give a visit to 60 high school students from Taiwan. Recently, the visit to the lofts has become more popular than before, and we are receiving a variety of groups, visitors from worldwide.

Actually, most of the built works by Arakawa and Gins are in Japan: the Site of Reversible Destiny Yoro Park, Nagi’s Ryoanji at



Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka, so I am confident that if one comes to Japan, they will be able to know more in depth Arakawa and Gins’ creative life, experiencing these built works.

We also recently received great news: Kansai University in Osaka has established a three-year study program on Arakawa and Gins from this year, and I am expecting that through this kind of action, we can move forward, since Arakawa and Madeline were so determined to continue studying the potentialities of the Reversible Destiny, and the action of not dying through an architecture mobilized against death. ■



Spatial Historiographies: The Decolonial Mapping Toolkit

INTRODUCTION BY JUSSI PARIKKA ///

The article “Spatial Historiographies: The Decolonial Mapping Toolkit” is particularly useful in reminding us that we are dealing with methods and toolkits, texts as assemblages that set things in action. In short, texts are not (only) read, they are enacted, projected, built upon, used and reused, and placed in living contexts of direct and indirect political action. To freely borrow from Brian Massumi, concepts and texts are good for many purposes beyond interpretation. They are like bricks that can be used to build things, or unmake and smash things. Texts are anyway cartographies and toolkits, and this one describing the in-progress ideas driving the “Decolonial Mapping Toolkit” is useful in exemplifying a counter-cartography.

The toolkit — a methodology for experiencing and working through the multiple temporal layers of spatial injustices of colonial histories — introduces a way to look at “a longue durée history of landscape as a legend, with subjective experiences as points of interest.” As Jaojoco writes, the programming is premised on social interaction, including “interviews with decolonial thinkers, architects, and theorists; a series of citizen workshops; and, ultimately, a mapping research and design process.” Hence, instead of a ready-made off-the-shelf software or such, this form of low-tech programming takes place through collating and mobilizing social knowledge and histories. The curatorial collective Frontview becomes itself a site of testing what sort of engagement can be useful in exposing the powers of maps, and the potentials of anti-maps so as to situate “cultural histories of Black, Indigenous, Arab, and other communities of color within mapped landscapes.” The text, then, becomes an entry point inventing methodologies to recognise spatially existing “counternarratives and alternative histories.”

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Spatial Historiogra- phies: The Decolonial Mapping Toolkit

Much of the world's land mass has, at this point, been mapped. Over the centuries, cartography has been a discipline applied by the corporate and government entities that have the power and technology to do so. From the economic import of European world maps of the 15th century to the racist introduction of redlining to American urban plans throughout the 20th century; to the evolution of those plans in zoning, real estate redefinitions of neighborhoods, and displacement through gentrification, maps have been used to perpetuate power or to grow it. There has historically been a politics inherent to mapping: maps are drawn from very specific viewpoints and principles, and are typically literal visualizations of the worldviews of those in power.

The colonial histories of the Americas are telling of these worldviews: from the so-called “discovery” of the so-called “New

World” to the usage of cartography to plan European settlements atop forests and the communities that inhabit them, mapping since the 1400s has become a tool used by very specific entities in the process of landscape development and cultural displacement. For hundreds of years, cartography has been a literally top-down way of building the world that translates landscapes into blank slates to be built upon in the name of modernist progress. Put differently, mapping has been fundamental to the project of Western exploitation, erasure, and ownership.

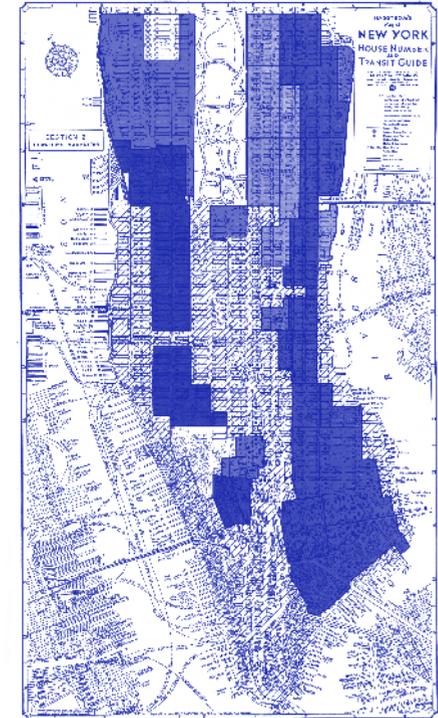
As Google Maps and other wayfinding applications have become more and more ubiquitous, our reliance on corporations has transformed maps into a visual apparatus of landscape interpretation structured for the public by drones and satellites and controlled from and by corporate offices. This relationship between maps and power is one glaring constant in colonial practices that can, perhaps, be reclaimed by the fringes to force more democratic social evolution. From this ambition arise the questions: what would a decolonized map look like? How would radically altering the mapping process benefit the project of decolonization? Is there a basic set of standards and questions that can be activated collectively to create a decolonized map?

Such questions require a radical shift in norms and standards of operation. The curatorial collective Frontview, of which I am a part, is pursuing this line of inquiry to deconstruct the dominant structures of mapmaking in our recent project, the Decolonial Mapping Toolkit. In this project, we have looked to a *longue durée* history of landscape as a legend, with subjective experiences as points of interest. Through interviews with decolonial thinkers, architects, and theorists; a series of citizen workshops; and, ultimately, a mapping research and design process; we are currently producing a first iteration of such

a map. Our first public program and core component of the process, “Faultlining New York,” took place on May 20, 2018 in which a small group of participants were led by an artist and historian in walking through Lower Manhattan to collectively restructure its history. It has become clear to us that broad landscape timelines must always be involved in decolonial histories, as decolonization is an active project that works to acknowledge past alterations in landscape (cultural and ecological), present experiences, and decolonized futures.

PASTS: ERASURE AND SUPREMACY ///

In both our initial research and collective workshops, we have come to understand that the power of maps is, essentially, as a medium between the map's user and “official” knowledge. We trust that Google will guide us to our destination; colonization required pre-mapped routes to the Americas for economic profit; zoning laws are sanctioned by city offices for the supposed public good. Maps are used for specific purposes, and those purposes rely on a relationship of trust between the public and the mapmaker (whether they be federal or corporate). We uncritically use these maps to interpret the landscapes we inhabit, labor in, and otherwise move through. **At the same time, the very entities responsible for making and disseminating maps typically benefit from obscuring histories of injustice and economic conquest, as these processes often form their very foundations.** Knowledge comes from power, and if these maps are our only sources of spatial history, then, as a society, we remain quite powerless in the face of colonial information structures. This is, of course, tied to the highly professionalized discourses around architecture



and urban planning, which are almost always intertwined with capital, government, and neo-colonial projects of development and “urban renewal.”

Take, for example, the proto-urbanism of Dutch New Amsterdam in what once was Mannahatta. The Lenni-Lenape Indigenous Americans, whose relationships to both land and property were profoundly different from Western tradition, had a distinct relationship to the landscape, shaping it just as it shaped them. While they did indeed alter the landscape, leaving oyster shells in masses on the island's East side and clearing pathways for collective use, they were a part of an organic, meandering, sustainable ecology. In 1626, the Dutch “purchased” the land from the Lenape, eventually coming to eradicate this ecology and overlay European architectures

and grid-like streets onto the clear-cut land. This history relied on maps, made solely in Western terms, that deemed the territory a part of the “New World.” Cartography here is a nexus of erasure: to deem something “new” is a refusal of any former presence in the land, and its mapping from this point of view functions as its officially-sanctioned manifestation.

Maps and physical landscape alterations further helped delineate “cultured” Europeans from the wild “Other”: it has been speculated that the wall built by the Dutch in the 1600s (transformed through the years into what is now New York’s famed Wall Street) was built in order to defend the colony from either Lenape or British attacks from the north. In both cases, the wall still functioned to reify the enlightened European against the supposed primitiveness of forest inhabitants. Even as the colony grew, Black slaves were relegated to the other side of the wall, working on farms to provide for the colony; this is an unmistakable example of segregation and capital accumulation that defines the Western colonial project. The wall, the gridded colony, and the colony’s infrastructures of accumulation worked as manifestations of racist colonial thought, starting American development down such a destructive path that it is difficult to imagine alternative architectures or ways of moving through the space.

Colonialist occupation and development — reliant on mapping as a preliminary act of erasure — has since become a major tool of urban policy and community displacement. Throughout New York City and the nation, the process of redlining has had the catastrophic effect of relegating communities of color to the fringes in federally-sanctioned ghettos. The New Deal-era policy, based purely on culture-flattening maps, deemed certain parts of U.S. cities desirable to investors and developers and left neighborhoods of color to rot in neglect.

These lines are more subtle manifestations of the Dutch wall, and have had the effect of patterning a slow violence of poverty, lack of education, and increased crime rates over the years. This racist process of urban “renewal” has since evolved into the renaming of neighborhoods on Google Maps for real estate usage, coating displacement with absurd branded terms like East Williamsburg and Bedwick (which, fortunately, has not stuck). This new colonial cartography, put into practice more than 300 years after the original map of New Amsterdam, has an evolutionary lineage directly tied to the white supremacist social structures of the 17th century.

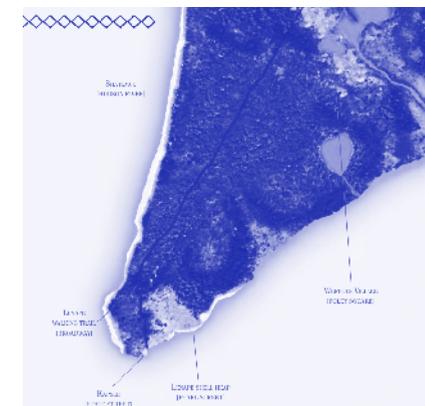
PRESENT: DECOLONIAL MAPPING ///

Yet the cartographic imagination is not unique to urban planners, politicians, or development companies that (much like the Dutch West India Company) have used maps to racist and capitalist ends. Mapping can also be used to inquire, remember, and decolonize these relationships and can very easily be placed in the hands of colonized communities. **It has functioned well as a tool of white supremacy, capital accumulation, and control; and yet the power of mapping is not inextricable from this legacy.** Rather, as a tool of accessing and establishing power, it has been and can continue to be used for justice. In this alternative methodology, there are several options that we have established in our collective research.

The Underground Railroad was one such anti-map. Used to guide slaves north to freedom in the U.S. in the early 19th century, the map was disseminated only through coded messages and wasn’t visualized until later as a point of historical study. It remained accessible only to fleeing slaves and a trusted network of Native American, freed Black, and white ally “Conductors.” At the time, it functioned to undo white supremacist landscapes, and instead trace paths for

active Black liberation. More recent projects such as Mapping Inequality, which disseminates redlining policy maps to the public for activist research; and the University of Washington’s Segregated Seattle project, which unveiled still-active remnants of redlining, are instances of mapping histories of injustice to political ends. From these and other examples, we have found that mapping hidden or even forgotten power structures is a route in decolonization, while a more positivist action is to map a landscape’s cultural histories in remembrance, potentially leading to public recognition of injustices that define our landscape today. A broader goal of decolonial cartography is to undo dominant frameworks of land use, instead working to proliferate and highlight the histories, contemporary experiences, and ultimate goals of communities that have suffered from the colonial project and in many cases, remain obscured. Frontview aims to redistribute cartographic power and activate such modes of collective, participatory mapping through our Decolonial Mapping Toolkit project. Over a series of three workshops in January and February 2018, we, along with visual activist and writer Nicholas Mirzoeff and activist collective Decolonize This Place, began discussions around the relationship between decolonization and maps, with the goal of determining what a decolonial map might look like. These workshops became a broader collective of artists, activists, scholars, and students, now called the Decolonial Mapping Front.

Together, we determined a few key aspects of the colonizer’s cartography: these maps are static, embracing immutability as a way of reifying power; they hide, misrepresent, or do not have the proper information structures to present certain types of



information (such as landscape histories, community configurations, and change throughout time); and they only concern themselves with either the present (as in wayfinding maps) or future (as in zoning policy and development). In order to undo these understandings of landscape, our visual map must be historically-minded and yet conceived so as to always accommodate changes and additions, guided by the lived experiences of those whose bodies have been historically colonized. Situating cultural histories of Black, Indigenous, Arab, and other communities of color within mapped landscapes is the project’s broad and basic working principle. This is so we can link historical injustice to ongoing, lived experiences predicated by issues in land use and modernist “progress.”

In order to reframe our understandings of space, we aim to establish counternarratives and alternative histories that, rather than remaining anecdotes of a time past, can be seen as essential to the stories of how landscapes and the communities that inhabit them have been territorialized, constructed, displaced, and destroyed through colonial action. It is this type of political *longue durée* that we view as the essential structure

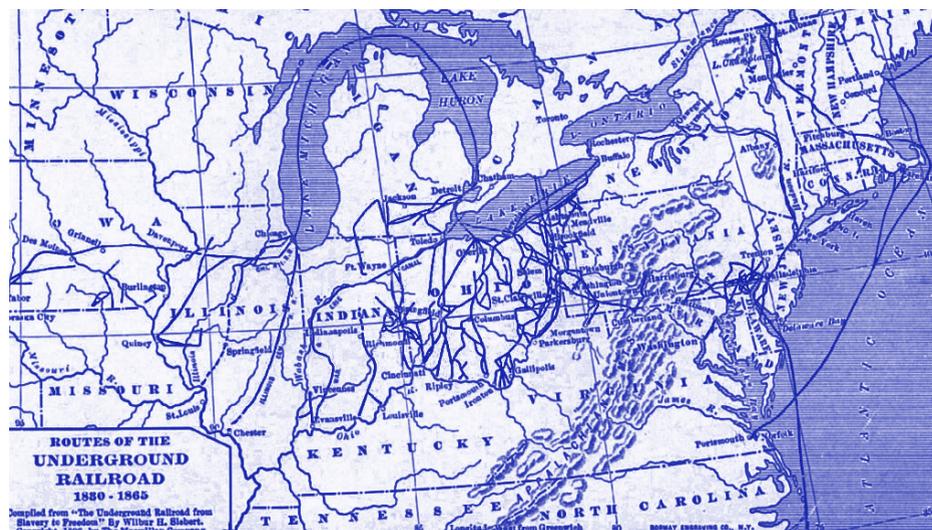
of a decolonial map, which seeks not only to commemorate but also to contextualize contemporary architecture and infrastructure within a broader history of conquest and control. If maps have always been inherently political, this mode of mapping, placed into the hands of the colonized, becomes a grassroots remapping of historical power structures to decolonize our understandings of space.

“Faultlining New York,” a public series of artist- and historian-facilitated walks, was one such experiment in remapping. The day-long program sought to reframe our interactions with contemporary urban environments, connect contemporary colonialism to global histories of displacement and apartheid (as in the aforementioned Dutch wall separating white settlers first from the Lenape, then Black slaves), and remember Lower Manhattan’s once-thriving Arab community of Little Syria. This neighborhood — which housed Arabs from what are now known as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Israel, and Palestine — was eradicated by capitalist development in a story that has conceptual colonialist ties to the violent displacement of Palestinians in 1948, a connection we would highlight during our walk, which was

scheduled in the week of the 70th anniversary of what Palestinians call the Nakba.

The first walk of the day, Paradise Glosed, was led by artist Moira Williams, who presented precolonial materialities (such as seaweed and marsh sand) and led us in exercises inspired by Indigenous rituals to renew sensory relationships to the landscape. The resulting hour and a half included stomping across a wooden bridge; running our hands along metal fences, flower petals, and trees; and rubbing sand into our hands and clapping them together. Emphasis was placed on the contours of Battery Park, whose map reveals landscaped curves, meandering paths, and plant life, all built on landfill excavated during the construction of the World Trade Center.

The World Trade Center was, in fact, one of the nails in the coffin of Little Syria, which had, by then, been partially displaced by the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. This history, along with the histories of Bowling Green, the Customs House (now the Museum of the American Indian), and histories of the slave trade on Wall Street were all discussed through printed images, architectural histories, and participant-led conversation for historian Rebecca Manski’s



Map of various Underground Railroad escape routes in the Northern United States and Canada. Compiled from *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* by Wilbur H. Siebert, The Macmillan Company, 1866.

Unsettling Wall Street, the second walk of “Faultlining New York.” By bringing to light histories of colonialism on site through visual culture, we collectively reframed the area by making connections between the still-standing buildings and streets of the area and their political implications. Conversations spanned from Indigenous lives and their relationships to museums, to the present-day manifestations of Jim Crow laws, to the histories of Arab displacement in both New York and Palestine.

Remapping landscapes is essentially an act of reframing our understandings of them; traces and architectural evidence acted as the nodes for these walks’ new maps. Additionally, participants were encouraged to take video, audio, and notes throughout the day, all of which will be aggregated on a dynamic online map — the project’s framework that will house myriad narratives, histories, and notes. This decolonial map will continue to be built on through other walks in “Faultlining New York” (and, potentially, other cities), as well as through in-depth research of contemporary colonial practices. By mapping and remapping the traces of our decolonial gatherings, we effectively aim to decolonize our relationships with the spaces through which we move, and to create an accessible and living multimedia archive that counters mainstream understandings of space, maps, and urban histories.

FUTURES: UTOPIAN CARTOGRAPHIES ///

In our efforts, we have found that both social justice and decolonization frameworks rely on broader temporalities that these maps must embody, lending a way of envisioning a future geography that reflects utopian principles of community ecology, anti-occupation, and anti-gentrification. **What’s more,**

utopian visions must rely on a radical re-envisioning of the past, beginning with a reorganization of the cartographies on which societies have literally been structured. A new historiographic cartography can focus on recognizing the political implications of infrastructural change over time. Decolonial maps, then, house the potential energy for active decolonial projects, framing information in such ways as to imagine, then enact, alternative social configurations.

One such ongoing process is the decolonization of New York City’s literal and cultural landscapes, which both undoes colonial infrastructures and monuments and introduces participatory design to city governance. Prior to Frontview’s Decolonial Mapping Front, maps of the city’s colonial and racist monuments have been made and disseminated, which help influence public thought and increase access to the NYC Monuments Commission’s recent public discussions. Further, the National Museum of the American Indian (while inhabiting a colonial architecture itself) has released a guide to Manhattan, the Lenape name for the island on which Manhattan stands. While this guide does not necessarily refuse the regime of modern design and urban planning, we can look to institutes such as the University of New Mexico’s Indigenous Design and Planning Institute (iD+Pi) to activate Indigenous ways of life through new technologies, architectures, and urbanisms to progress towards a future with decolonization at its core. This is to say nothing of the Black, Latinx, and myriad other communities that continuously battle displacement through gentrification. These issues fall under similar discussions of power, architecture, and maps, and participatory mapping can begin to reverse colonial

urban processes. The Decolonial Mapping Front, as a layered and dynamic project, is able to encompass these multiple stakes, temporalities, and visions for the future in its multimedia and iterative approach.

Utopian progress on colonized land would thus look directly to precolonial narratives for cartographic, infrastructural, and architectural guidance, honoring these living histories while negotiating political, technological, and environmental realities. This does not necessarily imply a 1:1 return to historical maps; such moves are, for the most part, as impossible as reversing time. Rather, utopian cartographies must be radically participatory and progressive to redistribute the power inherent to maps. They must prioritize cultures and infrastructures of the colonized in future-minded redesigns: they must never be complete and must account for both historical transgression and living culture. Histories are made by irreversible events; by mapping these events and remapping their politics, social structures can, perhaps, evolve to accommodate both alternative pasts and radical futures. ■





Anjulie Rao

BIOGRAPHY

Anjulie Rao is a Chicago-based journalist and writer focusing on livable built environments, equitable design, architecture criticism, and radical urbanism. With an academic background in art history, she enjoys intersections between visual art, architecture, infrastructure, and political narratives. She received her MA in New Arts Journalism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014 and her bylines can be found in *Metropolis*, *Chicago Reader*, *American Craft Magazine*, *Chicago Magazine*, *Artsy*, *Curbed Chicago*, and *LUXE*, among others.

STATEMENT

I pose the question “how is public knowledge produced?” Within the field of architecture, I have found that that knowledge, appreciation, and continued support of the design practice is a function of writing for the public; the development of our cities as habitable, equitable spaces is produced through criticality—“If there’s bad art, burn it down,” as Dave Hickey says. But what seems to be sorely lacking is a conversation about emotion—feelings that are entwined in how we experience cities and the politics of how stuff is made and built and fed to us. It’s a crucial component of public knowledge often cut from word counts.

I speak about music and lyrical writing as a form of building public knowledge: To understand the world lyrically is to create space for clarity, for experimentation and play; in which knowledge, form, and confidence can be altered. To look at writing through the lens of the lyric, to follow music through writing, and to sing what one knows, these methodologies are at the core of producing a public that does more than “know;” they feel information compassionately and completely.

VOICES
OF
CHICAGO #5

How to Lose in Chicago

How to Lose in Chicago

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you
meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

(Octavia Butler, *The Art of Losing*)

Some days, a life in Chicago is a life of mastering loss. As a newcomer to the city I often found myself standing at one of six or eight or 10 or 100 street corners that intersect with six or eight or 10 or 100 other street corners. In Chicago, these quintessential intersections are called “six corners” but when you're fresh and new to the city, they often feel like a hall of mirrors. And, of course, we Chicagoans consider the loss of people, whether through the city's unfair reputation of violence or the “bleeding wound” of the hoards of Black and Brown families leaving the city, driven out by decades of inequity. Chicago's losses move into the material: on Twitter Chicagoans follow the accounts of individuals and organizations chronicling with intense detail the historic buildings that are to be wrecked by a developer's bulldozer. All this loss has driven us apart, taking a city divided by segregation and redlining and uneven investment and shredded it further, pitting preservationists against developers, renters against their aldermen, homeowners against density advocates — it goes on. Loss is everywhere, it is fought and felt, and deep within that pit of loss lies architecture.

Under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration, Chicago saw a relentless burst of quality design projects and a commitment to continuing his predecessor, Mayor Richard M. Daley's (1989-2011) pet project of transforming Chicago into our own *Paris sur Chicago River*. While Daley supervised the destruction of Chicago's public housing stock in the 2000 Plan for Transformation, racking up an unbearable tally of housing losses (18,000), Emanuel has touted the revitalization of public spaces, investment in cleaning our putrid river, expanding bicycling routes, and building neighborhood libraries. Also in his credentials: the Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB), his brainchild, which melded his love for architecture with his salvation for increased tourism.

At the 2019 CAB opening event, press and Biennial stakeholders gathered at the Chicago Cultural Center to witness the launch of the next Biennial edition, to hear from curators Yesomi Umolu and Sepake Angiama. Making welcoming remarks was Emanuel, whose usual deadpan humor peppered the ho-hum air of press conferences. Someplace in the middle of his remarks, after gushing on about Chicago's architectural legacy, he noted that we have seen “foundational” works of architecture in our neighborhoods. Perhaps it was the contrast between that sense of beaming joy that comes from speaking about downtown Chicago's architectural “gems” and the pleading tone that the city sees value in our neighborhoods. But it was that word, “foundational” that locked my disappointment.

The word foundational is inherently architectural; in a building, it is the lowest point on which all else is built. It's often underground. In an idea, it is the load-bearing principle. It is a beginning; a point of departure from which all else can be elaborated.

I begrudgingly begin at the beginning, with the Michigan Avenue Bridge in downtown Chicago. On the bridge's south end tenderhouses, four relief sculptures commemorate the city's violent beginnings: the first panel, *The Discoverers*, depicts Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette — the French-Canadian explorers who mapped the Mississippi River (Joliet is widely credited as a founder of Chicago) — as well as René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, and Henri de Tonti — the 17th century explorers who charted the Great Lakes. The second panel, titled *The Pioneers*, depicts fur trader John Kinzie, dressed in his wares, guiding a group of

settlers toward their own Manifest Destiny. It would be inappropriate to not acknowledge the tyranny of westward expansion and the false claims to land made by explorers that land was free for the taking.

Defense, the third panel, presents as the most atrocious: it depicts the Battle of Fort Dearborn, an armed conflict between Native Americans and settlers in which the native peoples were responsible for nearly 70 settler deaths. In her radio piece “Four Corners,” writer Sarah Vowell describes the relief perfectly: “A wildly racist relief sculpture [...]. A soldier from the fort is kind of battling off this savage Indian brave while a mother and child are kind of cowering behind him, basically waiting to die. And underneath that is a plaque that says the people of the fort were brutally massacred by the Indians. They will be cherished as martyrs in our early history. What it doesn't say is that those Indians technically hadn't given over their rights to this land. But it looks like they ran out of room to put that on the plaque.” (1999)

The final panel, *Regeneration*, depicts workers rebuilding Chicago after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Chicagoans still celebrate this occasion like it was the birth of a nation: theater groups stage re-enactments of the fire by burning facsimiles of buildings on boats that cruise the Chicago river while audiences cheer. It is brought up in the endless fight to make housing more affordable; some of the arguably-unnecessary expenses related to Chicago's wild building code are meant to prevent fires like The Great One from recurring — 150 years later. Replace our city's flag with an image of Mrs. O'Leary's infamous cow flicking her

cigarette into a nearby pasture, which is said to have started the fire? We'll take it.

In four panels, we see a city's history in loss, images of men forging ahead to conquer and defend; murder and tragedy and the triumphant (white) human spirit. In each panel lies Chicago's foundation — geographic, civic, and architectural. Oddly, each scene is guarded or watched over by a different angel floating above them, perhaps to divine their stories as Chicago pushed on into a future of ongoing loss.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or next-to-last, of three loved houses went. The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I hesitate to jump so far into the present, as Chicago's recent past is colored by generations of disinvestment, segregation, and the intentional neglect of communities of color. But while the photos we see of the city's magnificent architectural marvels — the invention of the skyscraper and its tenacious re-re-reinvention that brought us the variety of Post-Modern, Minimalist, Brutalist, and Deco towers we see downtown — and the barrage of boat tour advertising (the tours are actually quite nice, you should try it), we see the exact opposite in our neighborhoods. Architecture critic and photographer Lee Bey uses a phrase that always piques my attention: “vast swaths,” he says, of the South and West sides emptying out; vacant buildings are demolished, leaving more vacancy. Beginning with the Plan for Transformation which displaced thousands of families under the still-false promise to rebuild, loss of equitable housing remains prominent. Social infrastructure like public schools also suffered a similar fate: under Emanuel's administration, more than 50 public schools were closed (most of which are located in Black and Brown neighborhoods), many left vacant, still. Couched in

this loss of housing, ironically, the few closed schools located in affluent areas have been transformed into luxury apartments, touting “authenticity” and “unique features.”

Stewart School, located in the rapidly-gentrifying Uptown neighborhood, closed in 2013. Today it is called “Stewart School Lofts,” and its features include chalkboards from classrooms and flooring taken from the gymnasium that still bears the school emblem. Images on the new development's website read less like marketing and more like a graveyard. In a powerful essay published in the *Chicago Reader* by Matt Harvey, a student who graduated from Stewart in 2012 and visited the newly-completed lofts, he wrote: “It was in this building that I played my first — and last — games of Johnny Come Across, and freeze tag, and Heads Up, Seven Up. It was in this building that I found my first crush, first girlfriend, and first kiss. Here, I won my first award, had my first fight, learned under the tutelage of some of my favorite teachers, and met lifelong friends. For nearly a decade of my life, this building was like a second home, and I had more seminal experiences here than in any other place I've ever stepped foot in. Today I wouldn't be capable of calling this place my home even if I wanted to.” (2018)

Paola Aguirre Serrano, founder of the urban planning firm Borderless Studio, has been working with the now-closed Overton Elementary school in Bronzeville for several years, collaborating with artists and designers to re-activate the space with installations and activities that foster optimism and community agency. She says, “School closures are a symptom of broader challenges related to spatial inequities, racial segregation, population loss, declining school-age population and too many school buildings, yet they represent an opportunity for creative and anticipatory planning

that equally values the process and the outcome.” For Serrano, the business-as-usual model like that of Stewart disregards the original pathos inherent in a neighborhood school. Instead the building is just a shell, ripe for hideous redevelopment. Where there was once life we've created market value; where there has been vacancy we've created anxiety.

Chicago has seen greater investment in leisure infrastructure and Rahm's version of “foundational” works of neighborhood architecture. The 606, a 2.7-mile elevated recreation trail located between the Bucktown (on the east) and Humboldt Park (on the west) neighborhoods, is certainly one of those. A long-abandoned elevated rail line was transformed into a lush running and walking trail, spotted with formal and informal gathering spaces, public art, and play structures. Costing \$90 million in total (\$30 million per mile of trail), the horizontal park is widely used and loved, attracting over a million visitors in its first year of operation. As a work of design and landscape architecture, it is a community asset. Yet as a piece of leisure infrastructure the project has had far more sinister impacts: it has spurred enormous property value increases, allowing for rents to rise and housing prices to skyrocket on the western side of the trail.

While Bucktown gentrified long ago, Humboldt Park has long been a neighborhood characterized by its strong Puerto Rican population that has fought tirelessly against gentrifying forces. The park's enormous steel Puerto Rican flags that mark the neighborhood's gateway serve as a welcoming gesture and a reminder of the long, sometimes unsuccessful battles many

Puerto Ricans in Chicago fought to remain in their former neighborhood of Lincoln Park.

For those who relocated, homeownership became more feasible and residents were thus shielded from some of the slow-creeping development making its way inside. That is, until 2012 when the 606 broke ground when the west side of the trail (Humboldt Park) saw single-family home prices increase by 48%, according to the study “Measuring the Impact of The 606” by DePaul University's Institute for Housing Studies. When the trail opened in 2015, housing prices rose an additional 9.8%. Gentrification continued to be spurred by housing sales, demolitions, and Chicago's history of sweeping downzoning to prohibit density across many of the city's neighborhoods. Today the neighborhood is becoming unaffordable to many renters and longtime property owners are seeing unanticipated and unfeasible property tax hikes due to their proximity to the 606.

It's a small but vital case study of gains and losses in Chicago, and a symptom of a much greater problem: a short-sightedness in architecture and design. Rahm, touting his foundational works of architecture, did not seem to comprehend that these gains are based on prosperity created from loss. Rather than integrating new design initiatives with policy-based infrastructure that would prevent the displacement of communities who had rooted themselves in their neighborhoods (rent control, upzoning, designated affordable housing), we kept the nice architecture and let the rest to work itself out. In an already-segregated Chicago, architecture is tearing us apart. When we seek to preserve

those values of design, what are we actually preserving?

I forgot the prairie because it stood so still. I forgot the clouds because they were always moving. I forgot the taste of water because it lay quietly inside the taste of everything.

I forgot the childhood when it disappeared through a hole in itself. Later, mushrooms emerged from its damp soil.

The way to keep something is to forget it. Then it goes to an enormous place.

Grass grows to the horizon like hair. In the sky a cloud goes on naming and unnamng itself.

(Jenny George, *Mnemonic*)

I've never fully trusted history — nor should you. History is dangerous, as its narrator is never reliable. It makes us into liars. In Chicago, our history makes us look like picky thieves: we choose the parts that treat us softly; unlike cities like Richmond, Virginia or New Orleans, Louisiana, that are dotted with monuments to confederate separatists who fought and died for the right to own the bodies of Black slaves, Chicago has just one statue, a monument to Balbo — a gift from Mussolini to the city. There have been protests for its removal yet the true monuments to Chicago's past racism lay in plain sight.

Our monuments aren't like statues, characterized by narrative. Instead we have cherished works of architecture that are cleaned and polished and preserved with the utmost care. The campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) is known for its collection of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe buildings, notably Crown Hall. Dotting the

grounds in a perfect Miesian grid, the squat minimalist structures are celebrated by international visitors and beloved by locals. New buildings are added to honor and respect the grid; from atop the Rem Koolhaas-designed El platform, the campus resembles a board game. Each piece is in place.

IIT is located in the historic Bronzeville neighborhood, known for its significant role in the development of jazz — an epicenter of Black culture. The Great Migration of the early 1900s brought thousands of Black migrants to Chicago, where they settled in Bronzeville and established what was known as the “Black Metropolis.” One building in particular stood as a monument to the thriving arts and cultural community, Mecca Flats. Designed in 1981 by Willoughby Edbrooks and Franklin Pierce Burnham (no relation to Daniel Burnham), the building resembled what Chicagoans know as a “courtyard” building: a long, U-shaped structure with an enclosed courtyard and 170-foot atrium ceilings. Balconies opened up onto the atrium, allowing for informal social space. The building was surrounded by plentiful outdoor gathering spaces as well, making it a rich, vibrant place for artists, musicians, and poets to gather, notably the renowned Poet Laureate, Gwendolyn Brooks. While much of the building was occupied by white tenants through 1910, the populations became predominantly Black, blue-collar workers by 1920. In 1938, Mies joined the IIT faculty, and in 1941, IIT took control over Mecca Flats (cf. Sherry Tierney, *Rezoning Chicago's Modernisms*, 2011).

IIT President Henry Townley Herald (1940-1952) saw the growing Black population at Mecca Flats as blight, desiring its destruction. Gradually, the building was starved out; IIT refused to maintain the building. They refused to install legally-required sprinkler systems or manage cockroach infestations.

They began gradually lowering rents to ensure that poorer tenants replaced the blue-collar workforce that moved out due to decaying conditions. Once vacated, the building was torn down in 1941 with support from a federal slums-clearance program. Herald's successor, John Rettallata, remarked in a 1954 speech to The Chicago Club: “You have probably examined today the model of the proposed new building which has been designed by Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe... It will be the successor to another building at that place which we demolished a few years ago because it did not fit the needs of our industrial era, the once-famous Mecca Flats.” That Mies building that would replace a home for working-class Blacks was Crown Hall.

To memorialize the once-thriving Black Metropolis, several six-foot stones and obelisks stand on the boundaries of the IIT campus, each telling a part of the neighborhood's storied past. They are vital monuments to this history but they exist in targeted loss. Author Sherry Tierney writes: “The adoption of Mies' language of architectural modernism [...] abolished 120 acres of sidewalk cafes, homes, and businesses of the Black Metropolis that were the incubator of Chicago's Renaissance. [...] This renaissance was based on the cultural production of Black artists, musicians and writers. While the work of these artists is archived [...] it can never be restored to its original vibrance that was lost to IIT's wrecking ball.” Yet this inhumane story doesn't end there: in 2018, a maintenance crew discovered artifacts from Mecca Flats buried underground; household and personal items as well as colorful tiles and bits of infrastructure from the building's basement. After several months of excavation,

IIT launched the Mecca Flat Artifact Conservation Fund campaign, raising money to preserve and catalogue the recovered items and place them on display at Crown Hall without recognizing their role in the building's demise — the Cheshire smile of irony at its best.

Now the way of the Mecca was on this wise
Sit there the light corrupts your face
Mies Van der Rohe retires from grace
And the fair fable fall.

(Gwendolyn Brooks, *In the Mecca*)

Perhaps I'm mischaracterizing Chicago in this essay; I don't mean to note that Chicago is, in any way, lost, or that the city's architecture as object or practice is solely responsible for the cultural or economic losses seen and felt by its citizens. Rather, that participating in the built environment — whether as designer, planner, consumer, or critic — we must begin to re-imagine how the built environment could ever, possibly, function outside of a normative system of market capital.

I think often of a current agenda item on Chicago's civic docket: whether or not the city should designate a segment of the Pilsen neighborhood as a Landmark District. Preservationists are asking for this district to preserve the neighborhood's architectural stock — one that is distinct for its Eastern European-built “Bohemian Baroque” styles but has been occupied by a majority working-class Mexican population for almost five decades. Today its flourished buildings include hundreds of unique, colorful murals that tell the story of its current residents and made it attractive to young artists (along with the

low rents). Its highly-walkable neighborhood and vibrant business district make it an area that has continued to attract younger, white and increasingly affluent residents. Certainly the neighborhood is being gentrified with second- and third-wave white populations, and locals are being displaced due to rising rents. Residents are concerned that landmarking Pilsen will cause rents to rise further and create burdens for existing home and building owners to comply with rigid aesthetic requirements. Yet the question of landmarking the neighborhood is not being posed as a means to preserve the inhabiting population and all its contributions to neighborhood character; rather, it seeks to preserve building stock by using the cultural capital generated by the Mexican residents (murals, ambiance, civic cohesion) as a darling for its argument.

Cases like that of Pilsen are challenging because, like many cities, Chicago cannot seem to separate good design from economic growth unless that design is done charitably; we cannot envision our city's architectural heritage and ongoing social infrastructure investments operating outside of generating economic capital. We will happily preserve Pilsen's murals because they raise property values; we preserve their Bohemian Baroque buildings for the sake of the building — not because people live there. In her book *The Neighborhood that Never Changes*, author Japonica Brown-Saracino argues for social preservation — a vastly different way of looking at systems of power, preservation, and displacement in communities. "Social preservation," she states, "asks us to attend to how an ideology and set of practices complicate economic revitalization processes as well as personal and financial gains [...]. In this sense, it calls us to consider culture for culture's sake because social preservation is a value rational, or at least driven by less instrumental goals than those we typically

associate with gentrifiers." (*A Neighborhood that Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*, 2009). Those instrumental goals, she notes, are competition for resources and development for personal gain.

Now I'm no expert in revitalization or development, but I believe that writing about architecture makes one an expert on the void that is left by losing what you once had and loved. Losing in Chicago means adhering to short-sightedness and to architecture-as-capital, and leaving the void once filled unnamed. Serrano, in her work, asks: "Could we think of former school sites more as capacity-building processes for their communities instead of mere real-estate transactions?" I propose we broaden this question to encompass all Chicago development; that when we decide to build new housing, tear down the old, or invest in social and leisure infrastructures, Chicagoans must consider growth outside of normative capitalistic prosperity by understanding that our architectural and civic "gains" have historic roots in loss. To begin that process of decommo-dification we must recognize how development has easily camouflaged as "investment" or "revitalization" with foresight, and develop language to describe precisely how loss is felt physically and emotionally within our communities. We have to name it, reckon with it, and write it like a disaster. ■

Biographies

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P. 84 *Palestinian Homes: Infrastructures of Intimacy and the Politics of Representation*

HACÈNE BELMESSOUS is an independent researcher and essayist. He is the author of several books about urban questions and the French *banlieues* such as *Opération banlieues* (2010), *Sur la corde raide : Le feu de la révolte couve toujours en banlieue* (2013) and *Le Grand Paris du séparatisme social* (2015).

P. 124 *State of Exception Neighborhoods in the French Banlieues*

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P. 140 *The Invisible City: Existence and Resistance in the Peripheries of Lisbon*

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P. 114 *“Sunny Island Set in the Sea”: Singapore’s Land Reclamation as a Colonial Project*

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P. 38 *The Jurisdiction of Infrastructure: Circulation and Canadian Settler Colonialism*

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P. 12 *“Freedom Is a Place”: Long Traditions of Anti-Colonial Resistance in Turtle Island*

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P. 20 *Colonial Suburban Home-Making in Puerto Rico*

MOMOYO HOMMA is the Director of the Architectural Body Research Foundation (ABRF, Arakawa + Gins Tokyo office). She studied and graduated from Musashino Art University before moving to Costa Rica in 1993 where she worked as a full-time professor at Casa del Artista (San Jose, Costa Rica). She then worked as an assistant program director for the project “AI MARGEN” by ILPES, San Jose, Costa Rica. After coming back to Japan in 1998, she worked at the Caribbean Friendship Association and Promo-Arte Latin American gallery (both in Tokyo, Japan). In 2000, she met Arakawa and established ABRF, Inc. in 2002, where she is at her current post.

P. 204 *“We Have Decided Not to Die”: The Work of Arakawa and Madeline Gins*

ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI is Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow at New York University. She is co-editor of the volume *Spatial Violence* (2016). Her research concerns spatial politics, urbanism, and modernist culture and discourses, based primarily in East Africa and South Asia. She received a PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and practiced architecture in Bangalore, Philadelphia, and New York.

P. 150 *Architecting the Border: The Hut and the Frontier at Work in Dadaab, Kenya*

PATRICK JAOJOCO is a Brooklyn-based curator, researcher, and writer working in visual culture and spatial politics. As an independent researcher and curator, his focus is in political ecology and historiography; in particular, how creative practices can aid in public understanding of long-term ecological, economic, and political histories. In 2017, he initiated the Decolonial Mapping Toolkit as a curatorial platform for decolonial spatial investigation, from participant-led walking tours to artist interventions in space to collectively-conducted research. The Decolonial Mapping Toolkit's online platform (in development) will house several layers of history, such as sites of resistance, topographical change over time, and maps of displacement, and will be used as a launchpad for public programs that seek to decolonize our experiences of the built environment.

P. 216 *Spatial Historiographies: The Decolonial Mapping Toolkit*

MOHAMAD JUNAI teaches Anthropology at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, Massachusetts. He has contributed essays on Kashmir in several edited volumes, including *Everyday Occupations* (2013); *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (2018); *Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir* (2012); *Of Occupation and Resistance* (2013); *The Hanging of Afzal Guru* (2013). His essays have also appeared in *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Greater Kashmir*, *Tanqeed*, *Al-Jazeera*, Turkish radio and television, *Tehelka*, and *Guernica*. Junaid grew up in Kashmir.

P. 170 *Disobedient Bodies, Defiant Objects: Occupation, Necropolitics, and the Resistance in Kashmir*

LALEH KHALILI is a professor of Middle East Politics at SOAS, University of London. She is the author of *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (2007) and *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (2013), the editor of *Modern Arab Politics* (2008) and co-editor (with Jillian Schwedler) of *Policing and Prisons in the Middle East: Formations of Coercion* (2010). **P. 100** *The Politics of Canals, Gulfs and Straits in Maritime Freight Transportation*

NO ANGER is a PhD candidate at the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, France. She works on nudity and sexual representations in political organizing, in particular on the Femen and pornactivism. She is also a disability activist and a performer.

P. 62 *Strolling into Imaginaries: When the Constitution of Space Produces Disabled Bodies*

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P. 198 *Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock*

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P. 188 *Antiblack Weather vs. Black Microclimates*

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P. 140 *The Invisible City: Existence and Resistance in the Peripheries of Lisbon*

TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE is a gathering of artists, curators, teachers, architects and often collaborators from completely different backgrounds, including fishermen, housewives and domestic workers. They came together in 2011 and are based in Karachi, Pakistan.

P. 160 *Walks through the Scrapyrd: Maybe in These Fragments There Might Be...*

ANTHONY TUTUGORO is a Kanak researcher, PhD candidate at the Université de Polynésie Française, and teaches constitutional law at the Université de Nouvelle-Calédonie. His thesis is entitled “Thinking About Sovereignty: Reconquest Strategies by the Independentist Movement in New Caledonia.” He is also a musician and performs under the name Inotux.

P. 28 *The Strategic “Toolbox” of the Kanak Insurrection (1984-1988)*

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P. 76 *Indian Residential Schools: Carceral Classrooms in Canada*

SÓNIA VAZ BORGES is an interdisciplinary militant historian and social-political organizer. She has a BA in Modern and Contemporary History/Politics and International Affairs from ISCTE-IUL Lisbon, and a Master's Degree in African History from the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Lisbon. She received her PhD in Philosophy from Humboldt University of Berlin. Her book, titled *Militant Education, Liberation Struggle; Consciousness: The PAIGC education in Guinea Bissau 1963-1978* (2019), focuses on liberation schools and the concept and praxis developed by the PAIGC. She is also the editor of the booklets *Cadernos Consciência e Resistência Negra* and author of the book *Na Pódi Spéra. Percursos nos Bairros da Estrada Militar, Santa Filomena e Encosta Nascente* (2014). Along with filmmaker Felipa César, Sónia co-authored the short film *Navigating the Pilot School* (2016). She is currently developing a new project focused on her concept of the errant/walking archive and the process of memory and imaginations.

P. 54 *On the Space of Imaginations and the Space of Memories: Remembering the Conakry PAIGC Headquarters*

MAWENA YEHOUESSI is a curator, co-founder and director of *Black(s) to the Future*, as well as a researcher (PhD candidate in Philosophy). Her one and only principle is the “praxis.” Think philosophy and art project management, but also contemporary dance and being a self-taught “geek,” to sum up her path. Jack of all trades but nonetheless persistent, she won her spurs in the contemporary art world while developing personal projects : clubbing, publishing, art collectives and exhibitions... B(s)ttF Founder and AD, she aims at enlightening the afro part of the world and performing the future!

P. 70 *Afrofuturistic Politics: Less Power, More Commitment*

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