POLEMICS

AARON SMOLAR
In a lecture regarding Lacaton Vassal’s Tour Bois-le-Prêtre housing project, Anne Lacaton states, “[h]ousing is everywhere. Housing is here. Housing is in the school. Housing is in the city. Inhabiting is situations to be well in any place of the city,” and that perhaps the architect’s most challenging objective today is “to make the city comfortable and full of pleasures.”

Yet, if the essence of “inhabitation,” thusly conceived, is ‘comfort,’ a phenomenon which, though seductive, goes largely unnoticed in one’s day-to-day affairs, one must acknowledge the countless modes of “dwelling” that materialize in everyday life. When one disembarks from a plane in a city with which they identify, they may characterize their situation as having “arrived home.” Similarly, one may feel their body melt into a particular song as they listen - a profound resonance with, or belonging to, that piece. One may also dwell on a thought. At the same time, one may contemplate that the world’s coherence, a system within which we typically operate unquestioningly, has been dictated by others or by society at large, engendering a kind of alienation from, or “homelessness” within, society. Indeed, Martin Heidegger, in his 1927 text *Being and Time*, describes existence itself as the condition of “dwelling” in this already constituted world.

Taking this neglected kind of dwelling as our point of departure, we mined the everyday concept of “home” as manifested at Tour Bois-le-Prêtre for traces of its presence. We became acutely interested in the project’s “performance,” a concept that spiritually recalls the structure’s modernist heritage, as a framework within which the often-overlooked rituals which comprise everyday domestic life – intertwined networks of sequences, objects, relations, and feelings – are permitted to unfold for its inhabitants.

At the same time, we understand the production of routine in terms of the sociocultural and historical substrates which coalesce Melrose’s distinctive atmosphere. For locals, such a fabric may be largely internalized, surfacing from time to time in specific moments or memories, yet ever-present nevertheless. To others, this character may be immediately apparent (as it was for us) in the neighborhood’s built fabric, its people, its sights, sounds, and smells.
It follows that culture and history are inseparable from human cognition, the ground from which there can be any “dwelling” in the world that one inherits as it has already been and continues to be determined. In the context of both these norms and one’s preoccupations, Heidegger theorizes that humans exist at any given moment toward the future, in an infinite multiplicity of behavioral possibilities projected on different temporal scales or horizons. Because one’s closest possibilities respond to that with which one is immediately concerned, physical space itself is reconstituted in one’s experience as cognitive space primarily shaped by these involvements. Atmosphere and mood are thus intimately intertwined with the possibility of spatial experience.

We posit that the everyday notion of “dwelling,” which includes the architectural concept of ‘home,’ has its ground in this more original, existential space. Consequently, a dwelling unit’s architectural performativity must be sought in terms of its deference to this latter, fuller notion, which encompasses everyday lived space. In contrast to the modernist performative dwelling, the so-called “machine for living in” that pursued a cold and homogeneous approach to housing, we suggest that respecting the human spectrum of atmospheric and emotional needs will increase feelings of comfort and familiarity that could ward off anxiety and homelessness. The proposal thus features nodes of rigidly articulated programs that gradually dissolve into partition-less fields, affording a territorial kind of architecture conducive to a fluid and lively urban environment.

Diagram of existential space (left top)
1. An individual is located at a point in space
2. At every moment, one implicitly understands possible ways to exist with respect to their cognitive involvements
3. These possibilities include others that are more temporally and cognitively distant
4. They perceive their physical space in terms of these cognitive involvements
5. Only in terms of these involvements can they encounter others
6. Others reciprocally encounter one in the context of their own possibilities

Existential space as a structural framework (left bottom)
7. Dwelling units as isolated spaces within a uniform framework
8. Introduction of limited auxiliary spaces and interconnection facilitate limited possibilities and atmospheric variety
9-10. Gradient of privacy, program, and atmosphere fluidly carries into intermediate spaces as units dissolve
11. Increased porosity in units increases possibilities for spatial appropriation, opening onto a more fluid interstitial realm
12. Internal structure almost entirely dissolves into a fluid condition, maximizing spatial flexibility and programmatic interpenetration

Unit aggregation and representation of atmospheric variety (top)
existential space study
30" x 36", mylar, stonehenge, graphite
These nodes respond to localized qualities around this block. For example, we assert that the corner of 151st St. and Melrose Avenue becomes the primary locus of a market to “receive” the public, in concert with the latter street’s operation as a major commercial strip, its size, and the intersection’s importance for transportation. With the area’s large educational presence, we envision this market to have a pedagogical role while providing the neighborhood with a pleasant olfactory stimulus. Furthermore, we hybridize the existing Bronx Documentary Center with a new library that permits integrated exhibition, reading, and residential experiences. We envision the gradient of residential units as an extension of this public dwelling, interspersed within more public programs such that all floors possess degrees of activity. Units maintain a consistent module to allow future reconfiguration as necessary while maintaining degrees of privacy.

Understanding this network of atmospheric nodes three-dimensionally, we augment this range of conditions with subtle programmatic interpenetration and varied ceiling heights. We also incorporate layers of passively-operated enclosure to facilitate internal climatic variation, with the capacity to more specifically temper light, temperature, and ventilation in more intimate spaces. Finally, the gradient of transparency and color conceived through the curtain wall and brick construction can internally contribute to these cognitive landscapes while, outside, maintaining a dialogue with Melrose’s historical and urban context.
Over the last four decades, private contemporary art museums and foundations have proliferated across the globe as “high-net-worth individuals” increasingly turn to collecting contemporary art, whether as genuine passion or to accumulate various forms of capital (among those defined by Pierre Bourdieu in his famous essay “The Forms of Capital” are included social, cultural, social, symbolic capital), often even pricing museums out of these markets (which are rendered, in turn, increasingly beholden to private interest). In this increasingly privatized and homogenous industry, the architectural intervention often stands in for more nebulous and geographically dispersed operating conditions and models, “territories” that are actively produced in the networks constituted by the institution’s collecting, funding, and display practices.

This analysis takes as its subject the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio, Texas, an organization established in 2003 by former salsa magnate and San Antonio native Linda Pace to both steward her private collection and to fund her funds to ArtPace, a separate artist-in-residence program she established one decade prior. After Pace’s death in 2007, her well-documented commitment to Jungian psychotherapy leaves these institutions (conceived as her “dreams”) in the curious predicament of understanding the Linda Pace Foundation as a dream, I interrogate what it means for dispersed operating conditions and models, “territories” that are actively produced in the networks constituted by the institution’s collecting, funding, and display practices.

Immediately inside Ruby City’s narrow entrance lobby, any clear light, overwhelmed by the density of information, is temporarily suspended. A brick-colored wall that appears to be trashed out of frame of a futuristic structural wall like a phantasmic spear (Figure 1) is attended to the right welcome one, providing this knowledge for any visit, but it is impossible to really give her my attention in this otherwise dim and claustrophobic corridor. This piece asserts itself into the viewer’s space, a challenge to perceive it in its totality: 2001 photograph, not an hologram. Instead, Red Project (created in the absence of any possible objectivity or ‘rationality’ and consume with its contents. Only from the side does this flamin’ collapse, revealing a continuous frame of neon ribbons lights.

Bearing in mind that Red Project was created by San Antonio native and former picante sauce magnate Linda Pace, it is striking, though fantastic and wishful as the claim may sound, how the very name of the institution evokes a sense of agency: a Cheryl’s name when perceived at relatively high resolution: an image of discrete red elements – including a Buddha, boxing gloves, a Rolling Stones logo, and a pair of ruby slippers – that reappears at any distance in a highly recognizable fashion (Figure 2). Lingering on the ruby slippers – that register with almost recursive fashion, 2001 – it implies in its closing scenes that Dorothy’s journey through Oz was no more than a fever dream; similarly phantasmagoric, Pace explains that in this deluge of symbols and associations, the visuals that constitute her emoto-logical life appeared in front of her “like a photographic emerging in development in the darkroom.” Red Project is one product of

Figure 1: Ruby City Collection
Linda Pace, Red Project (2001, 2008) (Ruby City Collection)

Figure 2: “obtains the visual consistency of a chalet-style setting paired with relatively low-resolution fusion.”

First Condition

Recently, I had an absolutely incredible dream. Courtney and I were going to Galveston to see the re-building after the hurricane. So we went to the beach, and there was some serious barbecue, and we were walking along that. To the left was the ocean and to the right was some sort of buildings that were part of the reconstruction. At the end of the boardwalk was a ruby city, like the emerald city, but it was ruby.”

Linda Pace

Figure 6: author’s photo of ArtPace

Figure 7: author’s photo of ArtPace
In the Linda Pace Foundation’s dynamic negotiation between its mandala bruise and six dy nasties, one can find parallels to the related concepts of “integration” and “transformation” that underpin such teleological processes as alchemy and individuation, which respectively pursue the philosopher’s stone and psyche’s lethal return. Meanwhile, where the alchemists posited that the philosopher’s stone, the prospectus of a new human, “ambulatory loop,” this geometry, represented as a serpent-like stairs that complete Ruby City’s microcosm, an alchemical symbol of rebirth, of ‘transmutation’ or wholeness and the recurrence, or wholeness and the wholeness. Moreover, where the philosophers’ stone, of conscious and unconscious, philosopher’s stone, as the pros pecus of western ‘rational enlightenment’ (Figures 1-2) indeed, Ruby City is inseparable from the notion of enlivening life through individuation process, holding that the immortal soul is a theological proxy for an aspect of the self, which is con ceived in part by an inherited, timetale, and internal “collective unconscious.” Institutions also aspire to perpetuation, and their fundamentally depend on trans formation for their perpetuation and ideological modes of rapid brand diffusion and public publicity. Life, albeit short at baselines (although fact or found out that, despite lacking any indication whatsoever, select few items can be purchased at the visitor’s desk, placed almost of sights with respect to the ensuing views!” (Ruby City suggests that this mosaic is not a priority, or at least assumes a different form, here. “Transmut” what Rogers does the Foundation’s internal dialogue advanced?)

Indeed, Ruby City is inseparable from the notion of enlivening life through individuation process, holding that the immortal soul is a theological proxy for an aspect of the self, which is conceived in part by an inherited, timetale, and internal “collective unconscious.” Institutions also aspire to perpetuation, and their fundamentally depend on transformation for their perpetuation and ideological modes of rapid brand diffusion and public publicity. Life, albeit short at baselines (although fact or found out that, despite lacking any indication whatsoever, select few items can be purchased at the visitor’s desk, placed almost of sights with respect to the ensuing views!” (Ruby City suggests that this mosaic is not a priority, or at least assumes a different form, here. “Transmut” what Rogers does the Foundation’s internal dialogue advanced?!

With these reflections, I exit Jelliffe’s gallery and discern the claim that complete Ruby City’s “ambulatory loop” geometry, evocative of the ouroboros, an alchemical symbol of rebirth, resurrection or wholeness and the unity of all things of macrocosm and microcosm, of light and dark, of prince nature and philosopher’s stone, of conscious and unconscious (Figures 8-11). Exiting the lobby, passing both Coordinator’s Office and Project a second time, I return to the problematics of an institution founded on dreams, finding the collection irrespective of its degree, an institution that allows the foundation to the hermeneutical lens in pursuit of a multifaceted legacy of personal and cultural transformation.

In his key late-career text Dream, Heidegger turns the phenomenology of the self, Jung writes that individuation is never complete, that “the more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approxi mation of the ego to the self, even though this approximation must indeed, Ruby City’s terraced interface with the Creek as “the completion of the [CAMPStreet] campus,” an el ement that Adjaye conceives as integral to Ruby City’s public ori entation (Figure 8). Already regressing into a lightening rod for real estate developers, the San Pedro Creek Culture Park undoubt edly foregrounds bailiwick as a focal point for San Antonio’s deve lopment in the coming decades. With the plans three downtown segments either completed or in progress, San Antonio is equally accelerating around Art pace, generating toward many harbors outside, Riley Robinson informs me during our meeting that ArtPace organization will be the “smaller building in the little area as about four years,” with high-rise development around the structure slated to begin in the nearly three-quarters of a mile linear park that, on its anticipated completion in 2023, will connect the Southeast and Lone Star (a few blocks south of Southtown) neighborhoods to Downtown’s western edge (two blocks near of ArtPace). Geographically and conceptually parallel to the city’s famous River Walk, this park will include a landscape of public art installations and water features while removing this artery to a natural creek habitat.
Manhattan’s eminence as a global financial and cultural center is sustained by a dialectical relationship. Where the island’s southern pole evolved into an international beacon of white capitalist hegemony, much of this growth was only facilitated by the presence of its historically neglected northern extremities. Manhattan’s northern pole thus metaphorically parallels the physical concept of “dark matter,” both of which largely elude representation yet remain integral to their respective ecosystems. As a similarly invisible but omnipresent phenomenon, dark matter also has an affinity with power, the dynamics of which I studied this semester in the island’s Washington Heights neighborhood.

Perhaps the most explicit typological manifestation of these architecturally encoded imbalances is the prison. Washington Heights contains the only such structure in northern Manhattan, the Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility, a consequence of the southern tip’s magnetic pull. Through mining this institution’s historical traces, this intervention seeks to repair this imposed spatial and structural violence. Through undoing this structure and penal convention, I propose carving out a new public urban space which challenges the traditional figure-ground dichotomy that defines the Manhattan grid to provide a respite from the city.
Territories of Power in the Morris-Jumel House

The Morris-Jumel House, commonly recognized as the first house in Manhattan, is an architectural embodiment of the European colonial project. In these drawings, I explore how this structure embodies the relationship of master and servant in planimetric and sectional territories.

Social, Economic, and Political Territories: 1992 Crack Riots

This logic of spaces of power corresponds to those of social, economic, and political power that underlay contemporary issues in the neighborhood today. These territories are reflected in this causal flow chart, adapted from videos on the 1992 Washington Heights riots surrounding the murder of Jose “Kiko” Garcia, in which links are grouped according to sphere of influence.

Typologies of Power

Many of these invisible yet determining factors are expressed spatially in a variety of both state-owned and private architectural typologies, many of which exist outside Washington Heights yet bear heavily on its way of life.
The Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility was initially constructed as a small community hospital before it was forced to close in 1964 due to pressure from the nascent New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Upon its later appropriation by the city and conversion into a minimum-security prison, this structure, through architecture's complicity, was implicitly brought into dialogue with the carceral typology's roots as an instrument that excluded and perpetuated the subjugation of the “non-white” other to consolidate white western hegemony.

Where the disciplinary process, as documented by Michel Foucault, was ultimately removed from the public sphere as part of the Enlightenment humanist project, this proposal instead considers healing as both a public activity and a more constructive approach to justice. Inspired by Saidiya Hartman's notion of “critical fabulation,” constructing imaginaries that address gaps in the historical archive, new imaginaries, this proposal draws upon community-oriented, non-western, and indigenous healing architectures and practices.

**Site strategy**

1. Present condition, showing prison and fenced enclosure
2. Inverting the site’s present massing, transmuting the prison's fortress-like disposition into a semi-covered public park which reintegrates Highbridge Park (right) into the neighborhood's fabric while exploiting the site's natural sectional change
3. The canopy and ground murals are derived from indigenous and non-western representations of healing practices and behave as tendrils that erode the city grid.
4. Screen walls reinterpret the prison fence, loosely defining programmatic zones, populated with volumes that synthesize healing precedents into new hybrid typologies. These interventions support healing physically, spiritually, and socially through spaces for bathing, meditation, education, and restorative justice. As symbolic ruins or artifacts of the Edgecombe Facility, these two formal logics (the wall and the volume) suggest that the existing carceral model cannot be reformed. As the project erodes penal and architectural convention, the canopy dematerializes around the excavated void into a pergola.
The intervention employs rammed earth and gabion wall tectonics that incorporate aggregates from the site. The pergola carries into the volumes through a waffle structure and shingle system that reinterprets papier-mâché. These materials naturally weather and decay, becoming artifacts of a new historiographic stratum.
tessuto now: textile

As a European Mediterranean port country, Italy was severely impacted by the 2015 refugee crisis. In an initial investigation reacting to these events, I explored the use of constellations as a navigation technique at sea. This study inspired a collaborative proposal for a textile studio in the Florentine bastione. Though located outside of the Florence city walls, the bastione is an extension of the city's urban fabric. Tessuto Studio is a mixed typology textile studio, bazaar, education center, and textile gallery that operates as a public space for both refugees and locals.

Inspired by the ideas of textiles and urban fabric, we see the refugees as metaphorically being woven into the city's fabric. The subtle intervention preserves the existing historically significant context, representing the seamless integration of these refugees into the city. The use of glass partitions and fluidly woven circulation enhance this contextual unification, blurring the boundary between indoors and outdoors. Through facilitated interaction with migrants, this structure would be a center for the dissemination of typically “othered” cultures.
Navigation Study
24" x 36," mylar, paper, stonehenge, graphite
Hybrid Site Plan/Section (left crop)
Collaboration with Zinan Chi
24” x 72” mylar, paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead
Tessuto Studio Proposal
Collaboration with Zinan Chi
24" x 36" mylar, paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic hail
I would see beside me, on my left hand, an angel in bodily form... He was not tall, but short, and very beautiful, his face so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest types of angel who seem to be all afire... In his hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails... I was left completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God.

This famous passage from St. Teresa of Ávila's 1565 autobiography The Life of Teresa of Jesus recounts one of the saint's divine visions, the Transverberation, an embodied association between pain and the beauty of spiritual enlightenment similarly encompassed in words that became associated with her personage: “I desire to suffer, Lord, because Thou didst suffer.”

Architect and sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini enriched this narrative in his canonical opus the Ecstasy of St. Theresa (1647-1652) in the Cornaro Chapel of Rome's magnificently ornate Santa Maria della Vittoria (Figure 1). Bernini's piece depicts the moment just before the burning angel plunges the spear into Teresa's body, evidenced by the juxtaposition between the angels' tensely coiled arm and tender expression. The saint's reined and passively limp figure appears to sink into her cloud-like drapery, eyes closed as her open mouth groans from an agony of such searing intensity and short-circuiting the neurotransmissions responsible for the brain's capacity to apprehend sensation, thus preventing this organ from interpreting pain inflicted during a procedure. In this sense, I understand general anaesthesia as an "adaptation technology," a construct that allows people to better reconcile themselves to aspects of existence or reality. Still, the mechanics of anaesthesia remain something of a mystery as researchers do not yet entirely understand how or why it works. In an article for Scientific American, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science associate professor of anaesthesiology Bill Perkins states that "we don't yet know the molecular mechanism(s) of action for general anaesthetics," in spite of this procedure's long history.

The first medical application of general anaesthesia in human beings is generally recognized to have been dentist William Morton's demonstration of the use of ether vapor in what is now known as the "Ether Dome" of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston on October 16, 1846. In this display, which has since been immortalized in Robert Cutler Hinckley's painting The First Operation Under Ether (1882-1893; on display in Harvard Medical School's Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine), surgeon John Collins Warren successfully removed a tumor from housepainter Gilbert Abbott's neck, the patient placed in a state of general anaesthesia under Morton's guidance (Figure 2). However, this "modern" technology owes a debt to the vast body of knowledge acquired over millennia of prior experimentation across a broad geographic range. This understanding recalls Astrida Neimanis's concept of "posthuman gestationality" elucidated in her book Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology, in which the author apprehends embodiment as "watery...""...never really autonomous [as we require other bodies of other waters...to bathe us into being]." Critically, Neimanis interprets "body" through a posthuman lens that encompasses all natural and planetary entities and systems. After all, in Classical Greek mythology, the spatial association between sensitivity to pain), muscle paralysis, and amnesia, allowing humans to transcend their biologically encoded pain thresholds. This state is usually begotten today by a compound of intravenously injected chemicals that operate in each of these four spheres, a common combination being an IV of propofol (sedative, analgesic, and amnesia) concurrently with one of succinyl choline (muscle paralytic). These agents broadly function by placing the patient in an induced coma and short-circuiting the neurotransmissions responsible for the brain's capacity to apprehend sensation, thus preventing this organ from interpreting pain inflicted during a procedure. In this sense, I understand general anaesthesia as an "adaptation technology," a construct that allows people to better reconcile themselves to aspects of existence or reality. Still, the mechanics of anaesthesia remain something of a mystery as researchers do not yet entirely understand how or why it works. In an article for Scientific American, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science associate professor of anaesthesiology Bill Perkins states that “we don’t yet know the molecular mechanism(s) of action for general anaesthetics,” in spite of this procedure’s long history.

The first medical application of general anaesthesia in human beings is generally recognized to have been dentist William Morton’s demonstration of the use of ether vapor in what is now known as the “Ether Dome” of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston on October 16, 1846. In this display, which has since been immortalized in Robert Cutler Hinckley’s painting The First Operation Under Ether (1882-1893; on display in Harvard Medical School’s Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine), surgeon John Collins Warren successfully removed a tumor from housepainter Gilbert Abbott’s neck, the patient placed in a state of general anaesthesia under Morton’s guidance (Figure 2). However, this “modern” technology owes a debt to the vast body of knowledge acquired over millennia of prior experimentation across a broad geographic range. This understanding recalls Astrida Neimanis’s concept of “posthuman gestationality” elucidated in her book Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology, in which the author apprehends embodiment as “watery...” “...never really autonomous [as we require other bodies of other waters...to bathe us into being].” Critically, Neimanis interprets “body” through a posthuman lens that encompasses all natural and planetary entities and systems. After all, in Classical Greek mythology, the spatial association between

Fig. 1: Ecstasy of St. Theresa

Transverberation constitutes an accurate analog to the divinity of sublime landscapes. At the same time, this glorification of physical and spiritual suffering runs counter to the modern utopian desire for a world beyond pain, an achievement humanity has perhaps come closest to realizing through the advent of general anaesthesia. In Bernini’s earlier Baroque cultural context, general anaesthesia would have comprised a form of pollution, a chemically induced haze that blankets and degrades a patient’s internal landscape, inhibiting individuals from fully opening themselves to experience with an engendered loss of perception and consciousness. It is not surprising, then, that some denounced this innovation as satanic. In the following paragraphs, I will explore how a multivalent series of dialectics, provides the seeds for an ethics of cross-disciplinary phenomenon that mediates between care. Through employing the spelling “anaesthesia,” I intend to foreground this bodily state’s derivation from the “aesthetic” (anaesthetic comes from the Greek aisthēsis, a combination of an- meaning “without,” and aisthēsis meaning “sensation”), illustrating its environmental implications.

Modern general anaesthesia operates through integrating sedation (a spectrum of reduced awareness or depression of consciousness), analgesia (reduced

Fig. 2: First Operation Under Ether

Hypnos, the god of sleep and the River Lethe speaks to a reckoning with the values of primitive anaesthetics. Hypnos lived in Hades, in a cavern containing poppies (from which opium was derived) and other sleep-inducing plants, which was circumnavigated by the River Lethe, from which, “[b]efore souls passed to Elysium, they drank...to forget earthly sorrow.” Where most early anaesthetics simply engendered sleep, it was only later when total and reliable sedation was united with proximal amnesia.

In subsequent decades, general anaesthesia quickly expanded into a standardized medical practice and splintered into a diverse assortment of compounds such as chlorofom, propofol, morphine, and nitrous oxide (“laughing gas”). Intravenous anaesthesia was first used in 1934. Suddenly, these agents could be precisely administered to bring about a particular degree of general anaesthesia as codified in Dr. Arthur Guedel’s 1937 four-tier classification system. Anaesthesia now ranges in intensity and comprehensiveness from topical (which blocks nerve endings in the skin), to regional, twilight, and, ultimately, general. This evolutionary trajectory parallels Peter Sloterdijk’s characterization of modern chemical weapons like Zyklon B as a “design problem” in his text Terror from the Air. Sloterdijk states that, “...the active manipulation of breathing air...had all the features of an act of design, one according to which ‘within the rules of art’ human beings produce and design more or less precisely delineable microclimata of death for other human beings.” The calibrated attributes of various
chemical weapons manifest an effort to clairvoyantly determine an enemy’s responding behavior. General anaesthesia similarly allows an operating team to carefully curate a patient’s consciousness and behavior during a procedure, even possessing the capacity to increase or decrease the dose, as necessary, to change their state. As such a crafted experience, general anaesthesia also mirrors “air design” in consumer capitalism, which “aim[ed] at directly modifying the mood of airspace users…enticing a space’s passers-by with pleasant, smell induced impressions of a situation, contributing to heightened product acceptance and willingness to buy,” extending “the principle of interior architecture…to an otherwise imperceptible milieu of everyday life.” It follows that general anaesthesia could be perceived to extend this “principle” into the body, an architecture of consciousness, allowing the surgeon to reveal diagnosed yet latent ecological defects under precisely generated climatological conditions.

Sloterdijk refers to such an act as one of “explication,” “the revealing-inclusion of the background given underling manifest operations,” a concept which, in this context, is underpinned by an understanding of the patient as “object” or “container.” In one of my own encounters with local anaesthesia, I was overcome by a profound awareness of the intricate vessel networks within my own body, the vessel through which the agent into my hand, that these systems suddenly carried a foreign substance that alienated my consciousness. As these communications collapsed into the ether. In transmissions between the world and a determined set laying siege to my awareness, parasitically interrupting the anaesthesia upon waking, in addition to the obvious apprehends the temporal disjunction induced by general anaesthesia to soften the body’s movement toward death. This spirit can be summarized in the principle that medical care will not be denied to a patient if there is reasonable cause to believe that it is necessary. The Hippocratic Oath, to which physicians commit upon completing medical school, expresses this notion in a moral imperative that physicians provide care and “do no harm,” now legally codified under medical malpractice. The institution of “charity care” arose out of these concerns to provide the funds to cover necessary procedures; however, industry cynicism exists around the abuse of these channels.

Postoperative side-effects, on the other hand, coalesce an entirely different type of anaesthetic territory – one defined neither by the hospital domain nor by total consciousness nor by the operation’s duration. Instead, this space is defined by discomfort, by the duration of ataxic side-effects (and by the inequitable) experiences in their sleep cycles or dreams over subsequent days and weeks from the stress, discomfort, and disruption. These lingering operative traces establish a unique spatiotemporal perceptual logic that adheres to the patient, reconfiguring their understanding of the world until their faculties fully recover, and as bodily functions return to their pre-operative states.

Such effects are one of the only ways in which a patient is effectively rendered unconscious by general anaesthesia upon waking, in addition to the obvious shifts in their spatial environment (which is perhaps akin to a sort of teleportation). It is thought that, with complete amnesia of the procedure, the subject instead perceives the loss and return of being or consciousness in immediate sequence. At the same time, this sudden
shift generates anxiety, particularly within a patient whose cognitive faculties are not behaving properly. Here, psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott’s “transitional object” provides something of an antidote, framed as an object consciously or unconsciously adopted by an infant to help them cope with the shift from the illusion of omnipotent control over reality to complete reconciliation of the self with an autonomous external reality that does not conform to the infant’s desires. In broader terms, the transitional object provides a coping mechanism which helps an individual adaptation to and endure (usually) traumatic experiences, a form of anesthésia. Although, to an outside observer, no transitional object exists that can accompany the patient out of reality, according to this earlier logic, the transitional object technically provides continuity from the patient’s point of view. When memory resumes, the resulting disjunction can only be reconstructed from information from those who were present during this absence. However, since the operating team is quite busy and a patient’s caregiver often changes or rotates during their stay, these ruptures in the continuity of experience are usually left unfilled or unresolved, creating trauma and anxiety. In the case of hospice care, the home itself behaves as a transitional object, a point of continuity which eases the patient’s progression through the final stages of their life.

Much of the tension around general anaesthesia also results from the patient’s complete surrender to the surgical team, which is inevitably accompanied by an element of chance and danger not incomparable to that in mass-sports discussed by Lewis Mumford in *Technics and Civilization*. After all, there is little more terrifying than the prospect of returning to awareness in the middle of an operation, entirely paralyzed yet feeling the upper balconies to watch a surgical procedure, the moment with Biblical wonderment, not incomparable to that paradoxically returned full-circle with the game of *operation* as spectacle inherent to the name. This spatial configuration recalls how Bernini staged his rendition of the Transverberation, with the Cornaro family (the chapel’s patrons) observing the scene, with the anticipatory transfixation of a professional baseball crowd, from theater boxes on the adjacent chapel walls. Bernini engineered this unmistakably Baroque strategy to incorporate the viewer into the scene, appealing to phenomenology to inspire sublime awe and devotion in the audience. Furthermore, Bernini conceals a window above the two central figures which casts a glittering “divine” light below, anticipating the sorts of cinematographic special effects in the theater of modern warfare described by Paul Virilio in his book *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*.

At the same time, other transformations were more environmental in nature such as the suspended ceiling, which conceals medical equipment that would, by clearly associating the hospital with a total submission to and comfort, the architecture subversive to the conditions necessary for its optimal performance. The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) proved another significant innovation, as this space integrated patients from disparate parts of the hospital who necessitated serious treatments like life support, intubation, long-term anaesthesia, or even palliative care, allowing for their constant surveillance (Figure 5).

This natural anxiety around an operation can also be alleviated proportionally corresponding to the anesthesiologist and operating team’s ability to provide the script according to which the surgical team performed and responded – a puzzle to solve – a test of the surgical team’s talent. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, when Mumford mentions that “ether was first used in parlour games in America before it was used in surgery,” conceiving modern surgical practice as an evolution in the history of play, one that paradoxically returned full-circle with the game *Operation*, published in 1965 (Figure 4).

With the new possibilities afforded by general anaesthesia’s emergence like slower operating times and more reliable chemicals and methods, the surgical process was increasingly privatized and withdrawn, gradually departing from the public sphere altogether, consequently rendering the surgical theater obsolete. This change was symptomatic of larger trends in healthcare architecture intended to fulfill the increasingly demanding and stringent environmental requirements for new medical apparatuses related to power and cleanliness. One prime example of this process was the 1903 Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast as discussed in Reyner Banham’s text *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment*, this structure was one of the first hospitals to incorporate air conditioning with active humidity control for sanitation and comfort, the architecture subversive to the conditions necessary for its optimal performance. The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) proved another significant innovation, as this space integrated patients from disparate parts of the hospital who necessitated serious treatments like life support, intubation, long-term anaesthesia, or even palliative care, allowing for their constant surveillance (Figure 5).

This paradigm accordingly raises ethical questions like how such individuals can truly “do no harm” if medical personnel are systematically stripped of their power to empathize with others, many of whom present themselves to the hospital at their most vulnerable. This dictum requires a more expansive – more human – interpretation, attuned to both the patient and attending physician’s needs, physical, mental, and environmental. This pedagogy of desensitization also bears alarming resemblance to Lewis Mumford’s interpretation of military life: “[t]he denial of the body, the deprivation of the senses, the suspension of spontaneous impulses, the forced marches, the broken sleep, the exhaustion of the marrow; the neglect of cleanliness…” Mumford notably only attributes primal instincts like lust and the shockingly violent and act of rape with the power to penetrate or breach this façade, to insert a brief flash of reality through moments of physical connection within this otherwise disengaged vacuum.
Paul Virilio expands, stating, regarding the emergence of trench warfare that “…the vast new battlefield seemed to be composed of nothing…although they killed enemy soldiers, at least they did not see whom they were killing, since guns and aerial reconnaissance crafts had now taken responsibility for seeing in their stead…” deeming the front an “abstract” site of “blind, non-directional desire.” He elaborates, “…the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as deracialized or dematerialized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing in a surfeit of optical targets.” Detached from their own faculty of sensibility, soldiers are removed from their bodies and consciousness, effectively reduced to an anaesthetized state, existing only as a representation in enemy weapon sights, observing the battle as passive spectacle. In this new field of war, violence no longer connects a victim directly with its perpetrators but becomes an amorphous entity disconnected from and coalescing between both. Even death loses its finality, the soldier having “died” long before, marking nothing more than the end of the show.

This psychological and emotional distance was perpetuated by the emergence of the pin-up, a technology that was entirely lobotomized from the reality of the source model. These virtual surrogates for physical intimacy or care replaced the “carefully retouched photograph that serving soldiers used to receive from a female correspondent, a distant, intangible…fiancée of death who appeared only in letters containing…such personal relics as a lock of hair, a glove, a trace of perfume or some dried flowers.” This “sublimation” of the romantic implications embedded within this relic of a real relationship, one invested with emotion and memories, into a technology of distanced, mechanical, sexual objectification suggests social anaesthetization – the soldier no longer requiring contact with the outside world. Where Virilio’s description of the letters explicitly refers to a variety of “blind, non-directional desire,” he elaborates, “…the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as deracialized or dematerialized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing in a surfeit of optical targets.” Detached from their own faculty of sensibility, soldiers are removed from their bodies and consciousness, effectively reduced to an anaesthetized state, existing only as a representation in enemy weapon sights, observing the battle as passive spectacle. In this new field of war, violence no longer connects a victim directly with its perpetrators but becomes an amorphous entity disconnected from and coalescing between both. Even death loses its finality, the soldier having “died” long before, marking nothing more than the end of the show.

This psychological and emotional distance was perpetuated by the emergence of the pin-up, a technology that was entirely lobotomized from the reality of the source model. These virtual surrogates for physical intimacy or care replaced the “carefully retouched photograph that serving soldiers used to receive from a female correspondent, a distant, intangible…fiancée of death who appeared only in letters containing…such personal relics as a lock of hair, a glove, a trace of perfume or some dried flowers.” This “sublimation” of the romantic implications embedded within this relic of a real relationship, one invested with emotion and memories, into a technology of distanced, mechanical, sexual objectification suggests social anaesthetization – the soldier no longer requiring contact with the outside world. Where Virilio’s description of the letters explicitly refers to a variety of “blind, non-directional desire,” he elaborates, “…the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as deracialized or dematerialized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing in a surfeit of optical targets.” Detached from their own faculty of sensibility, soldiers are removed from their bodies and consciousness, effectively reduced to an anaesthetized state, existing only as a representation in enemy weapon sights, observing the battle as passive spectacle. In this new field of war, violence no longer connects a victim directly with its perpetrators but becomes an amorphous entity disconnected from and coalescing between both. Even death loses its finality, the soldier having “died” long before, marking nothing more than the end of the show.

This psychological and emotional distance was perpetuated by the emergence of the pin-up, a technology that was entirely lobotomized from the reality of the source model. These virtual surrogates for physical intimacy or care replaced the “carefully retouched photograph that serving soldiers used to receive from a female correspondent, a distant, intangible…fiancée of death who appeared only in letters containing…such personal relics as a lock of hair, a glove, a trace of perfume or some dried flowers.” This “sublimation” of the romantic implications embedded within this relic of a real relationship, one invested with emotion and memories, into a technology of distanced, mechanical, sexual objectification suggests social anaesthetization – the soldier no longer requiring contact with the outside world. Where Virilio’s description of the letters explicitly refers to a variety of “blind, non-directional desire,” he elaborates, “…the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as deracialized or dematerialized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing in a surfeit of optical targets.” Detached from their own faculty of sensibility, soldiers are removed from their bodies and consciousness, effectively reduced to an anaesthetized state, existing only as a representation in enemy weapon sights, observing the battle as passive spectacle. In this new field of war, violence no longer connects a victim directly with its perpetrators but becomes an amorphous entity disconnected from and coalescing between both. Even death loses its finality, the soldier having “died” long before, marking nothing more than the end of the show.

This psychological and emotional distance was perpetuated by the emergence of the pin-up, a technology that was entirely lobotomized from the reality of the source model. These virtual surrogates for physical intimacy or care replaced the “carefully retouched photograph that serving soldiers used to receive from a female correspondent, a distant, intangible…fiancée of death who appeared only in letters containing…such personal relics as a lock of hair, a glove, a trace of perfume or some dried flowers.” This “sublimation” of the romantic implications embedded within this relic of a real relationship, one invested with emotion and memories, into a technology of distanced, mechanical, sexual objectification suggests social anaesthetization – the soldier no longer requiring contact with the outside world. Where Virilio’s description of the letters explicitly refers to a variety of “blind, non-directional desire,” he elaborates, “…the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as deracialized or dematerialized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing in a surfeit of optical targets.” Detached from their own faculty of sensibility, soldiers are removed from their bodies and consciousness, effectively reduced to an anaesthetized state, existing only as a representation in enemy weapon sights, observing the battle as passive spectacle. In this new field of war, violence no longer connects a victim directly with its perpetrators but becomes an amorphous entity disconnected from and coalescing between both. Even death loses its finality, the soldier having “died” long before, marking nothing more than the end of the show.
The Great Mosque in Cordoba, Spain has an intricate religious and cultural history, having changed hands multiple times and seen several expansions with the city’s pivotal role in the expansion of both Islam and Christianity. This drawing accordingly investigates the notion of “threshold” as interfacing between the Great Mosque’s historical layers, a microcosm of the city’s own ad-hoc character, and how these traces dissolve into one cohesive and disorienting experience inside through adopting the language of carpets in Islamic manuscript illumination.

This game architecturalizes the phenomenon of losing one’s bearings in this almost kaleidoscopic world through conceiving the structure as an infinite field of different historical moments, one which belies its austere and weathered exterior.

gameplay screenshots (above, right)
“This is an extremely complicated river system altered by works of man. A fifty-year prediction is not reliable. It’s a mixture of hydrologic events and human events. The Corps of Engineers - they’re scared as hell. They don’t know what’s going to happen. This is planned chaos. The more planning they do, the more chaotic it is. Nobody knows exactly where it’s going to end.”


Old River Control Structure is a complex of spillways near Vidalia, Louisiana that regulates the flow between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers to a precise, Congressionally mandated 70% to 30% ratio. This system resists the Mississippi's natural desire to divert entirely down the Atchafalaya, a situation which would have catastrophic consequences on both local and national scales. Author John McPhee eloquently catalogues the history of this conflict in his seminal essay, “Atchafalaya.” However, few people are cognizant of this remote area or its significance.

This speculative design reinterprets the idea of the “batture,” unprotected yet inhabited land in New Orleans between the river and the levee. Batture inhabitants have found ways not just to live, but to thrive in this unpredictable threshold condition. Inspired by this idea, the proposal seeks to establish a flexible way for locals to inhabit this highly volatile site.
These drawings study the motif of “disorder” in McPhee’s essay. I established a system of red and blue colors to represent the different systems that comprise the model: red for the deteriorating stick system and blue for the paper cubes covered with textual fragments.

I interpreted the Old River context through this lens at different scales: red represents natural water systems and blue, human infrastructure. This series translates the established color system to the Louisiana Delta context such that red represents the erratic natural water system to which human infrastructure (blue) must respond.

The following maps illuminate how human settlement conforms to the water systems at each scale to navigate shifting conditions. This adaptive lifestyle is exemplified in the New Orleans batture, as inhabitants here have adapted to a similarly unpredictable threshold condition.

Old River Control scale (right)

Louisiana Delta scale (next page, top)

Lower Mississippi River Basin scale (next page, bottom)

all 12” x 12”, mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead
This proposal envisions that people inhabit mobile floating structures which enable evacuation to different areas as conditions shift. Larger stilted structures act as the land-water interface for these floating units and serve as rest “nodes” for the travelers. Program includes living space, storage, spa, gym, flexible multipurpose and common spaces, rooftop green space, and skiff storage for crisis conditions. The docking bay below accommodates both current and crisis water levels. This system can be deployed along any water body as both structures harvest hydrogen molecules from the water to power their operations.

programmatic speculation frames (right)
12” × 48”, mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead

proposal longitudinal section (below)
24” × 36”, mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead
proposal longitudinal axonometric section

24” x 48”, mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead

proposal transverse axonometric section

24” x 48”, mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite, plastic lead
perspective
24" x 48," mylar, construction paper, stonehenge, graphite

proposal horizontal and vertical section model
spreads about the James B. Dudley Memorial Building at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina, written by me (below) spread from the “Essentials” section of the “Curricular Tools” specifically looking at how core curricula (conducted and written by me) and textbooks are presently taught across programs in disciplines of the built environment. Later pages postulate, based on these findings, how such structures could be modified in accordance with Green Reconstruction principles. (right, top)

GREEN RECONSTRUCTION
A Curricular Toolkit for the Built Environment

GREEN RECONSTRUCTION: A CURRICULAR TOOLKIT FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

UNBROKEN WINDOWS: A digital archive tracing the spatial cultures of Broken Windows policing

As part of the Buell Center’s larger Green Reconstruction project, we participated in the Queens Museum’s “Year of Uncertainty” (YoU) initiative, “a framework for strengthening connection among the Museum, its [at] communities, and constituents, focused on creating new possibilities for culture, kinship, and mutual support,” particularly in an increasingly precarious post-COVID-19 world.

Attending to such themes as “care,” “justiciness,” and “repair,” the Buell Center contributes a digital archive of many annotated primary sources related to Broken Windows theory in the 1990s. I participated in the project’s conception; later, I located, annotated, and wrote curatorial statements for many of these archival sources in the collection, including that on the bottom right.
support plant/wildlife. by filtering out compounds deemed harmful as auxiliary to daylighting.

transfer electricity from deep below the Earth's electric lighting. Sun shades on the façade reduces waste and emissions.

they're able to be pre-fabricated which renewable and sequester carbon. In addition, Mass timber beams and columns reduce the MASS TIMBER