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For a relational understanding of care in critical urban action

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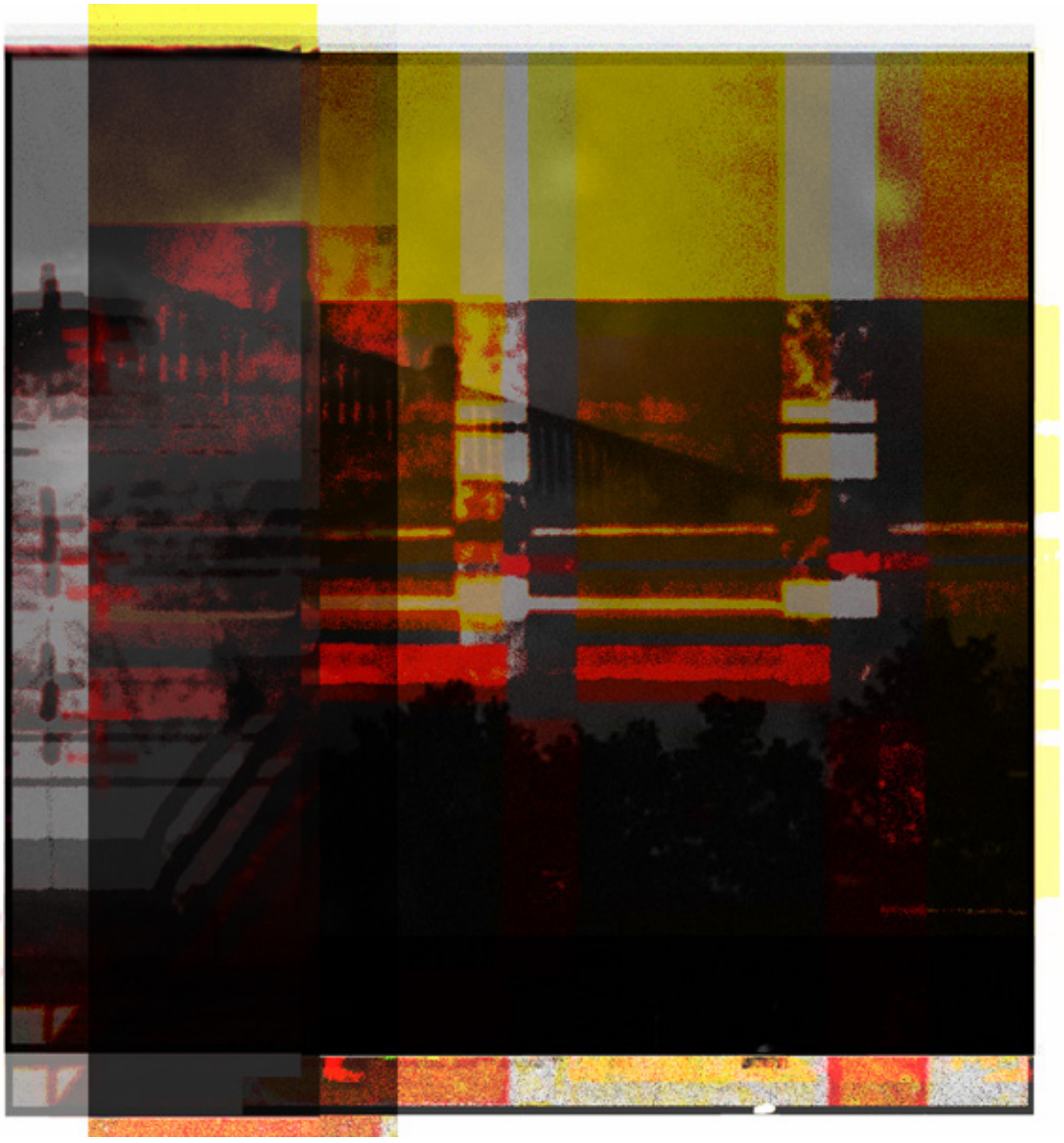
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**Care and Critical Action**

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# EDITORIAL

This issue proposes care as critical action, which we introduced as one of the analytic instruments to critique capitalist modes of spatial production, such as has been put forward by Ellen Meiksins Wood in *Democracy Against Capitalism* (2016). By putting forward perspectives on urban care, institutions of care, and care as agency, we argue that care as critical action refers to individual and collective mobilization for the radical changes society needs today. Regrettably, it has been overshadowed by regressive forms of individualism, undermining the social imagination and eroding civic institutions. Care for "the other," for individual and collective life, for the planet, and for the city must be brought to the forefront in our relations of thought.

This issue begins with two theoretical papers. In "My neighbour, the subject of civilisation," Lorens Holm presents a textured reflection that focuses on the neighbour both as figure and figure of thought, which enables Holm to cross between the ethical discourse of care and the spatial discourse of architecture and the urban. Holm focuses on the party wall as a spatial element that articulates the care of the other, the neighbour. For Holm, we are all neighbours and yet there is always an ambivalence in this relation, which is laced with violence—violence of enclosure, the governance of a party wall, fields, land, city, the split subject; and of civilisational discontent. Holm argues that care is a relation. Holm writes: "Ethics is about living well together. Living well appears not to be something that resides in the individual, but between them." In "Deconstructing Hospitality: Postcolonial Care in the Built Environment," Nathanael Nelson revisits selected seminal texts by Jacques Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, and places them in an inventive dialogue with bell hooks on the themes of otherness, hospitality, decolonization, and radical action. Nelson quotes hooks as follows: "These margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance [...] we are more silent when it comes to speaking of the margin as a site of resistance." In Nelson's essay, care takes on a transgressive role.

Papers by Andrew Copolov followed by Ceara O'Leary, Jiayi Jin and Yuxin Wu, then Lee Ivett and Ecaterina Stefanescu bring the notion of care more directly into the practices and inhabitation of the city. In "The urban staff room: Between institutional and mutualistic care in Melbourne's gig economy," Copolov articulates the urban staff room as a micro-institution of care in the civic realm and argues for care as a mutual activity. Copolov brings the "voice" of gig workers into the text. In "Community Hubs as Networks of Care", O'Leary describes the network of small-scale community spaces in Detroit as an inherently informal and semi-institutional way to establish caring practices. Such spaces are seen by the author as enablers of connections among marginalised citizens, whose voices are often unheard by institutional top-down process of place making. In "Careful Careless – A Systems Thinking to Restore Ecological Systems in Cities," Jin and Wu emphasise care of urban land and address question of soil as ground and the need for interspecies care—the foxes, the hedgehogs, the pigeons—as urban actors. In "To Make is to Care," Ivett and Stefanescu reflect on three moments of care as agency. They propose the categories of representation, intervention, and transition as the terms around which care as method and critical principle frame a thoughtful approach to architecture and urbanism with an ethical imperative. In "For a relational understanding of care in critical urban action," Jonathan Orlek, Claire McAndrew, Cristina Cerulli, Mara Ferreri, Marianna Cavada, and Eleanor Ratcliffe draw together reflections on their collaborative research project "Caring—with Cities" (2021–23). It investigated multiple forms of caring across neighbourhoods, towns, and cities in England, involving urban residents, community groups, public sector officers, and

urban professionals, reflecting on the role of the engaged spatial practitioner in such a framework of action. They ask: what forms of "caring—with" practices successfully recognise, value, support and amplify care within cities? They aim to shift the terms of discourse to "caring—with," rather than "caring—about" or "caring—for." They argue that this shifts care as interrelational, drawing on Joan Tronto's proposition of caring—with as a different way of envisaging care as "an ongoing system of caring acts in which we're sometimes on an extreme end of the giving–receiving scale, and sometimes in the middle."

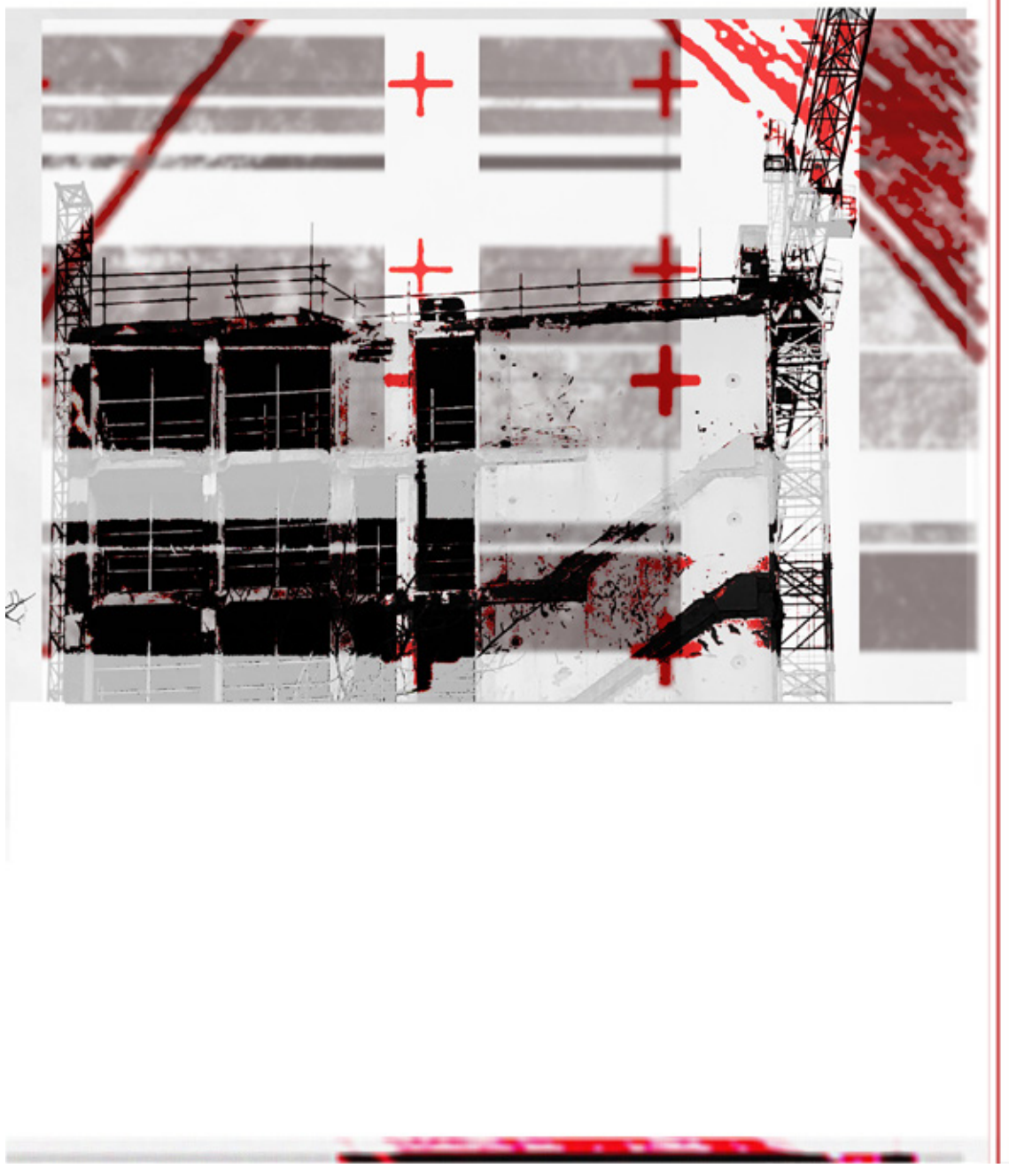
In "The caregivers' strike: a tale of violence and care in the entrails of San Salvador," Sofía Rivera-García brings terrifying attention to a hidden and violent phenomenon. The essay introduces the concepts of *cuerpo-territorio* [body/territory relation] and *acuerpamiento* [bodily infrastructures of care], to understand the practices and feelings of individual bodies as collective bodies. Rivera-García conceptualises the body as a territory and care as a collaborative practice, providing a definition of infrastructures of care that resonates and updates Arendt, to engage with "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices (. . .) reproducing life in the city."

We conclude with a set of papers that reflect on the politics and poetics of care as critical action. Mathilde Redouté reflects on a politics for common care in "Curated commoning," on the movement from commons to enclosure, with a critique of originary accumulation and references to Elinor Ostrom and Silvia Federici. In "Paths of banana trees: passages of care between unequal worlds," Carolina Correia dos Santos and Iazana Guizzo describe the care for the territory as a process of "becoming forest" to allow the landscapes to reactivate our bodies and consequently to further complicate the nature/social pairing of the Anthropocene—our geologic era when social and natural relations are entangled with all sorts of discursive and technological forces. Huda Tayob's conclusive essay "Archival Care" discusses her and Bongani Kona's project "The Archive of Forgetfulness", a pan-African digital exhibition and podcast series which ran in 2020 and 2021. Drawing inspiration from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Memory for Forgetfulness", the Tayob and Kona's archive questions how we might engage with what exists in the failure of memory. In the project, practices of care extend from the labour of maintaining neighbourliness, to multiple, small acts of refusal. Tayob argues that the attention to forgetfulness, to un-listened and un-spoken stories, is grounded in practices of peripheral care and constitute an agency of "small refusal." This essay opens reflections on the theoretical underpinning of care as a tool for critical action, a framework to analyse and dismantle power relations, and to re-establish spatial counternarratives.

Throughout the issue, the visual essay by Patrizio Martinelli, "Urban transparencies: The city as a palimpsest for action and care," offers a provocative reading of the city as a palimpsest. Rowe and Slutzky's notion of "transparency" is critically used by Martinelli to represent the interpenetration and overlapping of figures that compose the city, without optically destroying each other. This is achieved through the representation of depths, the simultaneity of the social experiences, along with the varying degrees of opacities that blur elements and merge figures into one another. Between the layers, elements, and experiences that these portraits of urban fragments express, Martinelli offers an imagery of the city that alludes to forms of action and spatial care, in overlapping time, space, and collective life.

The papers discussed in this issue developed and challenged the idea of care as critical action, which becomes an interdisciplinary tool to read, analyse, interact with, and act upon the the urban environment, across different cultures and geographies. It is to re-establish the ideas, values, and a promise of new civic institutions that connect to the ongoing struggle over social, political, and democratic life. The challenge is to find methods and practices for kinship, mutual endeavour, and an ethics of care, as tasks for an effective response to the breakdown of our cities and planet. The task is to reimagine care as critical action across scales, from the individual to social relations, and planetary entanglements.

N.B., C.M.E. & C.M.



# My neighbour
## the subject of civilisation

**Lorens Holm**

*Good fences make good neighbours.*
*Robert Frost*, Mending wall

In Frost's poem, two neighbours pace their wall, replacing the stones that have toppled. Each to their own side. They do it every Spring. Like a ritual. Frost is critical of the wall, in a neighbourly way, because his neighbour wants the wall and he doesn't see the point. The poem recalls the spectre of the American range wars of the 1890s, between cattlemen and farmers. They were excessively violent, largely because of the unregulated nature of the terrain in which their conflicts of interest were staged.

### An introduction to the neighbour

Ethics is about how we live well together. The three major religions of Islam Judaism and Christianity have chosen the neighbour as the principal site for our ethical duty to others. They have further chosen the words *love thy neighbour as thyself* as the principal form in which to express it. Even most atheists have adopted this form without critique. Ethics goes back to Leviticus where it has always been territorial and contractual. In Leviticus, it is love thy neighbour as thyself and leave the edges of your fields unharvested for gleaning by the road-weary indigent or love thy neighbour as thyself and pay your employees on time. The neighbour reappears in *The Gospel According to St. Luke*. A priest and a Levite pass a victim of highway robbery without helping. The Samaritan was the next person on the highway, and he stops to help. In Paul Ricœur's treatment of *Luke*, he describes ethics as an eruption of the charity of the individual through the stolid surface of the socius.(2) The recurring scenario of the road in *Leviticus* and *Luke* points to the transient, nomadic, and serial nature of the neighbour. (3)

The neighbour is a problematic figure. My neighbour has no affinity to me, and there is no reason they should share my tastes, lifestyles, or histories, which is not a problem except that they live next door. Most of us don't mind weird, until it is on our doorstep. The neighbour is an accidental and contingent category of other based solely on spatial or temporal propinquity. My neighbour may be of any race, gender, political affiliation, social circle, advocacy group,... and is my neigh-bour simply because they are near me. It is, in other words, a bond that is not articulated in the symbolic order of society, but in the reality of the spatial and temporal orders, which may explain the peculiarities of party wall legislation.

For a short piece which ticks cosy truths about the neighbour and community, you could do worse than a *Guardian* sketch about the helpful neighbour. (4) It masks the fact that the neighbour is also the site where disagreements become personal and invasive. It also masks the coercive nature of

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In 2019, he organised the conference *Architecture & Collective Life*, and subsequently, the on-line research group, iPSA. Publications include *Reading Architecture with Freud and Lacan: shadowing the public realm* (2022).

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communities. Both of which are the starting point for Mark Cousins' public lectures on the Neighbour which critique the neighbour from a psychoanalytic position. (5) Cousins distinguishes two connotations for the neighbour based on its etymological affinities: the near-man (Old English, German) and the next-man (Romance Languages). To sketch this field of connotations is one of the accomplishments of these lectures. His interest is to shift the neighbour from a spatial category to a temporal one, from near to next.

The near-man takes the form of a neighbourhood and forms the basis of the community with its implications of exclusion and hierarchy (someone always speaks for the community).

The next-man is the constituent of an open series explored by counting, whose form is not the neighbourhood but that 20th C British social formation, the queue. It relates to the serial nature of domestic life, the queuing for goods, services, passports, . . . . Mark Cousins taps into Aristotle's distinction between politics and economics, or state and household, which distinction is one of the bases for Arendt's discussion of the polis in *The Human Condition*. This distinction was put into architectural circulation by Pier Vittorio Aureli, who argues that it can be used to understand the different approaches to human settlement: if politics relates to public life and city form; economics relates to the household and the management of the ongoing process of urbanisation. My relations with my neighbour do not go through the forms of politics but through the economic management of the home, a domestic other. (6)

We can relate Cousins' distinction to our Biblical sources. The near-man shares the territorial ambitions of *Leviticus*' neighbour. It is a spatial category, grounded in the parcelisation and ownership of land. Land is either acquired by purchase or conquest. The next-man is a temporal category related to *Luke*. You go through the queue until someone offers you charity. It is not about land rights as expressed in either common law or planning statute, but about managing the procedures of daily life.

## Party walls

> 'The [Party Wall Act 1996] contains a special statutory code governing party structures and the rights of adjoining owners. . . . A special procedure has to be followed if the building owner wishes to invoke his rights under the Act.' (7)

The problematic nature of the neighbour is recognised by architecture in the form of party wall legislation. Most cities have procedures that recognise the co-dependency of neighbours who reside on either side of a parting or dividing wall. In the UK, these are inscribed in statutory party wall procedures, which are intended to keep the potentially incendiary relations between neighbours sweet. The party wall is the wall that separates your house from your neighbour's. Similarly, party fences. In a London terrace, the property line typically goes down the middle of the wall. They form a pattern of parallel lines perpendicular to the street façade. You and your neighbour enjoy certain rights and responsibilities with respect to each other. When you build up against your neighbour's property, the negotiation with your neighbour is taken out of your hands and the hands of your architect and given over to a specially appointed party wall surveyor. The neighbour does the same. These proxies reach an agreement about rights and liabilities on your behalf, and if they cannot, it goes to arbitration with a third party, appointed by the Institute of Party Wall Surveyors. Even if the wall is solely on your side of the property line, your neighbour still has usufruct over your wall (they can bear on it) simply by virtue of the fact that their house touches it. You cannot refuse them, but they have to go through a notification procedure. Architecture recognises that dealing with your neighbour is fraught business; it is always personal, and so it needs to go to someone who has no interest in the agreement. The love that Romeo and Juliet shared was doomed because the opening they made in the wall that parted them, violated this architectural law of the neighbour, we might call it the taboo of the party wall.

## Psychoanalysis

> 'But if for us, God is dead, it is because he has always been dead, and that's what Freud says. He has never been the father except in the mythology of the son . . .' Lacan, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis (1986/92) . (8)

In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan argues that the commandment *love thy neighbour as thyself* occupies the place of absence represented by the death of a God who has always already been dead. It is compensation for something that never obtained. In psychoanalytic discourse, the neighbour is a contested term, and the commandment is problematic, not least because it is intuitively correct and wrong at the same time. We want the neighbour near to us – in togetherness is strength – but they are always too close or too loud. In *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Freud is aghast at having to love his neighbour, who would sooner kill him than love him, if they were not constrained by civilisation. Kenneth Reinhard argues that the neighbour raises the terrifying spectre of being subjected to someone else's fundamentally alien pleasure, combining as it does, the extremes of being close and foreign. (10) Lacan links the neighbour to pleasure and enjoyment (*jouissance*), and in particular to the salient feature of pleasure in Freud's thought – that it is shadowed by an enjoyment *beyond* pleasure, beyond the realm where pleasure is articulated in thought and action. It is unnameable but intractable, useless but unexpendable. Lacan argues that *love thy neighbour as thyself* conflates imaginary and symbolic categories. *Love thyself* goes through the spectral magic of the mirror, whereas attachment to others goes through language and symbolic systems held in common by all. We have all seen how self-love can kill a conversation – it makes a bore of the best of us. It hollows out the self because it leads to a denial of the unconscious. Finally, the command to love makes love legally binding. It joins love to the law, enforced love, which is a formula for the cruelty and self-aggression of the super-ego.(11)

## Infrastructure of civilisation

Imagine if Nolli drew a section of Rome to accompany his plan, that highlighted the party walls and the co-dependence of properties. It would delineate properties not spaces. It would constitute a ground whose figure is not the urban object, but areas without ownership, which may or may not be public spaces. This party fabric relates to a fundamental condition of our relationship to the land – that we parcelise it for ownership. Commodification is often inscribed in the originary planning of the city (in the 1811 Commissioners Plan, Manhattan was laid out in blocks and subdivided into plots).

The party wall is a form of urban infrastructure. It extends the public infrastructure of the city into the domestic realm where everything is personal. It forms a network whose main feature is that it is hidden. Imagine a ground plan of the city in which the street facades that envelope the urban blocks have been removed so that only the parting walls remain. The blocks would now be distinguished by the texture, density, and complexity of their ownership, rather than their shape. We could call this plan, a property or neighbour plan of the city. Relations of private to private would become important, and relationships that we usually regard as important, like the relation of private block to public street, would be less important. (12)

Unlike the façade, the party wall forms no part of Lorenzetti's picture of the city of good government, although it is probably more important for keeping the peace than good government. Party walls constitute the hidden texture of civilisation, in contrast to the city walls that keep us safe from barbarians and the facades that articulate its public and private realms. The threat that the party wall addresses is the internal threat to civilisation which Freud identified, the threat posed by the violence inherent to individuals. Domestic wall and public space are in a dialogic relationship: often, conflict in one is resolved only to shift to conflict in the other. (13) The party wall is the domestic counterpart to Arendt's space of appearance, the agonistic space of boulevard piazza and media, where conflicts

of interest are staged publicly in productive ways. These conflicts drive civilisation forward. The party wall is where domestic conflicts are internalised in order that civility can be maintained, the depository for the simmering resentments that would otherwise tear civilisation apart.

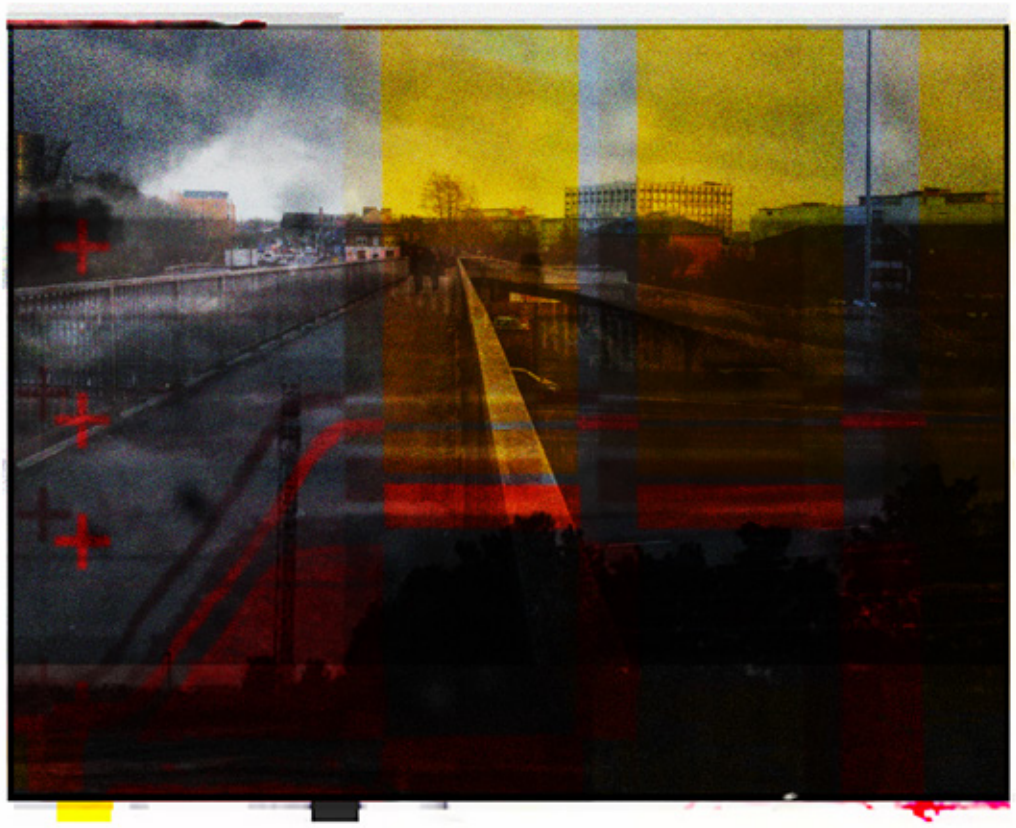
This texture of civilisation constitutes a domestic network of care. It is unlike other networks of care, which go through public programs, like child benefits or pensions, which are supported by the public purse; or go through institutions like charities, hospitals, spas, all of which, whether publicly or privately owned, have a public face that announces them in the public realm of the city. The care we owe to our neighbours is problematic precisely because it goes in the direction of a domestic duty. The party wall is the material model of the social bond that goes from individual to individual; it is incremental, cumulative, compensatory; it is on the side of metabolism – the metabolism of civilisation – and the multitude. The party wall permeates the city like a common grammar that articulates our care of the other. It works by relay, like the game of Chinese whispers. A takes care of B, B takes care of C. . . . To the extent that A takes care of C, it is indirect, diffused, going through others in the queue. You can imagine it rippling through civilisation, like unconscious life.

## Conclusion

The neighbour is the central figure in western ethical thought. This paper focuses on the neighbour because we want to cross the ethical discourse of care with the spatial territorial contractual discourse of architecture. This paper is, in effect, a prolegomena to any future discourse that may come forth as an ethics of the environment. Frost's neighbour wants stone walls; Frost defers to keep the peace. The ethics is in the act of deference. The wall is but a sublimation. Ethics is about living well together. Living well appears not to be something that resides in the individual, but between them. The lesson of our detour into psychoanalytics is that the neighbour – and that surface with the forbidden potential for a framed opening – is a formation of the super-ego in confrontation with the irreducible alterity of the other. *The love thyself* that resides in the subject of civilisation, and is externalised in the neighbour, and materialised in the party wall, is a relationship laced with anxiety, aggression, and cruelty. It is both summoned and regulated by civilisation. Freud and Ricoeur argue, to different ends, that we need the laws and institutions of civilisation to love, but they put that love in different relations to civilisation. For Freud, the command to love is a constraint imposed by civilisation (that's what civilisation does, it constrains us), and as a constraint, it is a source of unhappiness. Ricoeur's love is an exception that is made possible by, and erupts through, these constraints. The neighbour conflates the subjective categories of self and other, the territorial categories of near and far, the social categories of private and public and the political categories of household and state. It is clear why ethics should choose the figure of the neighbour – the neighbour is such a liminal figure, its liminality the flashpoint for care and for the aggression that prevents care.

Endnote

1. Robert Frost (1916) 'Mending wall' in The Poetry of Robert Frost, edited by Edward Connery Lathem. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, pp.33-34.
2. Paul Ricoeur (1955) 'The Socius and the Neighbour' in History and Truth. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, pp. 98-109.
3. The Book of Leviticus, 19: 9-18, Old Testament. The Gospel According to St. Luke, 10: 30-37, New Testament.
4. Hafeezah Soni, '. . . a good neighbour' in Moya Sarner, compiler, 'How To Be Good' in Saturday Guardian issue 66, 31.12.22, p. 16.
5. Mark Cousins gave a public lecture at the Architectural Association, London, every Friday evening during the academic term, each year addressing a different topic. See the Mark Cousins Lecture Archive at https://www.aaschool.ac.uk/markcousins. For the lecture series 'The Neighbour' (academic year 2009-10) see https://www.aaschool.ac.uk/markcousins/34. The Mark Cousins Lecture Archive is one of the great contributions to the oral tradition of public life.
6. Pier Vittorio Aureli (2011) The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture. Cambridge MA: MIT Press. Hannah Arendt (1958) The Human Condition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
7. Anthony Speaight and Gregory Stone (1996) Architect's Legal Handbook: the law for architects, sixth edition. Oxford: Butterworth Architecture, p.163.
8. Jacques Lacan (1986) The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960. Trans. by Dennis Porter. Ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller (NYC: Norton, 1992) p.177. Chapter XIII, The death of God, joins up the originary murder of Moses, the murder of the primordial father; the foundation of morals, the foundation of the law; the destruction of the temple, the sublimation of architecture, the death of God, the command to love God, and the command to love the neighbour.
9. Sigmund Freud (1930) Civilization and Its Discontents. Trans. by Joan Riviere and James Strachey. Ed. by M. Masud R. Khan, International Psycho-Analytical Library. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1975, pp48-9.
10. Reinhard, Kenneth, Eric L Santner, and Slavoj Zizek (2005) The Neighbour: Three Inquiries in Political Theology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 11-75.
11. Lacan (1986) The Ethics, op. cit., principally in chapter XIV 'Love of one's neighbour' pp.179-190, in particular p.186, although the discussion is returned to in a number of places throughout the text.
12. The relation to the street is not quite irrelevant. In British planning law, for a structure to count as a party structure, the two interiors must have separate entrances from the street. Many TV comedies, including Neighbours, Seinfeld, and Friends, tarry with the ambiguous disconnect between street façade and interior. The party wall seems to fall in the register of comedy; it puts individual in relation to individual. The façade, which puts the individual in relation to public life, falls in the register of tragedy.
13. These shifts often happen in the periphery. For instance, the planning debates around on- versus off-street (public versus private) parking.



# Deconstructing Hospitality
## Postcolonial Care in the Built Environment

**Nathanael Nelson**

Our hyper-individualized capitalist society has forgotten, perhaps intentionally, the revolutionary potential of care. Care brings order to entropy: tending to a wound, patching a hole, or dusting a countertop; but it also disrupts the prescriptive: striking against unfair labor conditions, de-installing hostile infrastructure, or advocating for mixed-use zoning. In all instances, care meets immediate social and material needs through investment in the future. This is fundamentally at odds with neoliberal policies, which relegate the responsibility of care to service industries and product lines for instant consumer gratification, or even weaponize narratives of care to obfuscate more devious agendas (The Care Collective 2020). The true restorative power of care comes from a perceptive gaze that identifies conditions of extreme imbalance, and the autonomy to respond sensitively yet urgently.

Here I will focus on one variant of care and its spatial manifestations. Hospitality, or the ethics of negotiating with the stranger, is foundational to cultural and political systems across the globe. From a simple dinner party to enforcing national borders, our conceptions of who or what constitutes the Other - and how fluid that conception remains - are central to the identification of culture (Nour 2023). As a student of architecture, I am particularly interested in how hospitality manifests at the scale of our communities and the built environment. While the theories presented here can apply to a range of scales from the individual to the globe, the strength of care at the community level is a powerful avenue for change. Care in the built environment cultivates the humanistic and materialistic conditions missed by care deployed through policy.

### Hospitality Philosophy

French philosopher Jacques Derrida brought the language and ethics of hospitality to a Western philosophical audience. Speaking from his own experience growing up Jewish in Algeria, Derrida critiqued the xenophobic and antisemitic European immigration policies of the late 20th century (O'Gorman 2006). For Derrida, the ethics that govern the way one would treat a stranger in their own home also define nationalist policies and immigration rhetoric. This is due to the existence of what he terms unconditional, absolute, or pure hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000, 25). Derrida reasons that the various rules and conditions we use to negotiate hospitality imply that there must be a hypothetical state of unconditional hospitality. Imagine a host relinquishing capital and control to any stranger who comes knocking, or likewise the stranger trusting the unknown host with their few possessions. While theoretically it would result in a fruitful new relationship, this is not a sustainable or even realistic practice. Rather than use this framework to moralize conditional cases of hospitality, the value of this hypothetical state is in realizing the constructs barring true unconditionality, whether they are social, political, economic, physical, or otherwise. These limiting conditions can show us the starting point and direction for radical systemic change.

Nathanael Nelson is an architectural designer from Charlottesville, Virginia. He received his Masters of Architecture from the University of Michigan in 2023 and currently works as a preservationist in Washington, DC.

His methodology is grounded in public interest design and alternative architectural discourse as tools to build stronger, diverse communities.

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Yet the answer is not as simple as removing the identified barriers to unconditional hospitality. Hostility and hospitality, as twinned social conditions, are mutually interdependent. Host, guest, hostage, enemy, and stranger all derive from the Latin root hostis, which reveals the way these seemingly opposite concepts have underlying similarities (Mishan 2023). Derrida was invested in deconstructing these binaries, as he was troubled by the way "one term enjoyed (or was claimed by those in power to enjoy) a special authority or privilege" (Clark 2020, 3). This is clear in the way Western tradition privileges host over guest, derived from the connotation of the host as synonymous with capital and privilege. Were the positionality of the guest as elevated as that of the host, Western conceptualization of hospitality and culture might appear quite differently. Take Couchsurfing.com, a completely free platform that connects travelers with a host's accommodations created by a few rent-burdened Americans and Europeans. In a society where services are only appreciated through financial value does this alternative gift-based economy seem radical. Not only does the fracturing of linguistic distinctions between host and guest reinforce false binaries, but it also results in profound spatial consequences in the manifestation of social or political borders.

Derrida writes of a French federal law that came into practice in the late 1990s called 'crimes of hospitality', wherein those who aided illegal immigrants could be fined or jailed (Clark 2020, 16). Confused and disgusted by this phrase - let alone the law itself - he reflects on the perversion of hospitality from welcoming the stranger into reinforcing the host's superiority. Citizens who hosted the asylum seekers and shared their resources were subsequently 'othered' in their own country. We see these imbalanced socio-political conditions in contemporary contexts as well. For example, how would urban space undergoing gentrification be read through a hospitality framework? A more cohesive understanding of the built environment through the lens of hospitality is necessary to grasp the ways in which capitalism and imperialism complicate our sense of belonging.

Therefore, there are two overarching conditions that I position as systemic 'crimes of hospitality' and worthy of urgent attention. The first is assimilation, which develops when a guest's identity is subsumed into its host or extracted for profitability. This condition requires a host with significantly more power than the guest. The second condition is colonization, where a guest overtakes a host and assumes control of their resources. This condition is the result of a guest with significantly more power than its host. bell hooks' notions of centers and margins most accurately define these contradictory power dynamics. To be in a central position or a position of power is to have access to means of control and standardization, while to be in the margins is to be defined against the center and occupy extraneous positions. This is not a moral judgment but an actionable framework. hooks herself states "these margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance [...] we are more silent when it comes to speaking of the margin as a site of resistance" (1989, 21).

## Spatializing Hospitality

To transition from a sociological to spatial understanding of hospitality and hostility, I refer to Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of smooth and striated space. Smooth space is the condition of absolute autonomy: a directionless, non-hierarchical, and unpredictable realm that resists standardization. I position smooth space as a manifestation of Derrida's unconditional hospitality, where host and guest share all resources in full, and as a result undermine the distinction between them. On the other hand, Striated space represents sedentary development, territorialization, and borders (Lysen and Pisters 2012). Because Derrida does not explicitly offer a foil to unconditional hospitality, I posit 'hostile isolationism' as a state where every actor is intentionally self-sufficient - the social and political condition of absolute striated space. These conditions serve as both signifiers and tools to identify and address moments of inequity, with the understanding that there is always a degree of overlap. For instance, a heavily striated space will restrict individual autonomy and creativity, therefore requiring a smoothing process for liberation. Alternatively, an overly smooth space may not allow for accessible or equitable navigation, in which case it is necessary to striate. Though 'unconditional hospitality' and 'smooth space' sound utopian, striation and hostility are equally important tools in pursuing justice. Sanctuary for the persecuted is impossible where every actor can traverse equally.

## Conclusion: Building a More Radical Hospitality

As Stuart Hall writes, "Theory is always a detour on the road to something more important" (2020, 42). We now have three frameworks for deconstructing neoliberal hospitality and constructing a healthier, resilient, and critical framework for care. The duality of hostility and hospitality, which refers to negotiating with the stranger and establishing a sense of belonging, intersects with centers and margins to identify how that sense of belonging can be influenced through differing relations to power. Smooth and striated then represents the spatial impact of center and margin activity. By reading the built environment through these lenses, spaces with shifting and overlapping influences can be deconstructed and subsequently restored to a healthy, equitable balance. Take the phenomenon of the Underground Railroad in the antebellum United States, a subversive implementation of radical hospitality in which fugitive slaves would align with abolitionist allies to collectively work towards liberation. In these instances, the allied host and fugitive guest have the same goal of smoothing an overly striated environment, using their central position to assist those at the margins of power. Yet at times, even striation of space is necessary. Removing barriers for the fugitive requires constructing barriers – whether physical or political - for the pursuer. Without this critical interrogation, moment by moment, house by house, person by person, the Underground Railroad would not have succeeded.

Gentrification is a helpful allegory for this framework in the 21st century. As a concept, gentrification is subject to constantly shifting definitions and identity politics. In most cases it refers to the "change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital" (Clark 2010, 25). This translates effectively to a centrally positioned guest actively overpowering a marginalized host and deepening the associated spatial striations. Care in this instance would require simultaneous hospitality for marginalized hosts as well as subverting regulatory and prescriptive land use patterns. One without the other fails to properly address the issue's complexity. For instance, simply increasing the percentage of low-income units in a new development might be hospitable to a few displaced individuals, but the new development itself still reinforces the striations of 'fixed capital investment' and cannot with integrity be considered acting with care. Alternatively, organizations like community land trusts are more successful because they undermine the traditional striated patterns of development while specifically targeting those at risk of displacement (The Michigan Chronicle 2022).

It is important to reiterate that these concepts are not necessarily new or radical, though they may seem so to the West. While hospitality discourse in European and American social and political theory grew more mainstream from mid-1990s onward, communities such as the Bedouins of Jordan find it strange that hospitality is even political in the first place (Shryock 2008). As a nomadic culture, the negotiations of hospitality are inherently fundamental to the sustainability of the Bedouin lifestyle. It is no coincidence, then, that as the architecture of the West increasingly serves as financial investment rather than as shelter, the ethics of hospitality grow foreign. Through the frameworks presented here, we can resist individualistic and capitalist patterns that undermine the radical nature of care, and furthermore construct a creative, resilient, and regenerative culture of care that is critical to our survival.

# The urban staffroom

## Imagining infrastructures of care and solidarity in Melbourne

**Andrew Copolov**

### Introduction

For food delivery riders in Melbourne, a lack of space evidences a broader lack of care. As both a space and a provocation, the staffroom offers workers a locus around which to build commonality and to care for o¬¬ne another. The following text addresses why delivery riders are without such spaces, and what the prospect of dedicated space might allow in terms of solidarity and care. Spaces of congregation are here understood as vital amenities for fostering agency and care amongst any precarious group. The experiences of riders in Melbourne, as outlined here through a set of interviews, make explicit the importance of labour in establishing a right to the city for marginalised peoples.

Two types of care are discussed in the following text. Firstly, institutional care: care provided to an individual or group by an institution, supporting the capacity for the recipient to care for themselves and their kin. Secondly, care as a mutualistic activity: something done by someone for another who could conceivably offer care in return. This second form of care relates to notions of mutual responsibility and shared action. In both instances, care is considered most effective when it can be negotiated collectively. The following text outlines some of the ways in which riders can care for one another, and how staff room-like spaces can support this care.

### Melbourne's food delivery riders

In Melbourne 90 percent of food delivery riders are male, 70 percent are aged under 30, and only ten percent are Australian citizens. Since 2015, when platform-based food delivery first gained prominence in Australia, these riders have only seen their rate of pay decline (Wang 2020). Like other gig workers, food delivery riders are understood by the platforms they work on as independent contractors, rather than employees. This classification means these riders are not entitled to paid leave, minimum wage, or legitimate compensation if hurt or killed whilst working. To cement the notion of riders as contractors, platforms refer to their workers using diffuse terminology such as 'associates' or 'delivery partners'.

For a delivery platform to provide adequate care and stability for their workers would be to risk being reclassified as an employer. Platforms produce disaggregated groups of precarious workers, most of whom are identifiable by their bags, bikes, and lurid gear. Though riders often engage with each other, the platforms undermine the capacity of workers to build solidarity by disincentivising congregation. Compared with other low-paid workers, platform workers tend to spend little time together, reducing their capacity to develop meaningful relationships with one another, or to organise. Social media has proven valuable in organising different kinds of gig workers, especially geographically dispersed ones. Yet as Heiner Heiland argues, without central meeting places, workers can only

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develop common social identities and build solidarity to a limited extent (Heiland 2020, 20). Shared physical space is thus crucial to collective identity formation, and to the development of 'workers' voice' (Heiland 2020, 13).

## Institutions of care in Australia

Platforms place cost-effectiveness before responsibility for workers. This situation of 'organised irresponsibility' contravenes the provision of care (Löschnigg 2019, 39). With food delivery riders unable to rely on platforms as sources of care, governments and unions play a critical if insufficient role in protecting and caring for these workers.

In Australia, trade unions have generally maintained a significant influence on employers and governments, which has helped the country to maintain high wages and a high level of welfare services. Since the 1980s, however, austerity measures, tax cuts, and privatisations have reduced the capacities of successive Australian governments to care for their citizens. Today, every fourth working Australian is employed on a casual contract, and those eligible for unemployment benefits receive far below the country's minimum wage (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022a). As independent contractors, riders face being removed from delivery platforms without warning, while the many riders who are temporary visa holders are ineligible for government welfare services (Zhou 2021). Delivery riders are therefore amongst Australia's most in need of care.

Australian governments have begun to recognise the severity of the situation facing gig workers. Australia's Federal Government, which now recognises delivery riders as "employee-like" workers, has promised to place greater emphasis on job security, and to introduce new minimum workplace entitlements. Whether riders will be entitled to amenities such as toilets and lockers, as employees are, will demonstrate whether Australia's urban environments can retain an ethic of care.

As the role of government as care provider has diminished, so too has that of trade unions. The introduction of anti-union legislation has meant a reduction in the collective bargaining power of unions, thus exacerbating the decline of union influence and membership. In 1992, 41% of Australian employees were trade union members, whereas by 2022 this proportion was 12.5% (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022b). Despite this trend, unions remain essential institutions of care and representation, and amongst Australia's unions, it is the Transport Workers Union (TWU) which has come to represent delivery riders and other gig workers. Beyond striking deals and signing charters with Uber and other platform companies to endorse legislative reform, the TWU has pressured state and federal governments to help ensure fair entitlements and safe working conditions for gig workers (Ore 2022). For some riders, however, unions can be alienating. Andriy, a delivery rider from Russia, perceives the TWU as being 'really aggressive'. He thinks that riders might worry about being 'shadow banned' by delivery platforms if they were found to be engaging with unions (DeafUberDriver 2020).

## Mutual aid and care in riders' spaces

Riders in Melbourne want a space to call their own. The struggle to establish such a space is the kind of shared project which in itself constitutes solidarity. Receiving typical worker entitlements and minimum wage would allow riders greater dignity, but it would not necessarily change the isolating nature of delivery work. Nor would such change alleviate practical difficulties that accompany the lack of space, such as the challenge of finding a bathroom. Herein lies the need for spaces which can both address the basic needs of riders and support the development of solidarity amongst them. Spaces of congregation, and the collective role that riders can play in implementing them, constitute crucial components of contemporary care. Unlike unidirectional care provided by governments, spaces of congregation for riders are understood as micro-institutions in which care is mutually constituted – e.g. I make you a coffee and you tell me where it's busy today.

When asked what they would want from a hub for riders, respondents focused primarily on access to toilets. 'Toilets are most important and there should be more of them around. They have toilets in parks, but they're all locked.' In this statement from Apiwat, a Thai rider in his 20s, it's evident that general amenities for the public are insufficient for the needs of this new breed of all-hours worker. Secondarily, riders wanted somewhere to charge their e-bikes and phones. Riders also reported wanting a space in which to purchase work-related goods. 'There have been plenty of occasions where I've had to go home due to a faulty this or that, [so it] would be great if I could go to a space to repair or buy something.' This comment by Davis was echoed in the following comment by Drevan: 'Expanding on a stationary toolkit, maybe having a vending machine or even a manned store that sells common things like patch kits, small snacks, batteries, power banks and disposable batteries for lights, for example. If possible, clothing even, like spray jackets, neck scarfs, gloves, and delivery bags.'

Crucially, Drevan went on to discuss the importance of a place in which to exchange information. 'It would be nice to have a space to discuss where is busy, and any incidents that have occurred, with other delivery drivers.' The recurring importance that riders placed on having space to exchange advice indicates how relating to one another in space is a precondition for a desired sociality. Interviewees wanted to have proximity with other riders, they were eager for a caring-through-exchange of relevant information. Colombian rider William wanted help with an account issue, showing a screenshot of a Spanish-language Uber interface which stated that the account could not be registered due to a license issue.

Moments of solidarity already exist amongst delivery riders. They can be observed when a more experienced rider responds to the concerns of a newer one. Respondents spoke about riders helping each other to locate hard-to-find restaurants. Other respondents spoke of riders helping each other to fix e-bike issues. But for this solidarity to become operative, for it to translate to mutual and ongoing support and care, likely requires spatial anchors. Such spaces would improve the likelihood of riders having agency and acting politically. Delivery riders share a complicity in that they're beholden to the same amorphous digital platforms. They also tend to share the condition of being financially vulnerable foreigners with an uncertain residency status. These shared conditions strengthen the ability of riders to recognise a shared mutuality, a precondition for genuine care.

Other riders also mentioned wanting a place with a microwave where they could heat up food. While another rider mentioned that with spare time between deliveries they wait 'wherever there is a busy, well-lit area with bike racks', demonstrating how influential the design of public space is on riders' experiences of risk and security. Investigating how food delivery riders understand and use the space of the city is thus a crucial step towards ensuring that changes around platform work result in a more caring and just city. If the views of delivery riders are listened to and acted upon, the city can be developed in a manner which accommodates precarious urban inhabitants in general, thereby allowing care to provide a partial antidote to the ills of employment precarity. Dedicated spaces for precarious workers work against the logics of platform capitalism which promote the notion of a 'unity-in-isolation of the entrepreneurial subject' (Spencer 2021).

The riders' sentiments expressed here support the notion that care ought to be provided by work-oriented micro-institutions, as well as by more comprehensive institutions such as governments. Institutional care providers, such as welfare services, maintain a distinction between caregiver and care recipient. Conversely, when care is provided directly between riders, these roles are far less distinguishable. The wellbeing of delivery riders and other precarious groups requires both self-determined and top-down care institutions. These two types of institutions support and account for the shortcomings of each other and are best expressed when formalised in the space of the staff room.

# Community Hubs as Networks of Care

**Ceara O'Leary**

In Detroit today, a dispersed network of grassroots community hubs is emerging as a collective venue for a myriad of services and programs attending to both short term emergency response and long-term daily needs. Neighborhood hubs led by community leaders have long been spaces of convening, information sharing, community activity and other elements of social infrastructure. Increasingly, hubs are intentional spaces for cultural production and community cohesion, contributing to networks of care ingrained in the urban fabric at the hyperlocal scale. Hubs comprise intimate infrastructures that support everyday care associated with community building and offer potential for more accessible and dispersed provision of physical and mental health services and other more traditional modes of wellness. Additional emergency needs can be met through this trusted network of small-scale community spaces, ranging from inherently informal to semi-institutional. Community-led hubs embedded in neighborhoods offer trusted, walkable, known and locally-responsive spaces. In their embeddedness, they enable connections with residents intimidated or overlooked by institutional services and spaces, particularly in the unique context of Detroit neighborhoods. As a networked collective, hubs create an infrastructure of care, primarily in the form of social capital and social infrastructure, which ultimately engenders a greater sense of community wellbeing and cultural resilience both day to day and in times of crisis. This essay examines the overlay of spatial planning for care at the building and neighborhood scale with considerations for community care that transcend the build environment. Ultimately the community connectivity enabled by collective spaces comprises a neighborhood scale care network that supports everyday and emergency resilience.

This essay explores and expands upon lessons from a neighborhood planning effort in two distinct Detroit neighborhoods that centers resilience and health equity, leaning on and leveraging existing community hubs as critical social and spatial infrastructure. As such, this work builds upon existing networks of community hubs in two neighborhoods in Detroit – Springwells in Southwest Detroit and Good Stock on the city's eastside – to both document ongoing work and models for community care at the micro scale and simultaneously propose new layers of service, built and social infrastructure that contribute to a more robust distributed communal care network. In both neighborhoods, contemporary character complicates the knitting of networks, including self-protective undocumented communities and high levels of land vacancy leading to a dispersed sense of community, respectively. In both neighborhoods, community hubs contribute to a trusted and accessible spatial network (Detroit Collaborative Design Center, 2023). This essay will focus on Good Stock as an illustrative example.

In Detroit, neighborhoods are emerging from an extended era of low expectations when it comes

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to city services and adequate infrastructure. Decades of disinvestment and depopulating tax base due to racist policies and development patterns led to the unique and land-rich cityscape that comprises Detroit today. In this vacuum of municipal capacity, resident leadership and neighborhood organizations evolved as the primary driver of community wellbeing and self-sufficiency. This social and political infrastructure continues to lead the bottom-up provision of services, spatial reclaiming, and celebration of culture that contribute to more resilient and equitable communities in the face of considerable wealth gaps and increasing development pressure. Springwells and Good Stock in particular face the environmental justice consequences of past and present wrongs weighing industry and jobs over health, with major polluters as neighbors and failing stormwater infrastructure contributing to significant air quality and flooding concerns. In this context, collective trauma is part of the present and communities of care that enable neighborhood and individual resilience support residents and local organizations to sustain the hard work of responding to challenges and providing everyday support networks within their community.

In Good Stock, there is an existing collection of community-based organizations that operate at a range of scales and have a varied physical presence in the neighborhood, contributing to a scattering of community spaces that has the potential to scale up into a dispersed and intentionally complementary and connected network that offers a suite of services and spaces that meet hyperlocal needs. Good Stock is a swath of Detroit's eastside that varies in character but is largely low-density, with an abundant amount of open publicly owned parcels that are both a liability and an opportunity. In primarily residential Good Stock there are few businesses that meet daily needs and the population itself is dispersed. In this context, the existing community hubs that varyingly offer emergency power, community gathering space, laundry, gardening, food demonstrations, health workshops, and youth activities among other programs also create a loosely knit physical network of hubs in the neighborhood. This collection of spaces hosts community events and information sessions and, within their respective pockets of geography, are trusted locally-led havens for residents. Good Stock is also comprised of a growing handful of resident leaders who represent various block clubs and nonprofits that make up the Good Stock Steering Committee, a group that in turn is host to many of the existing hubs. Hubs run by these leaders range from a highly established The Commons offering a laundromat, coffee shop, community gathering space, literacy classes, showers and more with an architect-designed renovation to Belvidere Community Hub with smaller footprint and a repurposed trailer that hosts youth workshops, an annual health fair and emergency power for charging and refrigeration during increasing power outages. In Good Stock, work toward greater community resilience prioritizes amplifying hubs in terms of awareness and communication channels and layering much needed pop-up and permanent programming into these existing trusted community spaces. Proposed programming meets daily needs, introducing more healthy food options in corner stores adjacent to hubs and regular pop-up preventative health services in hubs, as well as often-cited youth and senior activities, which in themselves generate connective tissue across the community. Proposals also better prepare hubs as emergency points of contact, including physical infrastructure for heating and cooling, internet access and more. Critically, reliable information sharing, both analog and digital, is central to the role of hubs in times of stress and the communication network, intentionally and increasingly inviting to residents, serves to span the distance created by vacant land and commercial corridors in the community.

In Good Stock, existing hubs are physical spaces of care and convening, offering trust and intimacy as well as the potential for greater coordination and provision of health and wellness services, while contributing to a more connected urbanism that supports resilient and healthy communities. In this context, community hubs are embedded in the neighborhood fabric and dispersed throughout the area, creating accessible pockets of comfort and care adding to a whole. Layered urban infrastructure such as streetscape improvements and mobility alternatives strengthen physical connections between hubs, supporting a physical network. More critically, neighborhood hubs create spaces for building and sustaining social infrastructure and community connectivity that is central to emergency resilience and everyday landscapes of wellness and care. Community-engaged strategies for more resilient neighborhoods center community connectivity as a key ingredient in ongoing efforts and are thus firmly situated in a growing theoretical framework amplifying the centrality of cultural connectivity in the advancement of equitable and resilient communities, particularly those that are traditionally underserved and do not easily access centralized municipal resources and spaces.

In current literature, community resilience is the "collective ability of a neighborhood . . . to deal with stressors and efficiently resume the rhythms of daily life through cooperation following shocks" (Aldrich, 2012). In Detroit, community resilience is relevant in terms of increasingly frequent crises – whether heating and cooling extreme events, massive flooding, or global pandemics – as well as an everyday self-sufficiency and ability to deal with stressors. Disasters exacerbate ongoing pressure points and the need for underlying support systems (Aldrich, 2012). Social networks and communities of care are central to these support systems and likewise have an impact on community and individual wellbeing and health (Venable Thomas, 2018). It is well documented that social capital provides immediate and long-term support post-disaster, from neighbors as first responders to ongoing access to resources including information and mutual aid. Social capital also offers emotional and psychological support (Aldrich + Meyer, 2014) and further aids by enabling connections out to broader networks and contributing to collective action (Putnam, 2000). Further, *bridging* social capital –which connects dissimilar individuals to share resources and ideas – creates new opportunities and information in both the everyday and emergency context (Aldrich, 2012). In turn, social infrastructure – the public spaces of comingling that support civic interaction – offers the spaces in which social capital is built and networks are formed (Klinenberg, 2018). Community resilience hubs serve as this social infrastructure – creating physical space for gathering, sharing resources, and providing emotional support on an everyday and emergency basis. A dispersed network of hubs in Good Stock and Springwells offers a model for a *physical* network that supports the growth of a neighborhood-specific *social* network that makes for more resilient and healthy communities. This overlay of spatial and social networks is at the essence of the planning work in Good Stock and the distributed network of hubs that are deeply ingrained in the neighborhood, contributing to the local levels of trust that in turn comprise community connectivity block by block that support everyday and emergency resilience. This distributed model is particularly important for communities that mistrust or are unable to access municipal services or, as in the case of Good Stock, where everyday amenities are few and far between. Micro hubs that create space for community to come together and source reliable resources and information enable wellbeing and create a finely-knit care network that is both physical and relational.

Vulnerable communities are particularly threatened by the stressors associated with environmental crises, which intensify existing patterns of trauma, including in Detroit. "Resilience is not only about rebounding from environmental risks but also about persevering through traumatic experiences and other perpetually stressful events." Communities of color and immigrant populations face greater risks and often have limited resources to respond in times of need (Venable-Thomas, 2018). In turn, climate and other stressors have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of communities. Social cohesion and capital have to potential to help counteract these forces and support community and cultural resilience. Cultural resilience – "the capacity to maintain and develop cultural identity and critical cultural knowledge and practices" – contributes to overall community resilience and speaks to both a human-centered understanding of resilience and the critical importance of local culture in building both social capital and social infrastructure (Venable-Thomas, 2018). Cultural and commu-

nity resilience, bolstered by social capital and social infrastructure, in turn contribute to community health outcomes related to socioenvironmental exposures and equitable neighborhood planning. There is a wealth of data and scholarship on the link between social capital and health and wellness outcomes and there is a reciprocal relationship between wellbeing and social capital, one which speaks to communities of care at the local level.

Within this research context, a dispersed collection of neighborhood hubs focused on communication, information sharing and creating space for community connection has the potential to strengthen social capital and contribute to resilience at the hyperlocal level, particularly in traditionally under-resourced communities. Neighborhood-scale networks of resilience hubs in Detroit offer a model for physical infrastructure but it is an emphasis on small-scale distributed community building and connectivity in those physical hubs that contributes to micro-networks of care and increased community wellness. Trusted spaces embedded in neighborhoods and layered with health services and cultural programming create places where connections and information channels are reinforced, laying the foundation for the social capital that sustains communities, particularly in the absence of top-down services and in the face of both everyday trauma and extreme hazards. In this context, the network created by intentionally connected hubs provides a supportive local social web across neighborhoods, including intimate physical and social infrastructures. It is community connection that underscores the effectivity of spaces and networks of care, contributing to wellness, equity and both everyday and emergency resilience that is rooted in and reinforces local culture.

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# Careful Careless

## A System to Restore Ecological Systems in Cities

**Jiayi Jin**
**Yuxin Wu**

### Regenerative Soil and Sustainably Renew Systems

The Soil serves as the foundational pillar that sustains life on our planet, providing vital resources such as food and raw materials. However, the pursuit of technological advancements aimed at extracting more from natural reserves, coupled with the necessity of supporting growing populations, has compromised the intricate natural systems that maintain life on Earth. Over the past decades, erosion and pollution have led to the degradation of one-third of the world's arable land. Regrettably, modern agricultural practices, characterised by extensive tilling and the heavy use of chemical fertilisers, have resulted in the erosion of topsoil, leaving it vulnerable and diminishing both food security and the soil's capacity for carbon sequestration (Maximillian et al., 2019). In 2014, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported that the world's remaining topsoil has been rapidly deteriorating and is expected to be completely degraded in the next 60 years. Without intervention, this leaves a mere six decades of viable harvests remaining.

The agricultural sector isn't alone in prioritising economic gains over sustaining the environment it is dependent on. The linear model of industrial practices that is heavily reliant on fossil fuel has both polluted the land it is based on and increased the level of greenhouse gas emissions. One thousand billion tons of carbon have been pumped into the atmosphere over the past 50 years, exacerbating the scale of climate change-induced disasters globally. The most powerful technology we have at hand to draw down this carbon load is healthy soil that can support plant life and microorganisms naturally. For every 1% increase in organic matter, an acre of soil draws down 10 tons of carbon.

The soil holds a critical role within Earth's ecosystems. The function of soil is to be understood beyond the sphere of food production, it is formed by a complex ecosystem of disintegrated rock, organic matter, water, gases, nutrients, and living organisms through slow processes that span over hundreds of years. In addition to acting as a carbon sink, it regulates and retains rainwater while functioning as a filter to improve the quality of the groundwater. Consequently, soil degradation not only destroys the most effective means available to capture carbon but also releases organic carbon content as a result of unsustainable land management. Even in the face of increasing scientific evidence that emphasises the unprecedented risks linked to soil degradation and climate change, there is a noticeable lack of effort in implementing substantial changes that could mitigate these issues.

In the book 'The One-Straw Revolution', Masanobu Fukuoka, a Japanese plant pathologist turned farmer, proposed the philosophy of "do-nothing farming", advocating for a hands-off approach that allows nature to dictate the appropriate course of action instead of attempting to control and intervene (Fukuoka, 2009). This book has had an enduring influence on new agrarian movements

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worldwide. And it inspired people to rethink their relationship with the natural system, from the choices that define our consumption patterns to the way we define land management. As we draw closer to the limits set by the earth, it is urgent to re-evaluate our priorities based on climate justice, resilience, and sustainable growth. And by establishing a bio-based economy centred around soil protection and management, there's a potential to create an impetus for change, in addition to the pressing need to mitigate climate change. This would improve soil health, restore ecosystem services in addition to ensuring food security, and spearhead innovations that can steer us away from petrochemical-based industries to more biobased industries that valorise biodegradable wastes.

> "'No-till' or 'do-nothing farming' doesn't mean you can just sit back and relax. It means questioning yourself. It means thinking about what not to do. It means staying away from chemicals, fertilisers, even compost." Masanobu Fukuoka, The One-Straw Revolution, 1978

Fukuoka's 1978 natural farming approach has served as an inspiration for a variety of alternative agricultural techniques that differ from industrial-productivist farming. These approaches include biodynamic agriculture (Steiner 1993), organic agriculture (Howard 2013), and climate-smart agriculture (Codur and Watson 2018). All these regenerative agricultural practices aim to sustainably renew systems, from soil to people (Hes and Rose 2019), with a commitment to reviving damaged landscapes and recognising their inherent potential (Massy 2020).

In the meanwhile, we have witnessed an emerging set of regenerative farming practices led by architects, urban designers, activists and artists, including design and implement different forms of urban green space on vacant lots or other urban-industrial sites, described as the 'four natures approach' (Kowarik 2013). As well as the 'Soil City' by Open Jar Collective in 2018, which addresses the urgent need to remediate soil to enhance its fertility and carbon capture capabilities in the urban environment, and puts forth a comprehensive, long-term strategy with a range of approaches, engaging citizens of Glasgow and surrounding communities to envision the city with a greater emphasis on ecosystem services. (Open Jar Collective, 2018)

## A Systems Thinking for Initiation of the Ecological Urban Transition

The anthropogenic impact and the influence of urbanisation have become ubiquitous and cannot be ignored. The repercussions of this excessive territorialisation have been extensively described (Steffen et al., 2015). However, concerns over urbanisation and environmental degradation led to the widely accepted UN definition of sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Verma, 2019). This definition has received criticism for being vague in the context of cities since it fails to address the complexities of the urban environment.

To address the complex challenges associated with sustainability, it is crucial to embrace systems thinking, an approach that recognises the interconnectedness of various systems and emphasises efficient resource and energy utilisation in urban areas. It moves beyond an anthropocentric, survival-oriented viewpoint that prioritises resource monopolisation and instead accepts the responsibility that comes with being the dominant species on Earth. Consequently, the concept of care should be elevated to the highest level of importance within this agenda, supported by the following strategies for initiating the ecological urban transformation:

1. Forming a network for 'third landscape'

The 'third landscape' as raised by Gilles Clément (2004), is the sum of all land which doesn't suffer the exploitation or control of humans. It is a biodiversity sanctuary, forming its most diverse and advanced state. This approach is straightforward and practical, as it enables the rapid identification of potential third landscapes within urban areas. These spaces, such as interstices, leftovers, underground and unused landscapes, are already present in cities and serve as pockets of urban biodiversity. Although their incorporation into metropolitan areas is still limited, their potential has been recognised and explored. Developing these pockets of life would offer many species an alternative to the current mineral homogeneity of urban landscapes (e.g. pavement, concrete or asphalt, etc.), not only humans but also our urban companions like hedgehogs, foxes and pigeons. These pockets of life could function similarly to housing neighbourhoods, and it is crucial to increase their number and overall surface area while also connecting them to form an interconnected, diverse landscape. The importance of an interconnected heterogeneous landscape has been extensively studied and proven to increase biodiversity (Huang et al., 2021), emphasising the need to develop ecological corridor grids. In order to evaluate the condition of these pockets of life, it is essential to conduct systematic monitoring. This monitoring is also a means of giving a voice to those who cannot 'speak' and influencing politics. Some governmental jurisdictions have begun exploring the idea of granting juridical persona status to entities such as rivers, lakes, and forests, to integrate ecosystem considerations more deeply into our society's regulatory systems.

2.Ecosystem services as the urban infrastructure

Pierre Bélanger's publication "Landscape as Infrastructure" (2016) advocates for the exploration and integration of ecosystemic functions as essential components of urban systems. Toronto's Leslie Street Spit demonstrates how waste disposal, tourism, and a biodiverse community can coexist and mutually enhance one another. This example suggests innovative approaches to bring together human and non-human actors in urban contexts. The thriving of the bio-community is dependent on the efficient operation of ecosystem services. This underscores the need for campaigns promoting de-pollution and un-sealing in dense urban areas. Such initiatives not only justify their implementation on a planetary level but also highlight their importance within the urban fabric. Enhancing these components locally (soil, water, air, climate, etc.) would also provide human inhabitants with invaluable ecosystem services, including healthy air quality, lush vegetation and parks, a balanced and healthy macrobiotic community, clean water for swimming, and resilience to natural hazards like heatwaves and floods.

As fundamental components sustaining various processes in the city of the future, ecosystem services should be considered as elemental infrastructure and developed accordingly. The Urban Green-Blue Grids framework has demonstrated its effective applicability and offers extensive documentation on implementing such transformations at multiple scales. Noteworthy examples of recent progress in several metropolises, such as the New York Dryline project by BIG and Bordeaux's "55,000 Hectares for Nature" development plan by Bureau Bas Smets, exemplify a similar approach.

3. Integrating local bio-communities for the circular urban metabolism

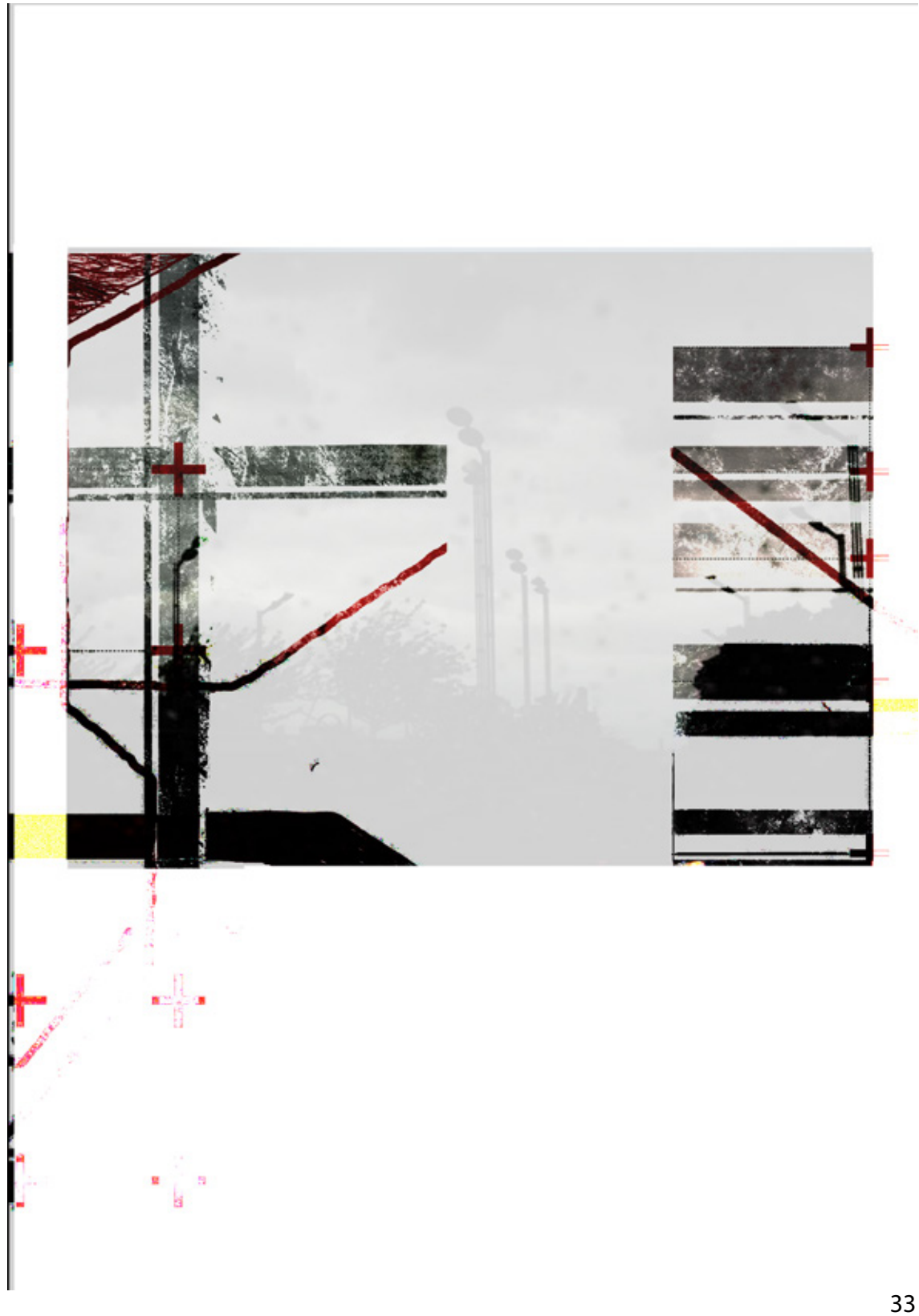
Fukuoka's natural farming approach, known as nature-based regenerative farming, places a strong emphasis on maintaining soil health through minimal use of chemical supplements. This method involves naturally cycling nutrients, integrating crops and livestock, and preserving natural resources. By doing so, it reduces the risk of crop failure and provides a more sustainable, affordable and accessible option for small-scale farmers. Implementing this approach in urban areas involves a biogeochemical process called pedogenesis, which is facilitated by numerous species. Certain organisms have proven to be highly beneficial in soil decontamination, offering cost-effective and straightforward alternatives to artificial technologies. For instance, a common species of earthworm has shown the capacity to digest the most widespread type of microplastic in the earth's soils. This also includes other nature-based methods such as no-tillage, cover crop integration, and valorising agricultural waste, which builds soil fertility and improves the functioning of the water cycle. Furthermore, regenerating natural

capital in dense city spaces is crucial to help safeguard, restore and increase the resilience of urban ecosystems against natural disasters. Supporting this approach to address circularity on a regional scale holds significant importance as it enables the establishment of systems that promote the local flow of circular bio-based materials.

4. From ecological mutation to the social structural reformation

Fukuoka's farming approach also recalls Bruno Latour's (2020) provocation of moving away from the system of production, not just to replace its ownership and profit distribution more equitably, but to reject the totality concept of the production pattern. This demand is becoming more radical and urgent, especially since the public health crisis. Given the economic crisis and high unemployment rates, there might be something fundamentally flawed in our current centralised production system. And the ecological and environmental mutation requires us to consider alternative ways of organising our economy. The system of production may need to be reformed and replaced by something entirely new. The concept of "practices of engendering" (Latour, 2020) offers an alternative to the notion of a singular "system of production." The idea of a singular system is too complete and coherent to be modified in pieces. Introducing plural practices allows for a differentiation between the act of production and the act of contributing to generation, thereby shifting the centre of gravity onto other modes of action. The term "engendering" contains gender, and this is no coincidence, as the repression of all that has to do with genesis, care, and the maintenance of life forms is tied, in Western history, with elision, eviction, and even the persecution of the feminine. To "get away from" the system of production is to get back to the question of gender and the allocation of effects and expertise between the sexes, which would require a reformation in the social structure.

This new perspective forces us to situate in time and space the particular enterprise of systems of production. Like Fukuoka and other peers, communities since the dawn of time have procured their own well-being, known relative abundance, enriched themselves and prospered without their practices being qualified as the "production of goods." Countless grassroots practices allow us to see this through. The viability of the system of production always and still today relies on what it cannot "take into account." Political sentiments are no longer expressed in terms of their relationship to production but in terms of the risks posed by the genesis of life.



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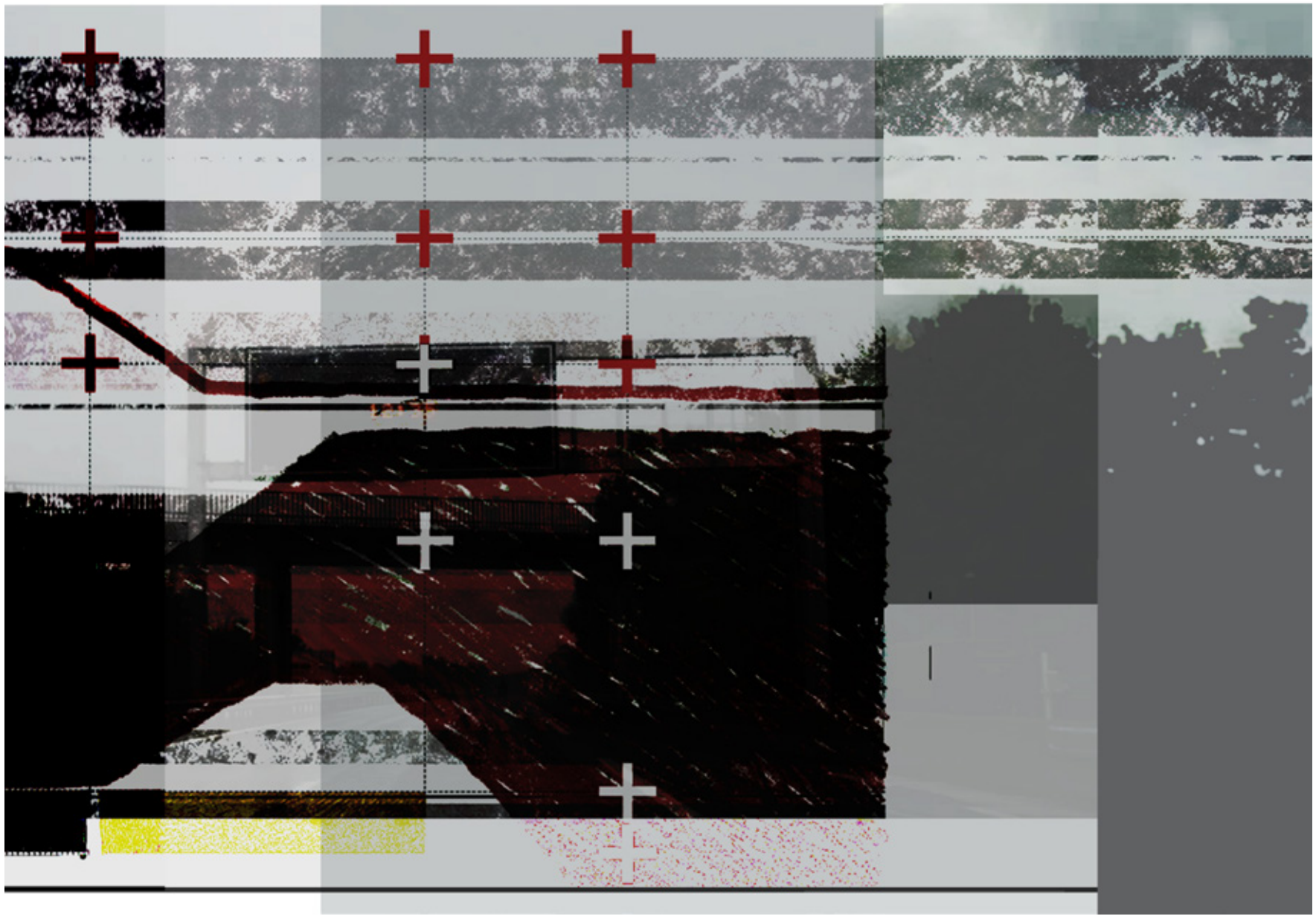
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*Urban transparencies. The city as a palimpsest for action and care*

*In* Collage City, *Colin Rowe interprets the city as a collage, drawing an analogy between tearing papers and gluing them side by side in unexpected or controlled juxtapositions, and the way the city is constructed through insertion, addition, extension, and even demolition. However, when I read, analyze, and experience the city, I also find relevant Rowe's and Slutzky's notion of "transparency", included in their* Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal. *In fact, collage still adheres to rules and principles of pictorial composition, even though it was invented as a reaction to it. The concept and design tool of transparency could be even more significant. The interpenetration and overlapping of figures without optically destroying each other, the representation of depth, and even the simultaneity of the experience, along with the varying degrees of opacities that blur elements and merge figures into one another — all of these strongly evoke the character of the contemporary city, including the cinematic and phenomenological experience of the urban environment. This experience encompasses movement in space, peripheral vision,*



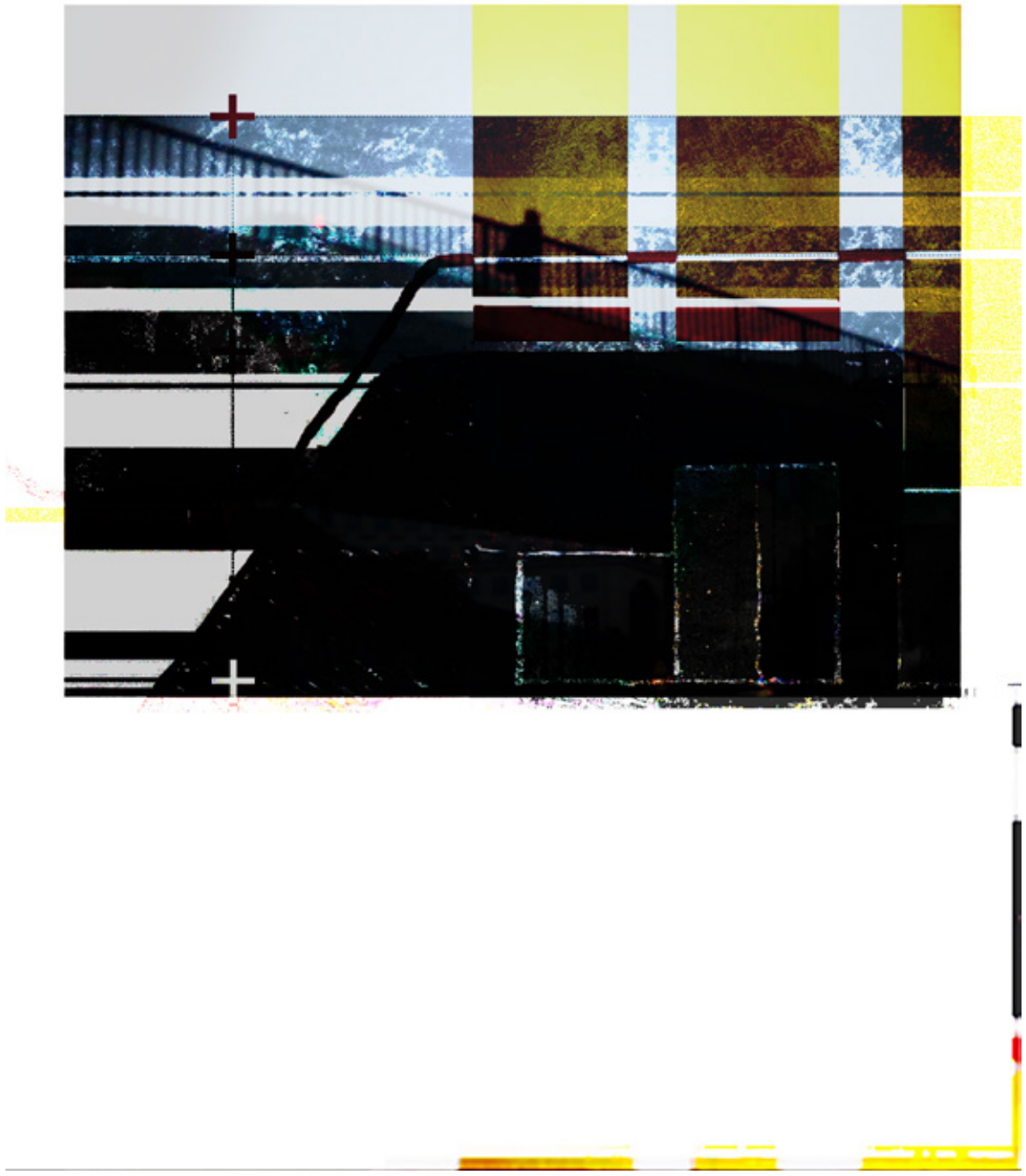
*materiality and immateriality, the dreamlike transition from figure to abstraction, and the presence, whether literal or evoked, of individual and collective memories.*

*In this regard, movie director Andrew Mondshein declared, "This is the way we think, the way we perceive the world. Memories, thoughts, and images flash through our heads constantly, and montage is just a reflection of that. So we live in a linear world in a sort of non-linear existence." In these terms, the collage and montage of city pictures and urban maps is a tool to describe my work for this issue, and transparency alludes to the layered character of the city as a palimpsest, encompassing shadow, obscurity, and the uncanny. Between the layers, elements, and experiences that these portraits of urban fragments express, and within the challenges and uncertainties of the in-between spaces, both real and metaphorical that belong to the city, these images allude to action and care.*

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# To make is to care

**Lee Ivett**
**Ecaterina Stefanescu**



## Introduction

This essay argues that the act of making forces one to simultaneously care about oneself, the places within which we exist, and the other people that we share ourselves and our places with. We find ourselves working and living within a social, economic and cultural condition that is fearful of ideas and agency, and where the general public have been conditioned to consider and believe acts of making are either lifestyle or spectacle, or something done by others to create things for us to consume out of either need or desire. Even acts of care and repair – acts that are essential to sustaining ourselves emotionally, physically and mentally and essential to the sustenance of collective life – are more often consumed as services or products from others rather than generated by oneself.

Production and the act of making need not only be the preserve of the professional, the artisan or the hobbyist. We see it as an activity of well-being or care, with the act of making as the means through which we enact agency and manifest change in ourselves and the places where we live. Acts of making should not only be judged by the intent or the outcome, but through the applications and manifestations of care generated by participating in the act itself.

We suggest that these particular instances of making as care are most identifiable within the following modes of making: 1. Representation, 2. Intervention, 3. Transition

The conceptual context in which making as care is situated is within the broad field of participatory design, an area of practice and theory that has been extensively explored over the decades since its conscious formulation and application in the mid-1960s. Even then however, participation in development was contested and analysed in terms of its capacity to do good. Sherry Arnstein in her seminal paper 'A Ladder Of Citizen Participation' recognised that much participation tended towards the lower rungs of her ladder, and did not therefore function to satisfy the basic precept of participation, which was the redistribution of power towards more just societies, but instead often fell into the trap, either by intention or accident, of manipulation and therapy, or tokenism (1969, 216)

## Representation

Within architecture, scale models play roles of proposition, speculation, and fiction. As a means of observation and documentation, we also see the model as a tool to engage with individuals and communities that have, for various reasons, been marginalised. By representing everyday spaces and objects through scale models that do not focus on speculative design but on the existing, lived realities, care and attention is given to communities and conditions which can often be overlooked.

Models, as material vectors and scaled representations, can move conversation and community

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engagement further, negotiating between the different actors involved: researchers, participants, external observers and the maker. But more so than this, modelling everyday spaces, as an artistic act of making, has the potential to give a sense of value and recognition to the lived realities of the individuals and communities depicted. This is achieved through the dedication required to realise this form of three-dimensional representation, which reveals ordinary spaces as objects of beauty and atmosphere.

Material objects often emerge as symbols of stability for individuals, especially those with a migration background or a precarious existence. Sociologist Maurice Halbachs identifies domestic spaces occupied by an individual as bearing the inhabitant's imprint, through furniture, decorations, and objects (1980, 129).

In ethnographic research, the value of "visual research methods" as described by Gillian Rose lie not only in their potential ease of dissemination, but also in producing insight that simple interviews, for example, cannot. Furthermore, by concentrating on the ordinary and the mundane, valuable but otherwise overlooked experiences are revealed in everyday actions (2014, 27-28). Combining model-making with ethnographic, situated research, also turns the maker/observer into a participant within the spaces they are studying and hoping to affect.

Although model-making is often a one-side activity, it allows for a deeper study and documentation of the spaces and the rituals associated with them. Gaston Bachelard talks about the condensing of value within miniatures. He suggests that the scaled-down version of the object is richer and more packed with insight than the real object, and by creating something small and gazing upon it, one generated insight and understanding that would not be possible by simply studying the real thing. But more so than this, the miniature increases the importance and value of the object being depicted, revealing it as a 'refuge of greatness' (1994, 150-55).

The care employed in the making of miniatures implies an engagement that goes beyond the ordinary, which therefore emphasises their importance. The scaled model allows viewers to examine, think about and imagine more readily the volume, objects, light and atmosphere of a place, and therefore force an empathetic response and an appreciation for the real space and people depicted.

Modelling formal, informal, domestic and communal spaces not only produces a visual representation of place, but also explores the identities of individuals and collectives on a deeper level. The models recognise and acknowledge the feelings experienced by the community and their experience within this transitory condition. But more than that, the models become the vectors through which instances of care – our own and the care that the community has for their own identities, stories and narratives – are communicated.

## Intervention

Through the act of making, anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that the Maker at once exists as observer and participant, and there is no differentiation between implicit knowledge and told, articulated knowledge (2013, 5). Through practice and experience, the transfer of knowledge between the different actors involved in this process takes place and the Maker, through the vector of the thing they create, simultaneously observes, documents and analyses (Ingold, 2013, 5).

At the scale of 1:1, making employed as a form of activism and advocacy generates a sense of belonging through a participation within and a subversion of existing social, cultural and power dynamics of society and space. As a performative, provocative and propositional act in public space, making becomes an opportunity for enacting agency and empowerment through a sustained and visible public presence; a live, active demonstration of care. A display of the belief that we care about our own potential to influence change in the spaces and the society within which we exist, and in the particular and specific dynamics of a place and its people. Making at this scale and in this way gives us agency of proposition, but, as opposed to scaled model-making, is also a methodology that invites active participation. And a desire to participate is in itself evidence of care: to extend care towards others, or to care about the outcome of a particular instance or activity.

This active and organic mode of participation borne out of curiosity and interest in the actions of another situates the passive as maker - an actor as well as an observer, a producer rather than a consumer. This example of making creates a scenario in which the participant is compelled to experience other behaviours and their impact, caring deeply about the way in which their own and other people's desires, frustrations, conflicts, oppression, agency and ideas might be utilised to physically make change. Acts of making in this way provide an opportunity to manifest modes of change that are immediate and tangible; they are an opportunity to display agency, amend a condition and shift and evolve one's own sense of place and identity.

Society and space are reimagined as a continuous and ever evolving register of life and experience: the marks, scars, reactions and interventions created by the actions of individuals, collectives and institutions shifting and evolving the dynamics of a place.

## Transition

Richard Sennet talks about the "evolutionary dialogue between the hand and the brain" (2009, 151). He writes that the information received though the hands is richer, more sensate than through the eye, and argues for the tacit knowledge created by "hand habits" (Sennett, 2009, 10).

Habits, and particularly good habits, are the result of repeated behaviours with a specific focus. We consider that acts of making need to be habitual behaviours inherent in the practice of everyday and ordinary life. In the same way that Sennet articulates the potential, through making, for the individual to gain knowledge and insight, communities of people and place might collectively acquire and retain knowledge through shared, collaborative, situated and participatory making. The collaborative aspect of this process reveals the tacit knowledge present in everyday actions.

But more so than this, making is a demonstration of care that is intended to initiate a process of transition towards something better. When enacted collaboratively through common purpose, shared ideologies and a desire to propose and advocate for something better, collective agency and care is achieved. The act of making is then both representational and interventional, and as such becomes transitional, offering a means of suggesting and testing new possibilities which are generated by the very people of that place. What is learned from the application of these methodologies is then utilised as a mode of advocacy for further strategic and constructive acts, or as a prototype for more permanent acts of intervention. As Holm and McEwan propose, collective life needs to be constructed, continuously and incrementally, for it to be sustained - through the making artifacts, critically and collectively (2020, 3-4). Making creates the tacit knowledge and empowerment that leads to a better informed and more successful development and regeneration of a shared social and spatial condition.

## Conclusion

Jane Rendell writes that in Western, capitalist countries, the making and production of architecture is only carried out by specialists. When occupiers do participate in the shaping of their spaces, it is either by altering a pre-designed and built space, or in the early design consultation phase. Within this framework, she argues that "the most productive site for social sculpture would be a place or time where architectural and social structures overlap (2017, 177).

Through a "transitional" act of making, ordinary people outside of the professions of art and architecture become critical spatial practitioners. By becoming involved and taking ownership of the act of production, all people of all backgrounds and of all places can enact care of themselves, of each other

and of place, that has the capacity to progress individual and collective wellbeing.

These three instances/methodologies of making create opportunities for all people to reimagine the built environment as a continuous and ever-evolving register of life and experience, through which we learn, evolve and benefit from habitual acts of physical, mental and emotional participation. This reinforces the notion that the act of making, regardless of scale or situation, is explicitly an act of care.

Making is re-positioned not as a finite act but as a series of empathic and responsive actions that situate the actor/maker within the physical, cultural and social conditions of ordinary life. Collaborative and individual acts of making create the knowledge and empowerment that lead to a more sustainable, progressive and successful realisation of society and space. To be passive and inert is to neglect, but to make means to care.


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# For a relational understanding of care in critical urban action


**VV.AA.**


## The Introduction

We open this paper by reviewing the care paradigm in urban action and the centrality of the concept of interdependence to this work. We then move on to consider our approach to mapping caring—with practices in urban community-led initiatives. The work presented comes from a British Academy supported project, Caring—With Cities: Enacting more care-full urban approaches with community-led developments and policy-makers.[1] We use caring—with, rather than —about or —for, to move beyond understandings of care as a provision from institutions to individuals, or from individual to individual, which positions the cared-for as passive recipients. Here, we illustrate how case studies on urban practices can unravel interdependencies of care by attending to long-term engagements, taking place across sites and scales – rather than being viewed as 'bounded' examples. We close with a set of thoughts on our mapping protocol in practice and speculate on future directions that re-situate critical urban action within wider relationalities and power dynamics.

## The care paradigm in urban action

This contribution responds to current, expanded debates on urban care. It acknowledges Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's consideration of care as a 'contested concept'[2] and is situated in solidarity with The Care Collective's assertion that dominant neoliberal ideology is fundamentally "uncaring by design",[3] offering "neither an effective practice of, nor a vocabulary for, care".[4] While "no clear-cut definition of care in urban studies has emerged", [5] recent/forthcoming special issues, [6] monographs, [7] and edited volumes, [8] have started to assemble diverse understandings of urban caring capacities, typologies and relationalities.

In our approach, we understand the urban as the product of dynamic interrelations; as stated by

1 For more information about the project, see: www.caringwith.city

2 Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, 'Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things', Social Studies of Science 41, no. 1 (February 2011): 85–106, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312710380301.

3 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence* (London: Verso Books, 2020), 10.

40 The Care Collective, 4.

5 Angelika Gabauer et al., 'Care, Uncare, and the City', in *Care and the City: Encounters with Urban Studies*, ed. Angelika Gabauer et al. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 5.

6 See for example: Ilan Wiesel, Wendy Steele, and Donna Houston, 'Cities of Care: Introduction to a Special Issue', *Cities* 105 (October 2020): 102844, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102844; Zannah Matson and Tim Waterman, eds., 'Special Issue: Landscapes and Care', *Landscape Research,* Forthcoming.

7 See for example: Juliet Davis, *The Caring City: Ethics of Urban Design*, 2022.

8 See for example: Hélène Frichot et al., eds., *Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2022).


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human geographer Doreen Massey, we recognise space "as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny". [9] Such interrelations may also build upon physical proximity, but a relational imaginary of space moves beyond a topographical understanding, to incorporate dynamic relations and interactions across and between individuals, groups, and processes. As Kim Trogal has argued, while these relational and dialectic concepts of space "have implications for care, care is also something that produces *spaces and relations*". [10]

Within the paradigm of care, the concept of interdependence has been key to interdisciplinary feminist scholarship. As explained in *The Care Manifesto*, the devaluing of activities that are considered 'reproductive' still dominates political imaginaries, [11] while social reproduction was and continues to be a 'constitutive outside' in urban scholarship. [12] Against understandings of interdependence in terms of a lack of autonomy, proposals have been put forward for a radical reformulation of care as a guiding principle in self-organisation, opening up new horizons for more caring social and spatial practices.[13] Interdependence, in a practical sense, means that we cannot understand care and urban action as something to be grasped, theoretically and empirically, by focusing on bounded 'case studies' alone. Multiple interconnections and webs of interdependence must take centre place to avoid understanding community-led practices as standalone, autonomous entities *within* cities. This contribution seeks to illustrate how interrelated interdependencies of care can be unravelled by attending to long-term urban practices of engagement taking place across different sites and scales.

Long term, recurrent, engagement with places and artefacts, such as through maintenance, is a form of urban care. Blurring the boundary between practice and scholarship, Shannon Mattern's thoughts on the everyday work of urban maintenance, care and repair provide a helpful anchor; working between disciplines and "connecting threads, mending holes, amplifying quiet voices" can be considered careful acts in and of themselves. [14] Similarly, Julia Udall highlights how practices of repair might offer possibilities to address ruptures "through the ethical decisions they prompt, the assemblages they generate, or gestures of care they manifest", framing repair as an activity with "spatial and material agencies". [15]

Critical scholars such as Power and Williams have similarly called for "an expanded scale of urban care analysis". [16] They argue for an approach that is attuned to lived experience(s) of care as they unfold within and through city veins and which extends beyond interpersonal sites and situations: an attention to "caring work at the scale of the city" [17] which includes urban governance and more-than-human materialities. Exploring interdependent working across scales, Gabauer et al. suggest how macro-research can work to "unbound situated research", by critically opposing and reimagining trans-local/national care regimes through processes they describe as "becoming-related"; they argue that links to meso-research on policy infrastructures and institutional frameworks can form a scaffold that frames and affects how local everyday caring/uncaring practices occur.[18]

In what follows, we put forward the need to understand care as emerging and embedded in sets of relationalities that challenge the boundaries of a given organisation or community, re-situating such urban action within wider relationalities and power dynamics. Visualising these relationalities requires not so much a conceptual reflection (upon the multiple ways in which 'care' occurs, or doesn't, in specific case studies) but a refraction, capturing/collecting/absorbing traces of instances of care across multiple sites and scales. Responding specifically to these concerns and theoretical approaches – and drawing on understandings of maps as "of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical), *always* remade every time they are engaged with" [19]– within the Caring—with Cities project we designed and deployed a relational mapping protocol to support a refractive way of exploring existing practices through the lens of care.

## Mapping caring—with practices in urban community-led initiatives

The Caring—with Cities project aimed to understand instances of care within community-led developments and to explore the interface between these projects and relevant institutions and policies in contemporary cities.[20] To do so we deployed a range of methods in collaboration with participants embedded within the initiatives studied, including relational mapping. This follows a long interdisciplinary and creative tradition of using mapping to support and understand community-led practices.

In designing and undertaking this mapping activity with participants, the definition of care we worked with was broad, encompassing "everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we may live in it as well as possible". [21] We specifically worked with Tronto's notion of caring—with to name a different and more holistic way of envisaging, revealing and discussing care as "an ongoing system of caring acts in which we're sometimes on an extreme end of the giving–receiving scale, and sometimes in the middle". [22] Caring—with is also central to Emma Power's work around 'capacity to care' [23] and shadow care infrastructures. [24]

We designed a template and a protocol, which we used to investigate relational caring practices at play in four case studies. For each of the case studies, two mapping exercises were carried out with members of the community partner organisation, guided by two members of the research team. A mapping template was designed to support participants to think about chains of care linking multiple scales, from hyper-local practices through to policy-making landscapes. A blank template included a colour-coded key to emphasise and articulate our open-ended understanding of care relationships, which encompassed: support, financing, advocacy/education, and space/resource provision. In addition, a vertical axis was added to prompt discussions about where action lies between formal urban sites of policy-making and community-led initiatives.[25]

Initially, participants created a relational map of their organisation, showing different organisations

9 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 9.
10 Kim Trogal, 'Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections', in *The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 159.
11 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto.*
12 Linda Peake et al., eds., *A Feminist Urban Theory for Our Time: Rethinking Social Reproduction and the Urban* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2021).
13 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto.*
14 Shannon Mattern, 'Maintenance and Care', *Places Journal*, November 2018, para. 3, https://doi.org/10.22269/181120.
15 Julia Udall, 'Mending the Commons with the "Little Mesters"', *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 19, no. 2 (May 2019): 254.
16 Emma Power and Miriam Williams, 'Cities of Care: A Platform for Urban Geographical Care Research', *Geography Compass* 14, no. 1 (2020): 2, https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12474.
17 Power and Williams, 6.
18 Gabauer et al., 'Care, Uncare, and the City', 9.
19 Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, 'Rethinking Maps', *Progress in Human Geography* 31, no. 3 (June 2007): 335, https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132507077082.
20 Mara Ferreri et al., 'Caring—with Cities: Project Report', 2022, https://caringwith.city/Publications.
21 Joan Tronto, *Who Cares?: How to Reshape a Democratic Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell Selects, 2015), 13
22 Tronto, 16.
23 Emma Power, 'Assembling the Capacity to Care: Caring-with Precarious Housing', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 44, no. 4 (April 2019): 763–77, https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12306.
24 Emma Power et al., 'Shadow Care Infrastructures: Sustaining Life in Post-Welfare Cities', *Progress in Human Geography* 46, no. 5 (June 2022): 1165–84, https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325221109837.
25 The mapping template, handout and protocol are available for download on our project's website: https://caringwith.city/resources.

and groups that they work with and the type and role of these collaborations/connections. This was followed by a reflective/refracting revisiting of the mapping to qualitatively define the relationships identified. The same participants were asked to expand on how the relationships mapped related to care and whom we should talk to, to find out more about these relationships, leading to a series of follow-up interviews across the community-led/policy-making axis.

The relational mapping protocol became key to *spatialise* how care is understood, by whom and where it is positioned within webs of relations across institutional and non-institutional urban collectives, multiple sites of practice and loci of decision-making. The exercise of participatory mapping helped gain a more nuanced understanding of this system of care, by exploring how community-led organisations connected with other organisations and localised democratic policy-making mechanisms. The mapping activity was not intended to produce an overview of the whole organisation or of its role in connection with established urban relations, but rather a trace of the multiple and complex relationships of care that are understood by insiders who are actively engaged in long-term efforts to shift some of the power dynamics in contemporary cities.

## Reflections and conclusions

We set out to explore instances of caring—with [26] within community-led projects to develop understandings of the "*spaces and relations*" produced by care [27] within such initiatives and, more broadly, within wider urban relations. Underpinning the focus on care was a desire to counter neoliberal "uncaring by design" [28] dynamics within the production of cities and to turn our attention to, and amplify the signal of, the potentially radical instances of mobilisation and self-organisation needed for such action.

Within the Caring—with Cities project we focussed on articulating care frameworks in relational terms, beyond bounded case studies, identifying traces of caring practices, which we, together with our project partners/participants, helped to make visible and understood as such. Through the participatory mapping activity (and holistic framing of care that underpinned the mapping protocol) organisations started to see the work they were doing, both internally and in partnership with others, as care, sometimes for the first time.

The mapping activity revealed how caring—with practices, even if institutional, often boiled down to relationships between people, highlighting their strength but also their potential fragility. This led to the identification of specific moments of rupture or impasse between community-led practices and policy-making organisations, as well as cultural and operational silos existing within and across the organisations mapped.

Visions of a caring city, expressed by participants, incorporate different elements and values; in some cases, the city as a whole was conceptualised as a receiver of care, in others care involved specific groups and locales. Caring—with cities practices thus appear to be based on the creation, recognition and maintenance of webs of relations between multiple communities and public institutions. In some instances, the outsourcing of care to community groups had transformed, with time, into an iterative process that changed and challenged formal roles, for instance of external service providers or consultants. The relational mapping became a constructive way of discussing and revealing these caring webs and articulations, their frictions and potentialities, across different scales.

In the mapping and follow up interviews, participants within and outside the partner community organisations also remarked on the importance of managing personal boundaries and expectations of care over time. Caring—with practices were frequently described as being long-term projects, requiring significant personal commitments. Interviewees from community-led organisations and within policy-making roles described several strategies to make these practices more sustainable, for example by opening-up and closing off; stepping-in during key moments; and striking a balance. Our research made visible long-term commitment to places and projects through the lens of caring—with, and beyond the precise time boundaries of specific projects. A number of temporal scales were held together, from short and fixed (the research project) to long and fluid (previous personal and professional involvement of researchers with projects studied) and continuous long and iterative (the organisations and their projects studied).

Our project was relatively limited in resources and for this reason, served as a pilot. Even though we selected case studies for which we had existing connections and ongoing relationships with, it took time to formally negotiate the framework to facilitate conversations with participants and our interactions with the projects were both expedient and contingent. Follow-on research from this pilot might take a range of different paths. One might involve a more systematic, centralised, resource intensive, approach sustained over time and involving more actors for each project case through a larger research project; other paths might take more decentralised, embedded and self-directed forms. The latter might involve creating a framework for independent unmediated use of our mapping protocol, adapted to be used outside of the research project paradigm, as a citizen science, where organisations employ it as a reflexive diagnostic tool.

26 Tronto, *Who Cares?*
27 Trogal, 'Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections', 15
28 re Collective, *The Care Manifesto*, 10.



# The caregivers' strike:

## a tale of violence and care in the entrails of San Salvador

**Sofia Rivera**

As I write these lines, one year has passed since March 26th 2022, the most violent day since the end of El Salvador's civil war (1980 – 1992), with 87 homicides committed in less than 48 hours due to a breakdown in the hidden negotiations between the government and the gangs (Martínez, May 17th, 2022). Owing to this unprecedented wave of murders, an exception regime started on March 27, 2022. Since then, a series of mass detentions have been carried out, with more than 66,000 captures in one year, most of them arbitrary arrests, over 5,000 reports of human rights violations, and at least 130 deaths of persons in the state's custody (Amnistía International, April 3rd 2023).

Although the fatal consequences of mass incarceration have already been pointed out (Bergmann and Gude, 2021), the current exception regime has tripled the prison population, turning El Salvador into the country with the highest rate of incarceration per inhabitant in the world.[1] In addition to the serious effects of arbitrary detentions, the exception regime has triggered numerous crises, one of the most disregarded crises of care. The criminalization of young, poor, and racialized men has been a pattern in the exception regime (T. Aleman, personal communication, November 28, 2022), the responsibility for looking after the needs of the detainee (providing food packages and basic accessories), support economically, and care for the rest of the family members, has fallen almost entirely on women. In cases where both parents have been arrested, communities have become responsible for the abandoned children (O. Flores, personal communication, November 27, 2022). These ignored collective effects of mass imprisonment on women and caregivers has resulted in new collective forms of care and resistance, which need to be remarked.

This essay aims to contribute to this issue by focusing on the experiences of a group of women (mostly mothers, wives, and daughters)[2] inhabiting the surroundings of *El Penalito*, an old cinema located within the limits of the Historic Center of San Salvador, which became a temporary jail where almost every prisoner passed prior permanent confinement and where a few prisoners who had been detained and did not have a verifiable connection to the gangs are being released.[3] In the midst of arbitrariness, lack of information, and the hope that one day their relative will be liberated, these women have turned *El Penalito* into an extension of their homes, developing their daily life between

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1 Approximately 1,540 incarcerated persons per 100,000 inhabitants.

2 I share here some of the first thoughts from the stage of fieldwork I'm currently conducting. I do not share completely the stories of the group of women I've been engaging with during these past months, since I intend to co-decide with them how they would like their stories to be told.

3 Although no official information has been made public, according to human rights organizations most of the arrests have been in committed in San Salvador (O. Flores, personal communication, November 27, 2022), which explains why El Penalito has become a key location for both arrests and releases.

the sidewalk and the black prison gate.

Echoing the call of Kristally and Schulz (2022) to take love and care seriously while researching contexts of violence, relationality, vulnerability, and interdependency become key concepts, rather than "limit the field of vision to death and suffering' (p. 2). This turn in researching violent contexts through the lens of love and care might allow us to understand the practices, feelings, and decisions of individual bodies collectively. By introducing the concepts of *cuerpo-territorio* and *acuerpamiento*[4] from communitarian feminism, I intend to unveil how bodily infrastructures of care become visible in the context of extreme and chronic violence by caring for socio-spatial practices that affect and transform spaces.

## Violence in the streets of San Salvador

The recent history of El Salvador includes two military dictatorships and a 12-year civil war (1980-1992). From the post-war period to the present day, the gang phenomenon has been one of the main triggers of criminal violence in the country. The two main gangs (MS-13 and Barrio 18) originated in Los Angeles, California, and arrived as part of the deportation program initiated by the US, with more than 81,000 ex-convicts portrayed between 1998 and 2014 (Dudley & Martínez, February 16th, 2017). As a result of escalating gang violence, in 2015, San Salvador was considered the most violent city in the world, with 199,3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Valencia, January 26, 2016; Cantor, 2016).

In the last two decades, the strategies to confront violence have been "widespread discretionary arrests and extensive use of lethal force" (Bergmann and Gude, 2021:46). Hume (2007), Hume and Wilding (2020) and Aguilar (2006) have delved into the consequences of the repressive policies of mano dura implemented in El Salvador since 2003. These policies have failed to address the structural causes of violence in El Salvador and reduce crime; on the contrary, they have opened the gate to human rights violations, resulting in mass incarcerations that have "strengthen prison-based criminal organizations at the expense of the state" (Bergmann and Gude, 2021:52), allowing gangs to establish hidden negotiations with the government. Since the first pact was uncovered and broken in 2012 (Martínez, Martínez, Arauz and Lemus, March 14th 2012), homicides have remained as "a currency of power in the relationship between Salvadoran gangs and governments" (Bergmann and Gude, 2021:54), leading to the wave of murders that resulted in the exception regime that today appears as the President's sole and total strategy to control not only gang violence, but also the entire population.

## Caring in violent contexts

In El Salvador (as in Latin America), caregiving tasks are performed mostly by women as a result of an invisible discrimination historically constituted by asymmetrical power relations (Pautassi, 2007). In low-income urban areas, where deprivation and lack of access to basic public services are part of everyday life, caring requires much more dedication (long working shifts, surviving each day with a bare minimum, walking long distances to obtain water, among other challenges). As a result, caregivers practice care in inadequate conditions, sacrifice their own well-being, and break the principle of reciprocity in which they must also be taken care of (Soto-Villagrán, 2022).

Crimes, homicides, extortion, and other forms of direct violence are also part of this scenario, in which women have remained in the middle of two groups "whose main logic of action is the use of violence; (. . .) the gang group that dominates the community's territory, and (. . .) the police or the army that confronts the actions of these groups" (Zetino, Brioso y Montoya, 2015:123, my translation). When the exception regime started, levels of repression, fear, and police violence increased exponentially, notwithstanding the fact that women had to continue carrying on their caregiving tasks, extending them to their detained relatives.

## Caring outside of *El Penalito*

In *El Penalito,* mothers, grandmothers, wives, and daughters become essential in the process of detention. They were the first to arrive and discover the situation of their relatives. One of their first tasks is to buy a prisoner's pack of essential items (shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, toilet paper, white clothes, and foam sandals). Additionally, caregivers must provide three meals a day during the first weeks of detention until their relatives are relocated to a bigger prison. Once transferred, caregivers have to send a package of supplies once a month. Owing to the lack of information and the impossibility of communicating and visiting their relatives (Urbina, March 17th 2023), it is impossible to know if the packages are received. This impossibility of communication has been considered by human rights organizations as torture against families perpetrated by the state (T. Aleman, personal communication, November 28, 2022).

This exchange of goods essentials for life can be interpreted as infrastructures of care in which women's bodies are an essential element that maintains the prison system as a whole by sustaining the lives of their loved ones. By inhabiting collectively El Penalito, these women have created collaborative networks in which, in addition to supporting each other with resources, transportation or information, they embody the concept of acuerpamiento, as a loving agreement through which bodies support other bodies amid the complexities and menaces that the defence of life entails for them (Cabnal, 2017), accompanying each other in their struggles and hopes. Even though infrastructure is a category that must be critically approached to avoid conceiving it as a "catch-all category for a multiplicity of relations, phenomena, and systems" (Buier, 2023:48), it might allow us to engage with "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices (. . .) reproducing life in the city" (Simone, 2004:408). Simultaneously, the relational dimension of infrastructure resembles the principle of interdependence that lies beneath the ethics of care.

Among these bodily infrastructures of care, the scale of the body is fundamental as it supports and makes life possible. In the context of extreme and chronic violence, where low-income areas are harassed and criminalized and the possibility to circulate freely is denied, the body becomes the only safe place to inhabit. The concept of *cuerpo-territorio* as the "inseparable ontological relationship between body and territory: what is experienced by the body is simultaneously experienced by territory in a codependent relationship" (Zaragocín and Caretta, 2021:2) algo recognizes the body as our first territory to retrieve. In this sense, women around *El Penalito* experienced forced displacement. While they express resentment and chagrin towards their previous houses and neighborhoods, their lives travel along with them in a backpack as migrants in their own country. Their most precious belongings are their relatives' clothes and shoes because of the urge to change them the moment they exit the prison, as the white clothes they wear symbolize their criminal record, which must be erased. Their bodies become their homes, and the bodies of their loved ones become their main territory for retrieval.

By remaining there waiting, adapting their daily activities to this unique space, and paying to use a restroom or charge their phones, women around *El Penalito* end up embodying the condition of incarceration. As bodies become their only territory of refuge, a paradox emerges when most caregiving tasks are destined for their sons, husbands, or fathers, even if they have not heard from them in months or for a whole year. The act of caring for a body that is absent, to the detriment of their own health and physical well-being, is related to the experience of communitarian feminists in Guatemala, when they identified that their own bodies had been neglected in their fight to defend their

4 *Acuerpamiento* is a concept that comes from communitarian feminism in Guatemala and can be translated to English as surrounding and supporting a body with other bodies.

territories (Cabnal, 2017). In the same way as physical infrastructure, caregivers' bodies also require care (and self-care), as they are worn-out, tired, and infirm. The lack of recognition of care as a right and the absence of care for those who care makes this infrastructure unsustainable, like almost all the processes of exploitation derived from the violence of the capitalist system.

To conclude this brief journey through the surroundings of El Penalito, it is important to recognize that women's bodies have sustained bodily infrastructures of care for centuries. In El Salvador, the exception regime made them visible, bringing them to the surface. As Simone (2004) stands, "people as infrastructure describe a tentative and often precarious process of remaking the inner city' (p. 411), and in violent contexts as the one portrayed in this essay, these infrastructures of care demonstrate us that without them life would not be possible. The way mothers, grandmothers, wives, and daughters inhabit this space and the dynamics of collaboration that they have generated arise from the pain and despair that, when shared collectively, manage to withstand the impact of the numerous forms of violence that they experience. In this context, the boundaries between the public and the private disappear, the street becomes the stage for intimacy, and care is provided without seeing, speaking, or holding. Acuerpamiento becomes necessary to articulate collective resistance by collectively sharing injustices and oppressions suffered by other bodies.

Despite the terrorism that the Salvadoran state is exerting on the population through the fear of being detained without cause, women are standing up to decades of structural violence. Caregiving tasks such as bringing food might be considered quiet politics, actions considered minor but fundamental in stop perceiving women as passive victims, but active subjects who seek through subtle actions to fight for survival "or even recovering dignity." (Hume and Wilding, 2020: 3) In a territory where chronic violence has reign for decades, and the idea of having a good relationship responds the principle "nobody messes with anybody" (Zetino, Brioso y Montoya, 2015: 124), building networks of cooperation and care is revolutionary. Sustaining, nurturing, replicating, and physically supporting infrastructures of care will be fundamental to reweave what this exception regime has torn apart.

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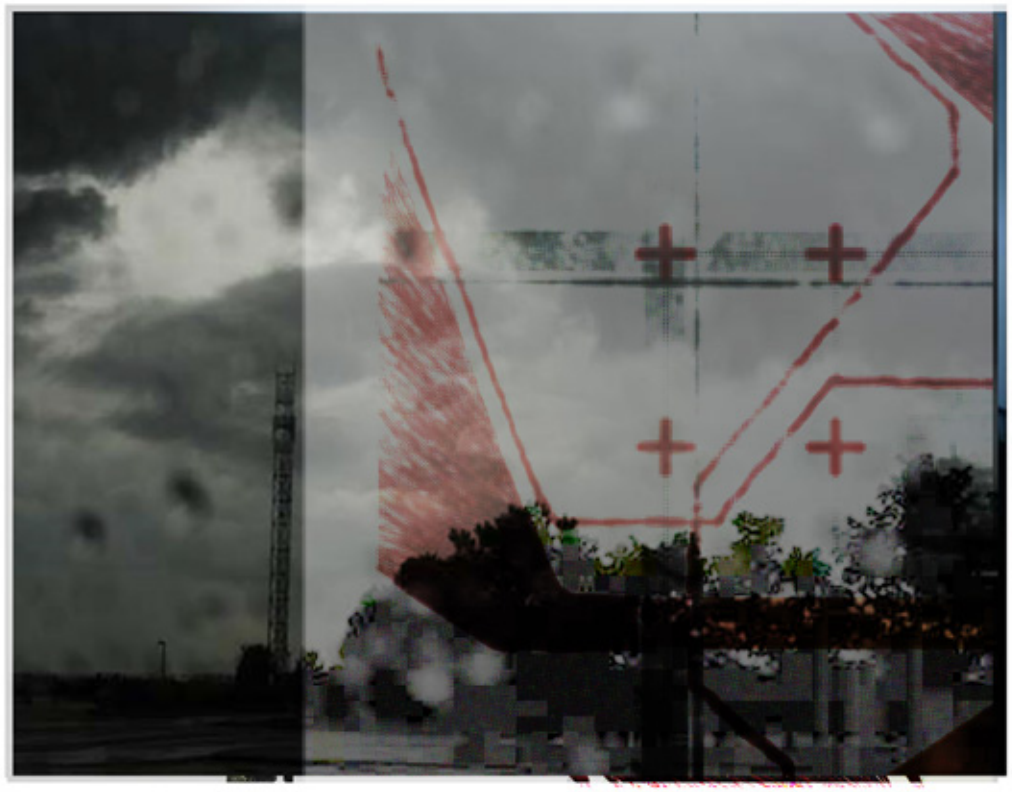
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# Paths of banana trees:
## passages of care between unequal worlds

**Carolina Correia dos Santos**
**Iazana Guizzo**

At a central region of Rio de Janeiro, several housing buildings take part of the old prison complex Frei Caneca. The buildings, named after two honorable samba musicians, Ismael Silva and Zé Keti, occupy what used to be an old forensic asylum, or the Hospital of Custody and Psychiatric Treatment (HCPT) Heitor Carrilho. It was built in the early 1920 to house those detained at the Lombroso section of the National Hospital for the Alienated, Rio's very first asylum. The Lombroso section was responsible for the offenders and/or criminals diagnosed with mental disorders. The HCPT Heitor Carrilho, in this manner, represents and materializes the power of both medical and legal knowledges combined.

As for its physical structures, the buildings have survived the century. In 2010, however, a legal resolution decided to extinct all custody and psychiatric hospitals and the Heitor Carrilho was demolished. On those grounds, the two housing buildings that incorporate the federal housing program *Minha Casa, Minha Vida*[1] were built. There remains the access porch to the "Correction House" and the walls on the left side of the complex. Frei Caneca street is where we can find the old porch and part of the wall, it goes through the sambódromo on to the bohemian neighborhood Lapa.

The slums of São Carlos and Mineira, on the opposite side, are the birthplace of poets and artists. Nearby, there is the first samba association of Rio, the *escola de samba* Estácio de Sá. The area, on the overall, is very poor in vegetation and densely populated. Cars, buses and motorcycles add up to the heating sensation, but in spite of the apparent desert, there is a breeze, "Estácio calms down the meaning of my mistakes"[2], as gently sang Luiz Melodia.

Niara do Sol lives, in the company of many other indigenous people[3] , in one of the buildings of Zé Keti. When we first envisaged the stories about the plants that Niara grows in the small spaces alongside the enormous old jail wall [4], we thought of Niara as the main protagonist, but we had forgotten something Donna Haraway learned with Ursula Le Guin: heroic, tragic stories are approaching their

1 Popular Housing Program implemented in 2009 by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government. Accused of giving continuity to the old politics of urban fragmentation (Carvalho; Medeiros and Rizek et all., available at https://www.scielo.br/j/urbe/a/FkFLVPC7JTtkbY8hpP5RBYP/# and https://www.scielo.br/j/ccrh/a/VpWbKJHKKCFHYM7JsCQpLfP/#), *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* is, however, considered to be the biggest and most ambitious Brazilian public housing policy (Euclydes et all. Available at https://www.scielo.br/j/rsocp/a/XzN3FcCLxhX7dtzWBfdbhyN/#)

2 Snippet of the song "Estácio, Holly Estácio" by Luiz Melodia, Brazilian musician born in 1951, in the favela of São Carlos. He passed away in 2017.

3 Niara do Sol is a Fulni-ô and Kariri Xocó indigenous person. She is the main responsible for the Dja Guata Porã Indigenous Comunity Garden. Niara and other indigenous people were assigned to one of the Zé Keti's buildings after being violently removed from their urban village at Maracanã.

4 The series of podcasts "Floresta Cidade", idealized by Iazana Guizzo, presents 3 episodes with Niara do Sol. Available at https://open.spotify.com/show/45XZYOk6zfwHaMqpR5cv6G

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endings.[5] For us, Niara was some sort of hero in the turbulent downtown neighborhood of one of the most complex Brazilian cities.

However, on our last visit to the buildings, we decided to take a walk through Ismael Silva, on the opposite side from Niara's forest. Niara did not lose her importance, but her protagonism was suddenly disseminated over other spots and other actors in that hectic area.

There are many possible paths to those who decide to enter Ismael Silva, the narrow spaces left between the buildings. In one of those paths, walking without a pre-established destination, we encountered a bunch of beautiful banana trees. Would they have been planted by Niara? Two men were enjoying the freshness of their shadows on a particularly hot day, Ney and Pará, whose nickname is one of the Amazonian states in the north of Brazil. Ivanildo, Pará's real name, was actually born in the countryside of Pernambuco (on northeast coast of Brazil), even though Ney had first mentioned that Pará was from Paraíba. Both of them had lived in the favela of Rocinha, before moving to Estácio. Rocinha is known for its outstanding population of 100 thousand inhabitants and its privileged location.

All the inaccuracy – what their real names are and where they came from –, it seems, helped us find them. Above all, Pará seems to be some kind of "crossroads man". A man with the ability to open paths. Someone with a notorious skill of facilitating the crossing of worlds: the place he was born in and the places he has been to, but also radically different worlds, worlds with other types of existence and communication. The relationship he has created with plants, he claims to have learned from his mother. "It takes a good hand to breed", he says. Pará walked hectically through the trees, showing us the many species he had planted, most of them fruitful or with medicinal purposes. At the approximately 19 feet passageway between the buildings and the retaining wall, what used to be a boring lawn is now an orchard.

Pará brings a whole lot of other worlds to the city's downtown. He seems to know, in his own particular fashion, that one of the possible ways to complicate the Anthropocene is exactly the same one brought by the banana tree, planted at the crack of the failed architectural project. If the Anthropocene has been mostly thought of in a fatalistic way, Pará, accomplishing a practice that resonates Haraway's criticism to the Anthropocene, subverts the narrative of the end of the world by creating worlds within a world that appeared to be finished. We know that traditional urbanism and top-down architect design have been the main tool of governments to deal with housing problems. Pará, in that sense, not only shows the limits of the 'official' practices. He also finds ways out of damaged relationships by creating others, including relationships with other species.

Designed in an extremely economic way, the four-store buildings of Ismael Silva and Zé Keti are made of materials that contribute to the high levels of extraction and pollution, the water and sewage pipes exposed at the facade display the (un)poetic degree of neglect. The scorching sun, the rain water and organic residue from the houses are despised as resources. The absence of any project for the free areas severely contrasts with our global need to plant more trees. The housing complex's rules, in that sense, are not helpful. Pará and Niara report threatening warnings from the administration. Maybe that's the reason why Niara has made alliances to extend the planting territory to São Carlos slum, where the those rules do not apply.

It's shameful to note that the housing project is oblivious to or just neglects the ecological debates, however important their existence is. The right to a household in a country such as Brazil is the result of many social battles that often face police bash and political scorn. Even though the slums are part of the landscape throughout the city, poor people living in a housing complex built by the State in downtown Rio is something to praise. Nevertheless, Zé Keti and Ismael Silva's designs could have been conceived in a past when we still thought of ourselves as a progressive people. "The problem is that progress stopped making sense"[6] says Tsing and we are at a global urgency state. The ecological debates of a regenerative and interspecific architecture, composed by green and blue infrastructure capable of contributing to the mitigation of global warming, food safety, depollution of the waters and collective alliances are not reaching programs of popular housing.

If progress stopped making sense to the western world, or at least to a part of it, it has never made sense to the African and indigenous descendants of Brazil. To Ailton Krenak, the cities are a plague that are "expanding in a incoherent way, indifferent to the fact that they are molding the Earth's body [...] the asphalt, the land and all these things that want to isolate us from Earth's body, as if we felt disgusted by the Earth".[7] The isolation of our human bodies from other beings allows us to think of the care for the territory as a process of becoming forest. In these terms, it wouldn't be us, humans, the ones capable of recovering the landscapes. Instead, landscapes would be able to reactivate our bodies, to remove them from this brutal isolation that the cities and architectures contribute to produce.

Pará and Niara step barefoot in the dirt to plant. They step on it everyday, they know the moon cycles, the rain, bugs and what kind of food the soil needs. Ismael Silva and Zé Keti, the samba musicians, practiced the magic of drumming and dancing on the asphalt. Samba reactivates a "charmed body" capable of surpassing the roofs that isolate us from the skies and the paving stones that separate us from the roots. To inhabit, belong, grow ourselves with cosmic life experiences has always been a part of this territory.

Brazil is an indigenous territory, Rio is Tupinambá and was the world's largest harbor for the black diaspora. Estácio is part of the "Little Africa", a set of black neighborhoods in the port district. It is not a coincidence that samba musicians reign in this territory. Indigenous and African descendants teach us that other technologies of dwelling are emerging, ones that bring fondness and make our and "earthly body". Hopefully, architecture and urbanism will, someday, become samba or forest.

In the absence of a vital and organic relation to the forest, plants become enemies in the calculating and misinformed claim that their roots can harm the foundations of the buildings. Every now and then, plants and trees are ripped out against the inhabitants' will. The priority of the economic argument that still sustains a good share of the discourses against development criticism stands up, as a matter of fact, for the development that, to make use of Bookchin's expression, decomplexifies the ecological and cultural relations, impoverishing the world. Bookchin doesn't use metaphors, the impoverishment is quite literal. If this is our development, he affirms, "we are steadily restoring the biosphere to a stage which it will be able to support only simpler forms of life."[8] Isabelle Stengers, more recently, drew attention to the lack of care, or even better, to the destruction of the resources that could promote the art of caring under the pretense and promise of modernization.[9] Isn't that the exact same argument used by the administration of the housing complex to forbid the planting of trees? As if it was a matter of choosing between building houses or planting trees. Pará didn't hesitate in clarifying that none of the trees planted had invasive roots. His argument, plain and simple, however, seems to be a part of the complex and organic world Bookchin states we are forsaking.

During the explanatory route we took with Pará and Ney, each species had a history, a beauty and

5 Donna Haraway (2016) *Staying with the Trouble: making kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 118.

6 Anna Tsing (2022) *O cogumelo no fim do mundo,* tr. Jorge Mena Barreto, Yudi Rafael, São Paulo: N-1 edições, p.71.
7 Ailton Krenak (2022) Saiam desse pesadelo de concreto! In Gabriela M., Renata M., Roberto A., Wellington C. (Eds) *Habitar o Antropoceno*, Belo Horizonte: BDMG Cultural/ Cosmópolis, p. 216. Our translation.
8 Murray Bookchin (1985) Ecology and Revolutionary Thought. In *Antipode* vol. 17, issue 2-3, p. 93.
9 Isabelle Stengers (2015) *No tempo das catástrofes: resistir à barbárie que se aproxima*, tr. Eloisa Araújo Ribeiro, São Paulo: Cosac Naify.

use. We got to know a new kind of banana, and the atá (a kind of custard apple). We talked about the shapes, smells, tastes, shadows and friends. For Pará all that was beautiful because they were alive. Such a "becoming forest" produces life. An abandoned city is a garbage dump, but a forest without humans is just a less diverse forest.

These stories help us think about our ability to respond to the damaged world we live in. Answers that enchant and connect our bodies to other living beings seem necessary to us. These are stories of political struggles that dislocate the human protagonism and suggest unusual cooperations.[10] To be a forest is not only to plant countless trees but blending with them. The encounter is necessarily contagious and requires an affective metamorphosis. It is also necessary to participate in a collaborative poetics that already exists in what we call biomes, understood as interspecific practices of inhabiting that connect different beings, forms, species, and worlds by creating living, situated, and diverse landscapes that are always in constant metamorphosis. In this sense, few (human) inhabitants of Rio are part of the Atlantic Forest, despite the city being surrounded by it. Niara and Pará have become forest because they are not isolated from this collaborative territorial poetics that promotes life. This is beautiful, as Pará had put it. And who would doubt the poetic force of one of the most diverse and exuberant rainforests in the world?

What we saw wasn't just a garden or a garden that provides us with fruit and medicine. It wasn't even just about the relatively vague obligation to reduce carbon emission. Those paths taught us the meaning of life itself, about creating life with more life, about understanding Earth as life. "Earth is a living being with a heart and it breathes" as the Yanomami say. Landscapes are created through an interspecific design that makes up biomes, forests, gardens and flowerbeds undeniably alive. Pará knows that landscapes are assemblies of beings in movement. Pará is, indeed, a part of it.

10 It is interesting, at this point, to turn briefly to Barbara Ward's 1976 evocation of the role national states and governments have in providing human settlements the basic conditions to live as well as her conviction that humans live inter-dependently. If this, by no means, ceased to be true, we must add to Ward's sense of an interconnected world the nonhuman beings that have come to the foreground. In the settlement we visited, the story we are telling, plants are protagonists as much as humans. Barbara Ward (1976) The Home of Man: What Nations and the International Must Do. In *Habitat*, vol 1, no. 2, Great Britain: Pergam Press, p. 125-132.

# Accurate commoning: between primitive and new enclosures

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In "Revolution at point zero", the feminist scholar Silvia Federici (2020, 25) defines caring as the "*day-to-day activities through which we produce our existence, develop our ability to cooperate, and not only resist dehumanization but also learn to reconstruct the world as a space of nurture, creativity, and car*". This definition based on participation and collaboration resonates with the contemporary debate on commons, and most particularly the one led by Peter Linebaugh. The American marxist historian argued (2014, 13) for the word to be used as a verb, rather than a noun, to portray it as an active system. Indeed, this seemingly archaic notion, which historically refers to an idea or material resource, is now being revisited through the concept of critical actions following the numerous ecological, financial and sanitary crisis. This debate was particularly marked by the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009 to the American Professor Elinor Ostrom for her ground-based research on the ways that people sustainably organize themselves to manage resources. Beside advocating for an economic possibility of self-governance by community, she also puts in historical perspectives the fundamental knowledge, and trust, they have to acquire to be able to (re)produce themselves in relationship to their environment. This "*complex ecology of human and non-human actors*" forms what Elke Krasny and Lara Perry (2023, 143) also called curated care. Therefore, the present correlation between these two practices (caring and commoning) led me to examine the systemic form upon which they are organised, either based on spatial, structural or sexual criteria, which is deeply rooted in the enclosures of medieval traditions. To paraphrase Clovis Maillet'argument (Golsenne and Maillet, 2022) going back to medieval and pre-capitalist time allow us to understand what is specific about the world we are living in today, and makes it possible to question the notion of progress upon which our society is based on.

Commoning understood in relation to the idea of curing[1] has its roots in the feudalism demesne of Medieval Northern Europe, evident in the open-field system, with their flexible structure of private gardens, collaborative farming pattern and shared common lands. To understand it, we must turn to one of the arguably most famous set of miniatures of all medieval illuminations to have survived: the calendar of the "Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry". While the unique XVth century piece highlighted the structural importance of the seasonal cycle in the (re)productive system of human activities, and its inherent spatial flexibility, the paintings also depict a clear images of medieval life where the nobility and peasantry lives are intrinsically correlated. This form of representation isn't an exact

1 Originated from the late 14th century, from Old French *curer* "to restore to health or a sound state" and directly from Latin curare "take care of" hence, in medical language, "treat medically, cure". In Latin the noun *cura* "the care, concern, or attention given to something or someone" gave the English nouns "curator," "curate," and "cure," as well as "accurate", which is precise or exact.

image of the medieval landscape but embodied the principle of the communally managed individual peasant holdings through a three-year crop rotation and common grazing. These collaborative actions played a critical part in the reproductive process of semi-commoners, between private and common uses.

Finally, winter months portray another spatial artefact: the commons. Also called waste, this territory situated at the margins of the manor, would be either too far from the village to reach, or too hard to cultivate. These conditions created a possibility for landless peasants or farmers to use and govern these land as well as they could. Beside peatland and non-fertile soil, the most important typologies were the forest. Peter Linebaugh (2008. Xiii) qualified as "*the fuel of that time*": the main resource to building houses, heating it and cooking food. Commoning was thus a curated system of management, using the whole territory in a flexible and efficient form while nurturing its environment. But as the archaeologist Susan Oosthuizen (2020) tweeted, "*it wasn't the garden of Eden*". Indeed, this apparatus need careful management and constant negotiations to ensure its well-being. It was based on custom rights, where commoners would meet at different times of the year to take decisions. This crucial aspect of governance was due to the knowledge that each of the farmer had of the territory, the high flexibility of the organisation and the fact that most of them couldn't write or read. Trusts and respect were thus at the core of these medieval culture of assembly. As Elinor Ostrom (1990) demonstrated in her research on the main principles to ensure proper functioning and a sustainable management of commoning, those who didn't keep their words needed to be highly sentenced by citizens courts (Hyams, 2000). Thus, their highly active and living process, shapes around a discourse, verbal dialogue, agreements and traditions, resist being expressed by canonical material like writings or maps. This lack of peasantry representation also appears in paintings or architectural documents as the commissioners were the nobility. The farming systems weren't even properly regarded until the XVI century for the sake of "improvement".

But even more specifically, the main obvious social lack of representation concerned women. Even now, as the historian Nadine Vivier (2015) indicated, despite the growing interest in the subject, the work of women in medieval times remains an understudied subject, which is often attributed to a lack of documentation. But the fifteenth-century poem "*The ballad of the tyrannical husband*" precisely and accurately depicted women labour. As the British agricultural historian Jane Whittle (2015, 78) demonstrated, the interest of this ballad lies on the form used: a dispute between a husband and his wife to know which of the two works the most. It perfectly illustrates the fact that certain tasks, belonging to the sphere of the domestic, are omitted or only briefly mentioned, such as looking after the children, getting water and fuel in the commons, maintaining the laundry. The same goes for daily work, that we can clearly see perpetuated by women in February or June in the calendar of "Les riches hears du Duc de Berry", such as milking the cows, producing butter and cheese, taking care of poultry, preparing bread and meals, brewing beer, preparing linen, spinning wool, etc. These activities do not leave traces because they are based on equipment not owned by households, or not registered because of very low value. Therefore, these gestures, however essential for the reproduction of the household, become invisible in the daily life. And most importantly, when planning the future.

Highly dependent on their environment, commoning practices can thus be conceived as a broader apparatus in which space, and architecture, are both the prerequisites and the outcomes in the (re) production of the social body entitled to it. But their existence cannot be described without their nemesis: enclosures. The terminology refers to the long process of alienation of a proportion of population from the land that sustains them, through termination of the common and basic right to land. This transformation happened first in England as soon as the XIIth century. By turning fields into commodities in a quest for profit and "primitive (capitalist) accumulation", as Karl Marx (1883, 579) described it, the enclosures both destroyed and revealed the importance of commoning, and the social system of care depending on it. Indeed, this "theft" as Peter Linebaugh (2014) called them, were faced with strong resistance by commoners, but their voices and actions were powerless against the tactical procedures. In theorising the spread of political and agrarian economy alongside the growth of trade, and implementing the use of abstract, scalable and reproducible tools (such as mapping or legislation), the importance of representation radically shifted contemporaneous understandings of the human relationship to both its environment, (re)production and contiguous forms of labour. By separating commoners from their means of survival, enclosures also emphasised the role played by the division of labour that occurred in the wake of the industrial revolution. Having nowhere to go, and no resource to survive anymore, commoners moved to cities to sell their last belongings: their body.

According to Peter Linebaugh and Ron Jacobs (2014), in this process, women were relegated to the homes which were, in essence, another form of enclosure. "*Their job was likely to be performing one small task as part of the creation of a whole product. This alienation from the final product is in itself an enclosing of the mind, spirit and even the person*". This is also addressed by Silvia Federici (2017) in her seminal book "Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation", where she advocates for another modification of care, taken for granted, labelled as natural cure. One that was developed by the patriarchal mandate: confined and contained at home, marked by unpaid labour considered as love and the obligation for women to become the mother-cum-carer. The connection between the privatization of property and the estrangement of labor; the enclosure of commoning and the alienation of humans from their work and from each other is thus directly visible, even though their realization remains invisible. In their article on the "Politics of kinship", Bue Rübner Hansen and Manuela Zechner (2019) are raising the question of how me might rethink the extended family today, beyond patriarchy and the reproduction of capitalist relations; not to romanticise precapitalist forms, but to seize hold of a memory in this moment of loneliness and exhaustion. This second enclosure, as physical as psychological, is based on the individual. But as Melinda Cooper (2017) demonstrated, neoliberal capitalism is not built on the individual as much as on individual family units; Thatcherism and Reaganism were reactionary movements to "restore" or "save" the nuclear family. This last, both enclosed again, and generated a new separation with its social and spatial environment. Indeed, "*kinship is held together by reproductive labour*" ( Rübner Hansen and Zechner, 2019, 153) as its meaning exceed the capitalist telos of reproducing labour-power.

A more care-full approach to commoning, as a precisely curated apparatus of co-reproduction, must be emphasised. The very idea of care labour, forming a large-scale solidarity network beyond the private scale can be traced back to medieval times. But the manifolds of commoning was slowly dismantled and eliminated to establish an efficient and rational exploitative system of production. The notion of capitalist value replaced the one of used value embodied by customary rights and deeply rooted in local culture and knowledge. Through enclosures, commons became visible, as well as commoners that represents an entire class structure deeply dependent on these resources. Their resistance revealed the direct link that spatial and social system plays in the (re)production of a large part of the population. Paradoxically, their resilient and adaptive nature is also their strength. According to Silvia Federici (2020, 35), the "new enclosures" brought to light an infinity of communal goods and relationships that many thought had disappeared or had no value before they were threatened with privatization. Better still, in addition to the persistence of the commons over time, they have demonstrated that new forms of social cooperation are constantly being created, including in areas where this cooperation was previously completely non-existent, for example on the Internet. Indeed, as the sociologist John Holloway (2010) argued, fundamental transformation can solely be achieved by generating, enlarging, and replicating "cracks" within the capitalist framework. These "cracks" are everyday instances or arenas of defiance where an alternative modes of action is demonstrated. He

insisted that the Marxist perspective on "two-fold nature of labour", comprising abstract labor and concrete labor, suggests that movements against capitalism ought to focus on concrete and critical collaborative actions, rather than pitting labor against capital, to combine what the division of labor has dissociated. This connection between care and the dimension of human interdependence, is what authors such as Elke Krasny has emphasized when advocating for the necessity of accepting dependency as a means to ensure equality and promoting an increased capacity for care. The feminist discourse, however, moves beyond a mere revalorization of care as an ethical principle and challenges its political economy by affirming the necessity of universalizing care work and removing its invisibility, obligation, and lack of representation. In the words of Manuela Zechner and Silvia Federici (2019, 157)"*People relate not as co-citizens, but as co-inhabitors of a territory of care and self-reproduction: caring for a common ecology, for the crops and animals of their neighbours, and for the co-inhabitation of in these dispersed settlements, criss-crossed by paths rather than fences*."


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# Archival Care


**Huda Tayob**


The *Archive of Forgetfulness* is a pan-African digital exhibition and podcast series which ran from September 2020 and December 2021 in three phases: a podcast series, online exhibition, and six regionally curated projects. The project was led by Huda Tayob and Bongani Kona, with six regional curators, Ali Al Adawy, Eric Ngangare, Jumoke Sanwo, Omnia Shawkat, Princess Mhlongo, and Zoubida Mseffer.[1] Drawing inspiration from Mahmoud Darwish's prose length poem, *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1), the platform questions how we might engage with what exists in the failure of memory(2). In the project, practices of care extend from the labour of maintaining neighbourliness, to multiple, small acts of refusal. Collectively they speak to a multiplicity of border crossings, as geographic, temporal and disciplinary. In this article, I suggest that the attention to forgetfulness is grounded in "practices of peripheral care".

While the project platform remaps borders and archives, individual contributions speak across scales to the urgency of many of the questions raised in work within the *Archive of Forgetfulness*, and the constantly emerging difficulties and repeated crises of making creative work on the African continent. Much of this works engages directly with contexts where the space to do such work is not a given. As Abdoumaliq Simone notes, care in peripheral contexts might be 'concretising new lines of connection' alongside 'an active refusal of inhabitation in its present terms.' (3) Similarly, these acts do not necessarily always look like 'obvious refusals,' and might instead be small and multiple. Jasmine Syedullah asks us to consider what and who we see 'when we peel back the historical sentiments and sediments of contemporary care culture?'(4) The works within the *Archive of Forgetfulness* collectively question how we might unmake structural inequalities, where care is an archival practice, an act of material repair, and a proposal for engaging with each other and the world in different ways.

## Small refusals

For Simone, 'peripheral care' is constituted by practices which emerge at geographic peripheries, and evade the usual terms, assumptions and subjects assumed by positions of centrality (5). He describes the urban periphery as 'a compost machine processing the leftovers of city life into a mulch of strange contiguities.' (6). Within this framing is both the idea of unwanted remains, and the seeds of new life and alternative potential futures within the small acts of repair, even if not always aligned towards a clear or singular political intention.

1 The overall project includes the work of fifty-six artists, cultural producers, curators, creative thinkers and researchers from the African continent and diaspora. Participants were from Angola, Brazil, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, France, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, USA, the United Kingdom and Zanzibar.


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She is a participant in the 18th International Architecture exhibition in Venice (2023) with a project titled Index of Edges, which traces watery archives along east African coasts Cape Town to Port Said.

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These small refusals are evident a range of projects in different ways. A podcast contribution by Menna Agha, is a call to recognise the labour of a generation of Nubian women who actively worked to keep families connected across the newly imposed displacement and borders, in the wake of the Aswan dam and Egyptian independence. As Agha notes, this is a racialized and gendered form of care that enabled maintaining bonds despite political and physical distances (7). In some cases, as with the essay provocation by Nkgopoleng Moloi, 'gestures of gratitude', offers a propositional method for recalling the contribution of slave ancestos who have been relegated to barely legible remnants in ledgers, and yet have been central to social reproduction (8). Similarly, the regional project by Zoubida Mseffer, is a search for stories of Yasmin, the slave-wife of her great-grandfather, where the research is a method and practices of care for deeply submerged family histories and unspoken pasts. In a different approach, Rania Atef draws attention to the limitations faced by mother-artists and the wider structural limitations within a field that does not take account for gendered caring responsibilities. In some cases, material practices of care are foregrounded alongside archival, such as in Arafa Cynthia Hamadi's 'Kujiona Series', which engages with queer story-telling on the Swahili coasts alongside the material repair of reclaimed Swahili dhows. In several projects, mapping is the means to speak to practices of care that extend from bodies to territories, such as Shayna Rosendorff's 'Unmapping', which looks to 1963 Unesco documents that record African resources as available for extraction, and an artist response that proposes an unmapping of these violent histories, and alterative cartographic projections. These are a few examples which speak to a range of practices and acts of refusal, where care is not reduced to a singular, individual act, and is often a vital strategy for "enduring precarious worlds" (9). In different ways, the work points to care-taking as central to methods and epistemic frameworks, while simultaneously questioning what it does in the world.

Two further projects stand out as central to an ethics of relationality, as sited and specific. In the work titled 'Existence is an Occupation' by Cheriese Dilrajh, we hear and see a film that moves from the making of a paper airplane within the confines of a Covid-19 lockdown, to Apartheid and post-Apartheid forced removals in South Africa, alongside forced evictions by the Israeli Defence Force in occupied Palestine. The film is a combination of filmed, found and archival footage, set to the song 'A Piece of Ground' performed by Miriam Makeba. The work is an active engagement with relational politics, drawing together the ongoing legacies of settler colonial violence and racialised displacement. Beyond the immediacy of the evictions and forced removals we witness, we hear 'A Piece of Ground' which chronicles the history of Land Acts and associated extractive labour, which legalised mass land dispossession and the institution of reserves for those deemed 'native', in what became South Africa, from the 1883 'discovery of gold' to the 1913 Natives Land Act. We are invited to listen to this song as an oral history of dispossession and resistance, alongside centering Makeba as an active political and anti-Apartheid feminist figure. In weaving together archival encounters from popular sources, we are simultaneously asked to contend with the relationality of forced displacement across history and geography, as linked through ongoing coloniality. At the same time, both Makeba's voice, intonation, and insistence on the struggle for a 'piece of ground' and the paper airplane which returns through a split screen, carry us to a history not foreclosed. While not all the works included are always as explicitly political, in many cases as with Dilrajh, the archive is actively engaged with and critiqued through method, practice and content.

A different approach is evident in the work of the regional curator Jumoke Sanwo, through the project *Dúna Dúrà – [The Negotiation]*. This work unfolded over the Archive of Forgetfulness website and as a live event in the Obálendé market in Lagos, Nigeria on the 9th of June 2021. The evening culminated with a live performance by Jelili Atiku who engaged the market as a medium, through the deities Èsù, the preeminent primordial divinity, and Ajé, deity of wealth and patroness of trade and economic prosperity. This performance was live-streamed, allowing a remote audience a portal into the night market. The live performance was prefaced with a series of talks, interviews, an installation and a spoken-word performance as an active and direct negotiation with locality and distance simultaneously. Sanwo's curatorial approach embraces the night market in the Yoruba world-view is also a portal between the living and dead. This particular market is known as a melting-pot of people from around Nigeria and a site associated with the nearby Dodan Barracks and therefore military power. (10) Sanwo has also noted the precarity of markets such as these, noting "there's been a lot of gentrification of open market spaces in the city of Lagos where a lot of open markets are now being demolished. You find fancy malls coming up, and people are being uprooted and dislocated from both the economic as well as the social meaning of the market space and what it represents every day. So, it's very important to bring all of this to the fore to look at the historical, the epistemological, but also associations of violence in Obálendé as well." (11) *Dúna Dúrà*, as the name suggests, is an active negotiation of the multiple worlds, histories and tensions which overlap in the space of the market. For Sanwo, engaging with the 'forgotten' is through a direct engagement with indigenous philosophy, a highly local sites and a global online portal, as a means to question the potential and possibility of the night market in Lagos, as much as Lagos as a global site. This is an engagement with what Simone refers to as 'the vast reservoir of vitality emerging from streets' (12) where we might begin to recognise the forms and structures of refusing the present status quo of impending displacement.

These loosely assembled works described here, speak to some of the forms that care-work takes within the wider project. A common element is the rejection of 'limited moral sentiments' which rely on exclusionary frameworks and define who is worthy of being cared for. Instead, these are 'non-innocent' forms of care, as Ticktin notes, which move away from liberal ideas of 'purity and deservingness.' (13) Instead, as Ticktin reminds us, drawing on the scholar-activist Michelle Murphy, these are forms of care marked by 'being troubled, worried, uneasy, unsettled.' These are practices of care which recognise and engage with the complexity of place, are materially grounded, and aim towards an alternative commons.

## Archival care, other ways of knowing and doing

Forgetting is not only the shadowy underside of memory, but shapes and defines the contours of what is recalled. As Mbembe reminds us, the archive holds debts and debris,(14) and centering forgetting is in many ways an engagement with the peripheries of archival concerns as a means to work beyond enclosure, however murky or distant, rejecting the assumed transparency of a binary position.'(15) In the first episode of *Conversations with Neighbours*, in October 2020, Ali Al-Adawy and Jumoke Sanwo discussed what it means to think about archives for the future, through that which is often untranslatable and opaque. Sanwo noted that the Yoruba word for archive is 'Itoju', which she translates as 'care'. Archival labour here is the work of establishing methods to maintain and care for archives. Archival work always requires the construction of categories and conceptual frames.(16) Denise Ferreira da Silva reminds us of the importance of addressing what she terms the three dimensions of the political, namely the 'juridic, economic and the symbolic'. For Da Silva, this is a prompt to engage 'with the ethical mandate of opening up other ways of knowing an doing' (17) for another world entirely. As this paper shows, while many of the projects within the Archive of Forgetfulness can be engaged with through the online platform as art-work or essay, the practices spoken to are material, sited and prolonged engagements with very particular places and histories.

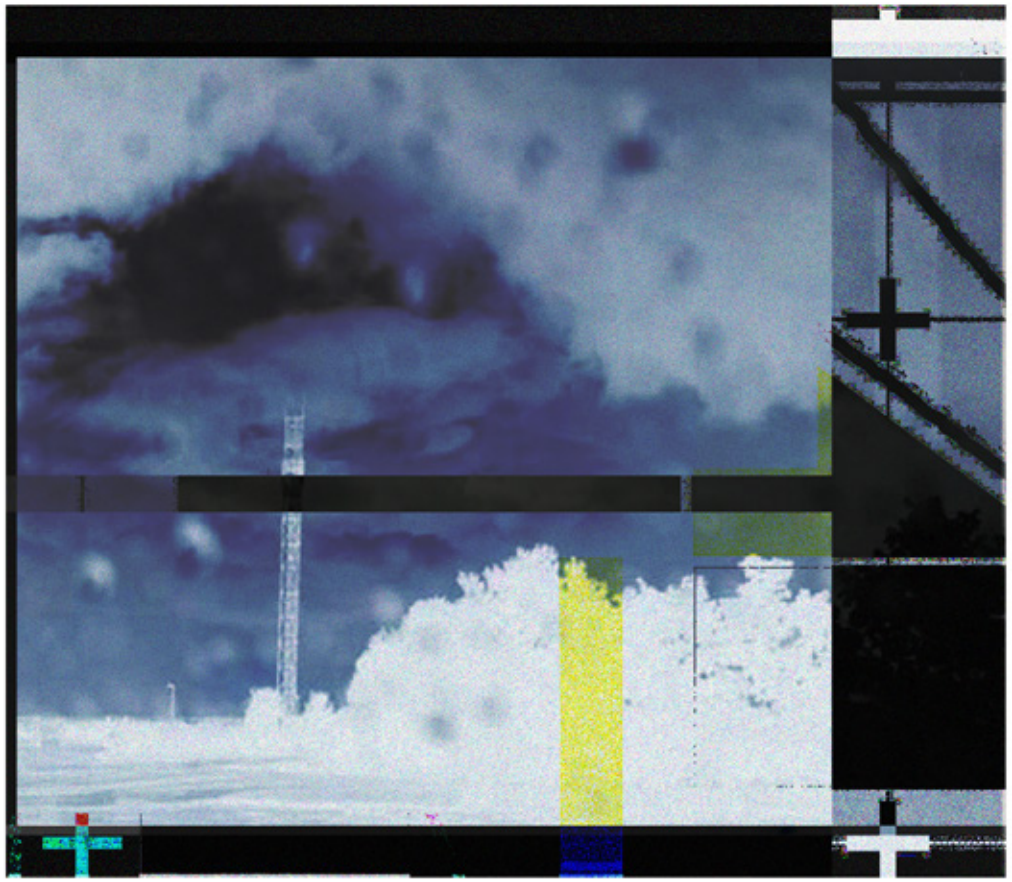
The multi-sited attention has been central from the outset. The initial call was launched in 2020, during global Covid-19 lockdowns. We wrote at the time, 'With our current heightened sense of being and breathing in this world, we are acutely aware of the longer and deeper histories of forced immobility and segregation, and of the extractive infrastructures and racial violence made material

in how cities across the African continent were imagined.' (18) In the call, working through archives is a prompt to not forget that public health laws, associated *cordon sanitaires* and forced removals, have been key tools of coloniality, as discursive and material. This is a reminder of how categories and grammars operate in the world, through what Denise Ferreira da Silva refers to as the 'juridico-economic effect', (19) as always tied into wider material networks and economies. The increasing biometric bordering policies' apply to social life and the body, (20) speak to forms of enclosure and control across scales, temporalities and technologies, and necessitate reciprocal work.

Care is a useful framework to read the lines of connection forged across projects, as materially grounded and epistemic provocations on 'training for the not-yet.' (21)This is work towards forms of communal belonging that engage with the difficulties of site and history, while provoking ways of thinking beyond the violence of enclosures by challenging the primacy of bordering. The Archive of *Forgetfulness* attempts to unsettle these imposed boundaries and borders, yet this is not a means to draw attention away from the material practices of care. It is instead an ethical positioning that, following Rachel Brown and Deva Woodley, 'reorients people towards a new way of living, relating and governing.' (22) Care, here, is not understood as a 'finite resource to be distributed among autonomous individuals, or as a necessarily feminine virtue.' (23) Instead, as Jasmine Syedullah notes, it is a 'poetics of relationship with the unknown' that is at work, an 'invitation to inquiry and improvisation' (24) which extends across sites from cities, to institutions and homes. In the varied works within the Archive of Forgetfulness are threads for dreaming and imagining alternative realities, forging alternative political allegiances, and suggesting alternative knowledge frameworks, as work that must all happen at the same time.

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# Afterword

**Cameron McEwan**
**Nadia Bertolino**

Too often, care has been marginalised as a private concern, associated with women and minoritised groups—care work, caretaking, self-care, childcare. In her recent work titled *Anarchafeminism* (2022), Chiara Bottici advocates for an intersectional approach to create new social alliances, with the goal of liberating all living creatures from both capitalist exploitation and an androcentric politics of domination. In her position, care becomes a crucial tool for understanding how various forms of oppression intersect and for fostering anti-state practices of solidarity and resistance. In *The Human Condition* (1958), Hannah Arendt argued that care work is traditionally less valued than so called productive work. Arendt draws a distinction between "work," understood as the productive process and making of artefacts; and "labour," as the unproductive work of care necessary to produce and reproduce the world. In Arendt's counter intuitive definition, work was public, labour was private, yet fundamental for living well. Care work is hard work, and for the most part, care is care of the other rather than self-care. It is care as a relation—family care, social care, care for, with and to others, for companionship, solidarity, play, support, learning. It is care for the spaces of the city, the public realm, everyday life, and care for the planet. Frequently, these forms of labour are labelled as "unproductive," when in reality, they give rise to new forms of exchanges and alternative modes of communication, as Hardt pointed out in *Rethinking Marxism*.

In an age marked by the fragility of democracy, the erosion of civic culture, and the abandonment of collective life, care for the other has vanished. It has been replaced by regressive forms of individualism, which undermines the social imagination and breaks apart civic institutions. As Hélène Frichot proposes in *Infrastructural Love* (2022), care is a relational approach, which creates links to and across pedagogy, practice, and theory. As Ellen Meiksins Wood argues in *Democracy Against Capitalism* (1995), democratic life is vulnerable and requires constant attention and reconfiguration. We argue that care as critical action, is one way to critique capitalist modes of spatial production and for thinking about how to live and act well.

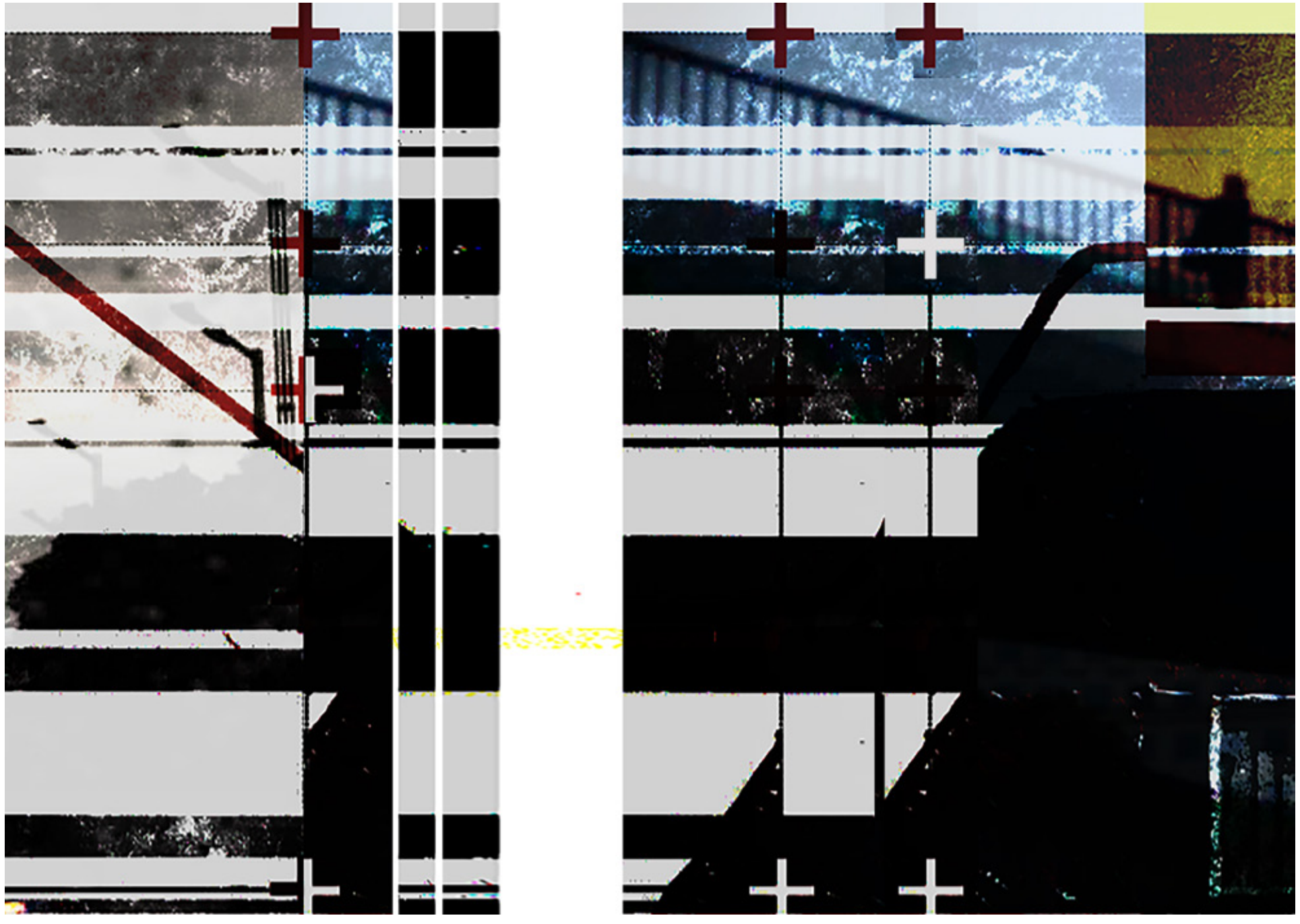
This issue brought together critiques of architecture and the city. It brought into dialogue the ethical discourse of care and spatial discourse of urbanism. It meant that care as a practice and principle, normally understood as individual, may be rethought relationally and collectively. It shifts the discourse. It means thinking about what are the typologies of care? The networks, hubs, staff rooms, and institutions; the fields, land, sites, and neighbourhoods that may act as places of care—for solidarity, reflection, or collaboration with others. We wanted to open questions of scale, thinking about micro institutions of care, for the planet, and care for the relations of critical thought.

Drawing on Hardt and Negri's *Assembly* (2017), the positions presented in this issue offer a critical analysis of contemporary capitalism, which is shaped by various factors such as neoliberalism,

finance capital, nationalism, right-wing extremism, the common, co-operation, intersectional feminism, immaterial labour, digital domination, and mediated social struggles. Against capitalist forms of urban space, we need ways of thinking about, and making, alternative institutions and communities to connect to a broader struggle for a different collective life. We need a new language, vision, politics, and renewed sense of civic care that stretches from micro institutions to macro level transformation. We need spaces for critical thought and civic action. We need a social imagination that takes care for all others, the human, the other than human, the more than human. We need to articulate the centrality of care in shaping modes of agency, values, social relations, and future visions of collective life. We need to find ways for people to speak, write, create, play, and act from a position of empowerment and be responsible to themselves and care for others.

Against prevailing depoliticization, there is a need for modes of care that provide a link that may start at a micro level institution—the drinking fountain, the speakers corner, the gig workers staff room—but becomes constantly amplified. It would be to articulate the body as infrastructure; and create the social and spatial infrastructures to care for our bodies. It would be to care—with others. Such bridging work may articulate what Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau once called "a chain of equivalence." Care as critical action becomes a method and a principle in the framework of care that we aimed to articulate here.





**lo Squaderno 65**

***Care and Critical Action***

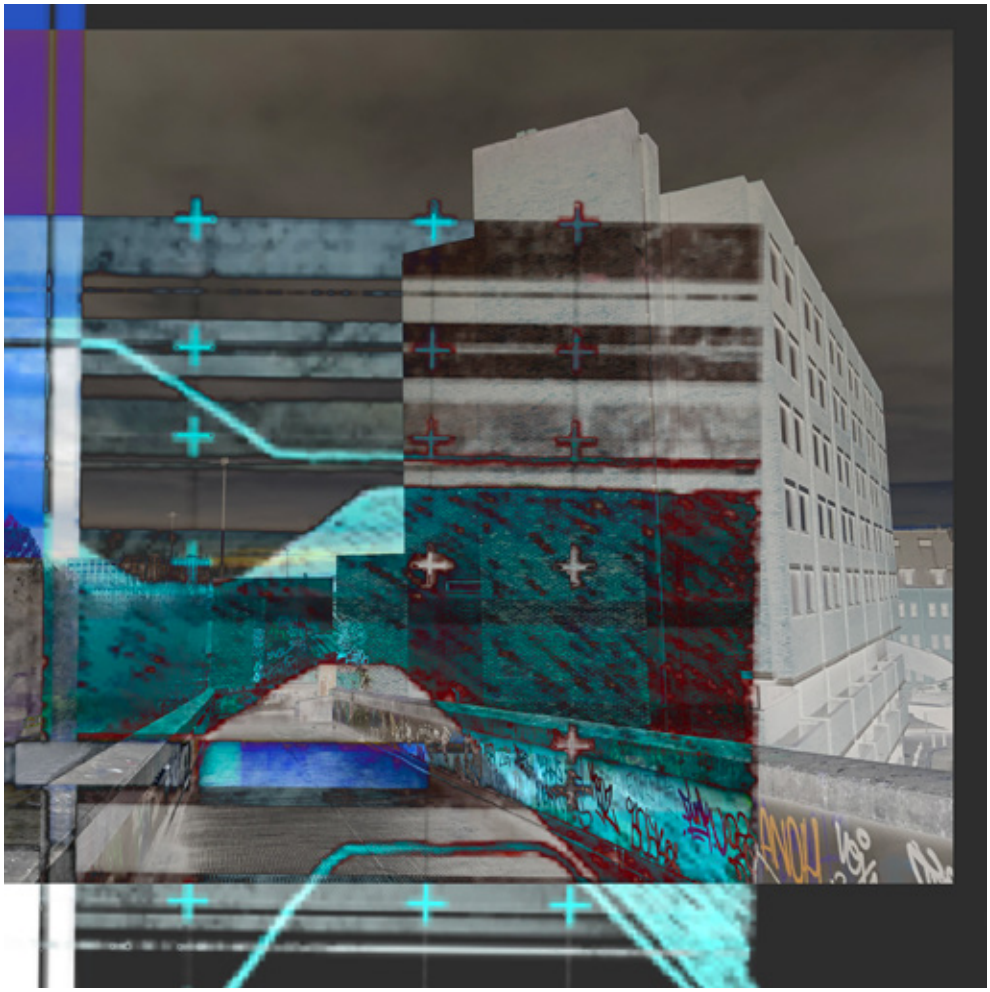
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**Guest Artist // Patrizio Martinelli**

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Glossy Urban Dystopias

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