Studio Brief- version. 01/16 /20

SPRING 2020 NAHYUN HWANG STUDIO

KNOWLEDGE TERRITORIES

R/URBAN ECOLOGIES II

Building upon the previous years' investigations into the new formats of knowledge institutions in the context of the contemporary city, and continuing the 2019 studio's examination of "territories" as sites of new collective realms, the second installment of "Knowledge Territories: R/urban Ecologies" studio engages selected critical sites in the mid-Hudson Valley region and their expanded geographies and explores the agencies of knowledge and its architecture in the milieu.

R/Urban Ecologies

The city and the countryside have often been placed at opposite poles, dynamic and densely populated vertical metropolises with maximum productivity on one side, and the timeless and restful countryside that promises simple lives surrounded by pristine and perpetually accommodating nature on the other. This constructed vision of two separate worlds may be convenient, but it not only fails to correctly represent the much-entangled reality, it also obscures *and* maintains the spaces of "uneven development,"[1] and of colonization, appropriation, and precarity that shape much of both realms and beyond. As the social, political, and environmental challenges and potentials of high-density cities in the "Urban Age" are investigated more vigorously than ever, and the discipline's renewed attention to the countryside begins to articulate the realities of the "new rural [2]," the studio centers its investigation on the conceptual "elsewhere," on the space beyond the dramatic binarism of the bucolic (or alternatively "hyper-cartesian") hinterland and the endlessly growing vertical city. Engaging the concept of "r/urban" as an open, working framework, the studio explores the often inscrutable yet expansive territories of spectra, of in-betweens, overlaps, and intersections. From the concepts of "rurbanization" in the early 20th century to the recent discussions around the concept of the planetary[3], while evading a consistent definition, the ideas of "r/urban," or the notion of the multitudes of open relationships between, or beyond, the imaginaries of absolute rurality and absolute urbanity, serves as a productive apparatus that may construct a more accurate picture of the world and articulate more effective agency and opportunities of architecture within.

In this context, the sites of "ecologies'' prompted by the semester's year-wide theme "environment" offer a fuzzy yet productive zone of focus for the work of the studio, overlaying layers of constructive complexities on the discussion of the "r/urban." Similarly open and multifarious in its definitions and demanding of one's own interpretations and agenda, ecologies provoke the considerations of multitudes of interconnected processes and actors beyond one's familiar physical and temporal scales, foregrounding the relationships between all inhabitants - human as well as non-human - of our largely post-natural, anthropocenic, and capitalocenic environment. Exploring sites of "r/urban ecologies" in the charged geographies of mid-Hudson Valley, the studio aims to investigate the spaces of fluid promiscuity and quiet yet often violent entanglements that occupy much of our contemporary landscape.

---

[1] See Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Cambridge, MA, and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

[2] See Rem Koolhaas' discussion on "Countryside Architecture" in Icon Magazine, September 2014.

[3] See Brenner, Neil. *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Berlin: JOVIS, 2014.

Studio Brief- version. 01/16 /20

SPRING 2020 NAHYUN HWANG STUDIO

KNOWLEDGE TERRITORIES

R/URBAN ECOLOGIES II

Territories and Knowledge

Engaging the topic of education shared among the advanced 4 studios, the programmatic experiments of the studio focuses on the exploration of new relationships between knowledge and territory. While counterexamples exist, the topologies of the contemporary spaces of knowledge more than often resemble those of islands or "camps."[4] With the implicit or explicit architecture of security and separation, rather than building *in* or *with* the territory, camps construct their own (extra)territories[5], often erasing the possibilities of any porosity at the local level while cultivating and strengthening the connections among and within.

Historically and still today, the location outside the conventional boundaries of the city further convolutes these topologies, and produces formulaic yet highly complex relationships between territory and knowledge. Powerful spaces of knowledge - sprawling high-tech campuses, private school enclaves, research "parks," and military industrial complexes etc. - employ the environment itself, often in a simplified form of "pastoral," as the primary apparatus of isolation and camouflage, while many of them quietly participate in the transactions of "cheap nature[6]."

In this respect, the zones of "r/urban ecologies" - with its messy realities and the plural interpretations - become effective experimental grounds to explore new institutional and spatial formats of knowledge within and in relationship to territory. Framing the concerns of knowledge and territory together, the studio aims to reconsider the false divide between culture and nature, the man-made and the natural, human and non-human, and the social and the technical, and envision the possibilities of a new spatial framework of knowledge within our intertwined bio-techni-socio-political milieu.

Approaches and Course Structure

As an advanced studio, the emphasis of the semester's work is on the production of rigorously articulated research and architectural propositions that each engages the critical inquiry of the studio topics with a distinctive thesis and position. The course is structured as a series of interconnected research, analysis, and design assignments, summarized as follows. All works are considered reciprocally informed and simultaneously developed as much as possible.

The studio will start with an overview of relevant discourses to establish the common ground for the semester's effort, followed by the work on the collective "R/Urban Ecologies Catalog" that begins to bring forward the shared characteristics of the studio

---

[4] The contemporary term "campus" originates from Latin *campus* "a field," as well as English *camp* which is closer to the actual spatial and operational structures of contemporary institutional campuses. See also Easterling and Agamben's reading of camp and campus.

[5] See the notion of "Edufactory" and neoliberal knowledge economy in Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 2011. 'Labor and Architecture: Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt'. Log, No. 23. Anyone Corporation: 97–118.

[6] See Patel, Raj, and Jason Moore. *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things : A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017.

Studio Brief- version. 01/16 /20

SPRING 2020 NAHYUN HWANG STUDIO

KNOWLEDGE TERRITORIES

R/URBAN ECOLOGIES II

site zone and help identify unique aspects of the potential locations of interests. The studio then conducts a brief survey of a wide range of institutional frameworks and actors of knowledge and territories in the mid-Hudson Valley region, to begin exploring the possibilities of new alliances and associations in the anticipated final projects' context. Simultaneously with this survey, the studio initiates the site-specific investigations and highly analytic documentation on the selected sites from the "R/urban Ecologies Catalog," articulating their in-situ, material manifestations of the key concerns as well as the relevant hidden networks and connections beyond. This work aims to instigate the individuated agendas and project trajectories for the design work, and help begin identifying basic framework and potential strategies prompted by the site conditions. The design proposals, revised through an iterative process in response to the ongoing investigations and dialogue within the studio, are to be developed articulating the rationales and intentions at multiple time frames and physical scales -from global and regional extent of intersecting networks and operations, and the "r/urban" scales of the newly defined collectives, to the architectural scale of buildings, inhabitants, and interfaces.

* Studio will take a day trip to the selected sites in mid Hudson Valley, exact date t.b.d.

Selected Reference

R/Urban / Territory

Berger, Alan. *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006.

Branzi, Andrea. *Weak and Diffuse Modernity: The World of Projects at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Milano: Skira, 2006.

Brenner, Neil. "Theses on Urbanization." *Public Culture* 25, no. 1 (69) (January 1, 2013): 85–114.

Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2001.

Palma, Vittoria Di. "Wilderness, Wasteland, Garden." *Wasteland: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Sheppard, Lola. "From Site to Territory." *Bracket 2: Goes Soft*, edited by Neeraj Bhatia and Sheppard. Barcelona; New York: Actar, 2013.

Upmeyer, Bernd, ed. *MONU - Magazine on Urbanism #16 Non-Urbanism*. MONU, 2012.

Versteegh, Pieter, Sophia Meeres, Matthieu Calame, Dominic Stevens, John Brennan, Stefan Kurath, Xavier Guillot, et al. *Alter-Rurality: Exploring Representations and "Repeasantations."* 1 edition. London: CreateSpace Independent Publishing

Studio Brief- version. 01/16 /20

SPRING 2020 NAHYUN HWANG STUDIO

KNOWLEDGE TERRITORIES

R/URBAN ECOLOGIES II

Platform, 2015.

Ecologies / Nature / Environment

Davidson, Cynthia, and Elisa Iturbe, eds. *Log 47: Overcoming Carbon Form*. New York: Anyone Corporation, 2019.

Graham, James, Caitlin Blanchfield, Alissa Anderson, Jordan Carver, and Jacob Moore, eds. *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary*. New York, NY: Lars Müller, 2016.

Latour, Bruno. *Politics of Nature : How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Morton, Timothy. *The Ecological Thought*. Reprint edition. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Reed, Chris, and Nina-Marie Lister, eds. *Projective Ecologies*. Har/Chrt edition. ACTAR, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2014.

Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

Thün, Geoffrey, Kathy Velikov, Dan McTavish, Colin Ripley. *Infra Eco Logi Urbanism: A Project for the Great Lakes Megaregion*. Park Books, 2015.

Architecture of Knowledge

Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 2011. 'Labor and Architecture: Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt'. Log, No. 23. Anyone Corporation: 97–118. Ed, Arjen Oosterman. *Volume 45: Learning*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Archis, 2015.

Ambasz, Emilio, Harriet Schoenholz Bee, and Gina Rossi. *The Universitas Project: Solutions for a Post-Technological Society*. The Museum of Modern Art, 2006.

Colomina, B., Choi, E., Galan, I. G., & Meister, A. "Radical Pedagogies." *The Architectural Review, 232*(1388), 78-82, 2012.

Ed, Arjen Oosterman. *Volume 45: Learning*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Archis, 2015.

Haar, Sharon. "Campus and City An Evolving Boundary." *MAS CONTEXT*. (online) 2013.

Martin, Reinhold. "The Topologies of Knowledge." In *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.