

4.314/5

INTERSPECIES ECOLOGIES

FINAL REVIEW 12|12|19

Interspecies Ecologies

Advanced Workshop in Artistic Practice and Transdisciplinary Research 4.314/5

**Professor Gediminas Urbonas
TA Luíza Bastos Lages**

This course discusses artistic practice based research geared towards a development of transdisciplinary and multi-valent projects that connect creative drives with political realities and social conditions of so called environmental turn.

Interspecies Ecologies take its inspiration from the Zooetics, a 5 year-long research project (zooetics.net) focusing on sympoiesis, as well as from the Swamp School (swamp.lt). The course explores intersections of the human and nonhuman knowledge spheres through a series of collaborations, bringing in artistic experimental practices into scientific knowledge fields and vice versa. To advance research, pedagogy and presentation of future interspecies ecologies the course addresses cohabitation of human and other forms of life as an urgent issue that unfolds through a variety of discourses: indigenous and vernacular knowledge, biosemiotics, posthumanism, and human-animal studies, among others. The course proposes re-imagining the role of ecosystemic thinking and artistic imagination in this context. Readings related to this subject include those by Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Isabelle Stengers, Jane Bennet, Elizabeth Povinelli, Eduardo Viiveiro de Castro and others. Visitors to the class include Sohin Hwang, Silvia Bottinelli, Joe Davis, Miriam Simun. Field trips to the New England Aquarium and to the FUTURITY ISLAND serving as relational models and discursive events that include presentations from Nomeda & Gediminas Urbonas, Christine Shaw, Nicole L'Huillier, Indre Umbrasaite, Tobias Putrih, Glorianna Davenport, Caroline A. Jones, Erin Genia, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Eben Kirksey, Brent D. Ryan, and Lorena Bello Gomez.

ABC: Alphabet of the Anthropocene

Anthropocene acupuncture

Brandeised

Castillo

Children of the Anthropocene

(Re) Introduction

Wild Caught in Asia

12 | 12 | 19 to 12 | 15 | 19

This exhibition is dedicated to the ACT's lineage of thought, that promotes art on environmental scale, and as such responds to 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25).

Kindly supported by the CAMIT's Artists' Speaker Fund, SA+P and ACT.

With special thanks to: Kathryn Blass, Kevin Mclellan, Drew Nichols, Chelsea Polk, Marion O Cunningham, James R. Harrington, John Eric Steiner, Jessica Tsymbal, Andrea Volpe, Graham Yeager.



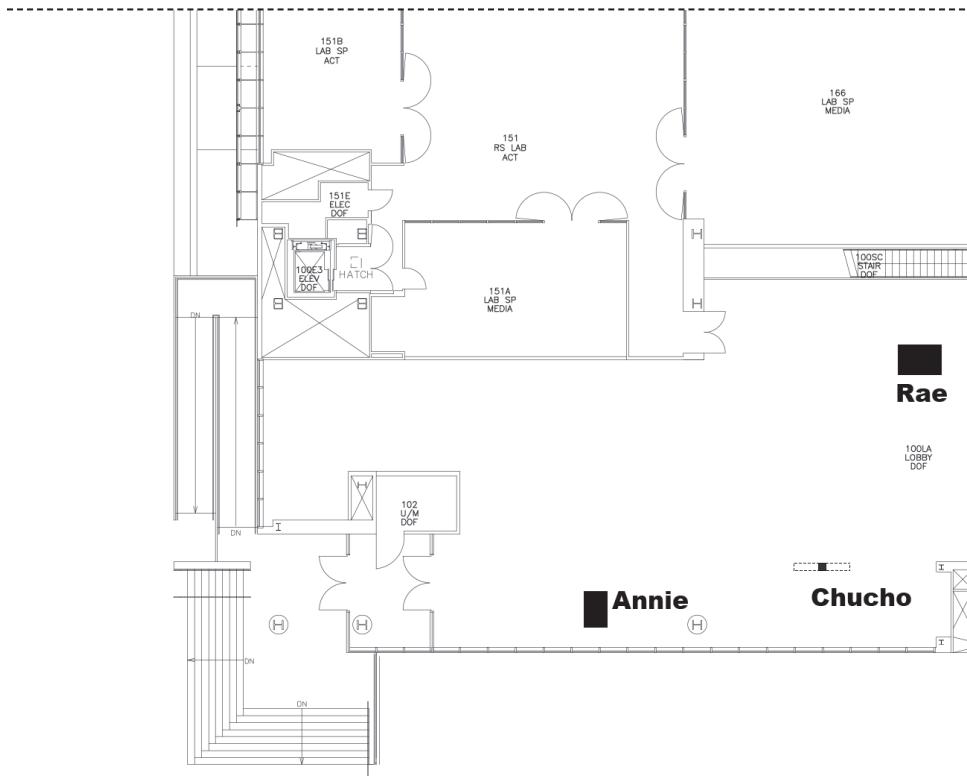
Council
for the Arts
at MIT

act

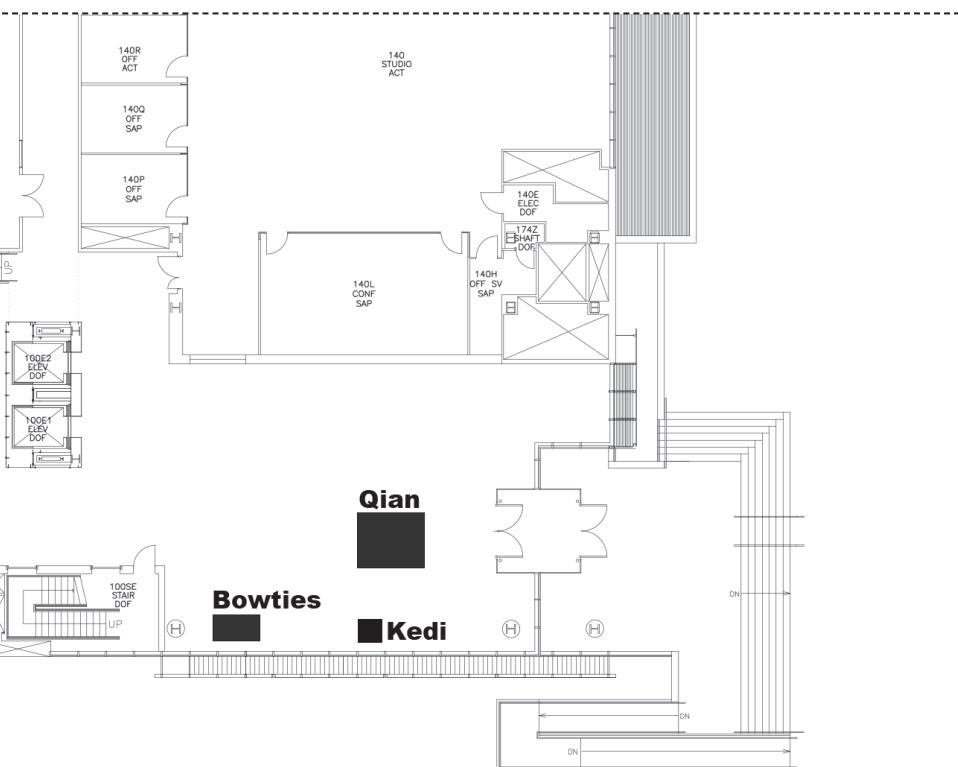
MIT program
in art, culture and
technology

School of Architecture + Planning

EXHIBITION LAYOUT



E 14 - FLOOR PLAN



Anthropocene Acupuncture

**Rae Yuping Hsu
SMACT 2020**

This work seeks to reconcile the vast, ungraspable scale of the Anthropocene by bringing it under the skin through a performance titled Anthropocene Acupuncture. In 1830, Charles Lyell published Principles of Geology, where he first created a separate period for human history via the term “Holocene”, providing the foundation for modern discussions of the anthropocene. This idea was sparked by the frontispiece of Lyell’s book, a geological strata diagram, and its striking resemblance to cross section illustrations of the human skin anatomy. The frontispiece is modified with snippets of text created by compounding the lexicon of medicine, geology, and critical theory from the posthumanities; it becomes the backdrop for this performance. The interrogative object of the performance is conceived through principles of acupuncture, a technique of Chinese medicine that formulates the human body in relation to the earth, as an attempt to regulate imbalances of energy (qi) along the body’s meridians. The participant will have to make two choices: location and text. A poster of relevant acupoints on the body will guide participants to choose from specific locations to be treated upon. A booklet containing 7 different terms surrounding the anthropocene will be provided, with metadata and picture. The words are as follows: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene, Gynocene, Plasticene, Homogenocene. I, the performer, will wear a mask with a specially designed mechanism to mobilize blood flow into one of the 7 words, and the resulting bruise will remain on the participant from a few minutes to a few hours, depending on the person.

Anthropocene

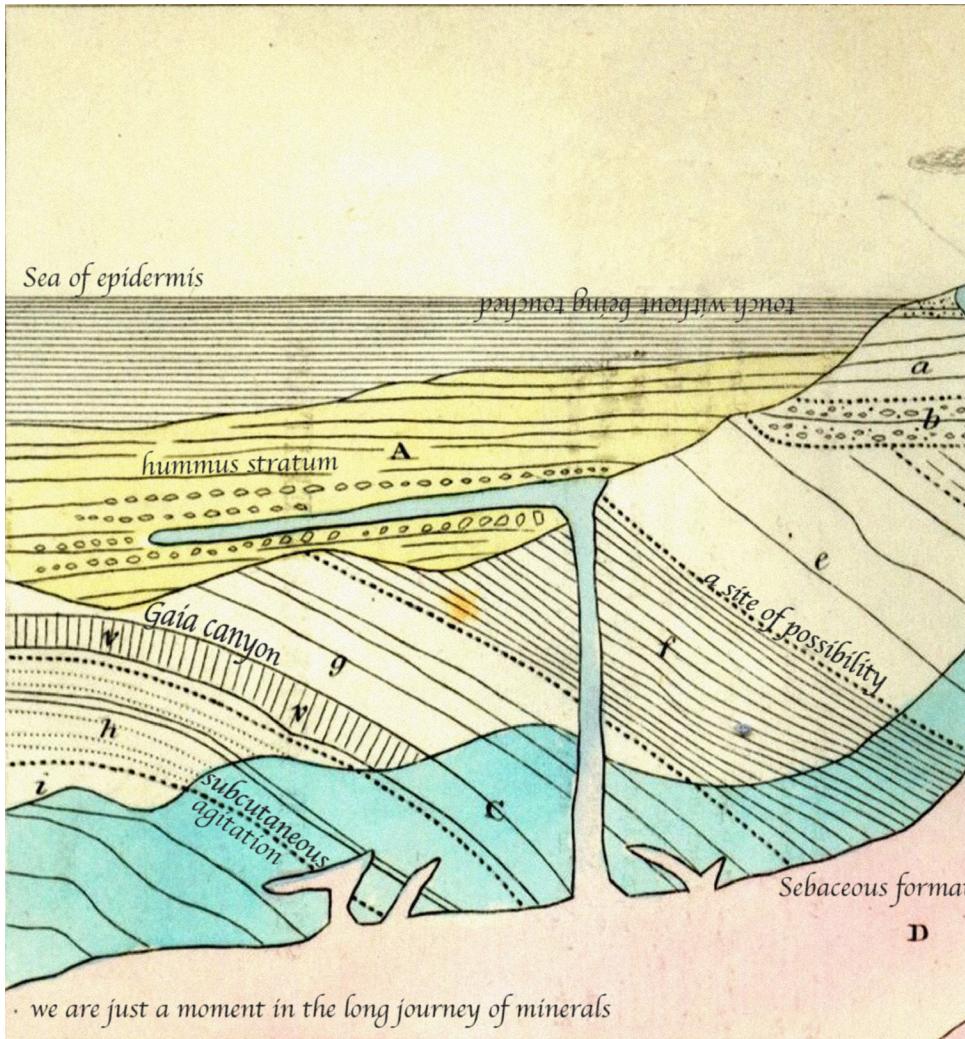
A close-up photograph of human skin, likely on a forearm or hand, showing a light greenish-yellow tone. Faint, reddish-pink text is embossed into the skin surface. The text reads "Anthropocene" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly raised from the skin's surface, creating a subtle texture. The background shows the natural texture of the skin with small hair follicles and pores.

Cthulhuocene

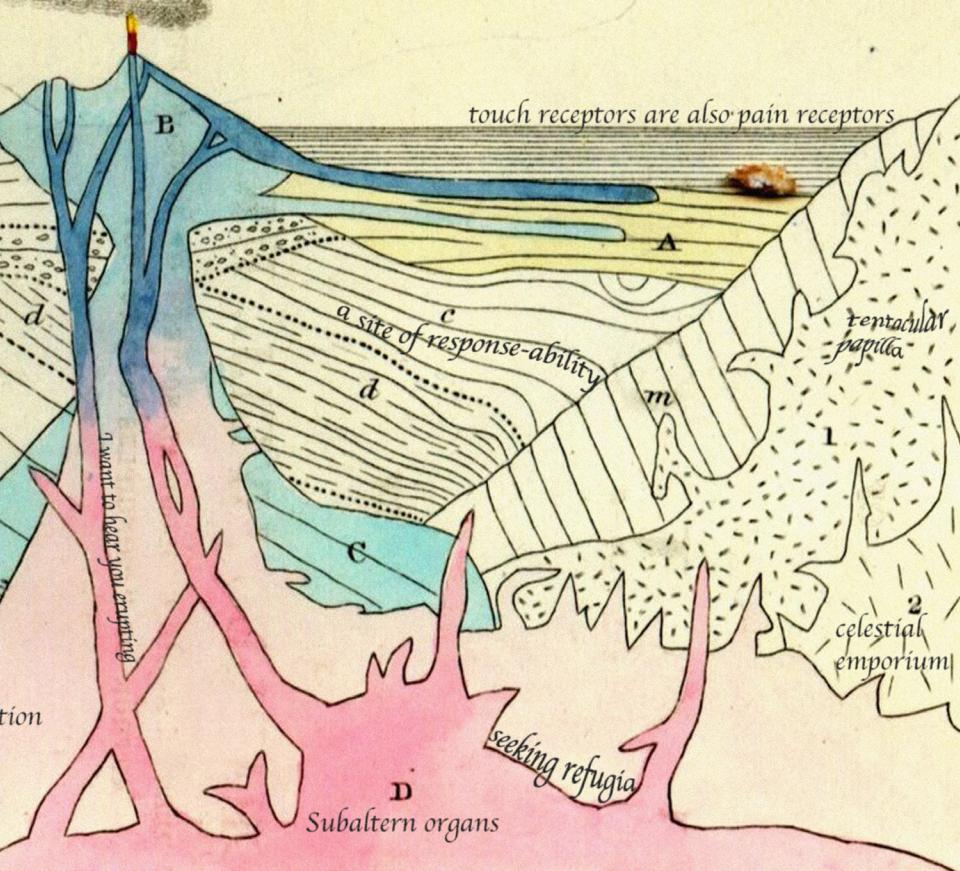
A close-up photograph of human skin, similar to the one above, showing a light greenish-yellow tone. Faint, reddish-pink text is embossed into the skin surface. The text reads "Cthulhuocene" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly raised from the skin's surface, creating a subtle texture. The background shows the natural texture of the skin with small hair follicles and pores.

Homogenocene

A close-up photograph of human skin, similar to the ones above, showing a light greenish-yellow tone. Faint, reddish-pink text is embossed into the skin surface. The text reads "Homogenocene" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly raised from the skin's surface, creating a subtle texture. The background shows the natural texture of the skin with small hair follicles and pores.



if you're underneath, if you're kept down,
you break out, you subvert.



Brandeised

Christopher “bowties” Miller

Course 8 2021

In 1908, Louis D. Brandeis, an overachieving Harvard Law graduate, delivered the first dossier of scientific evidence to the Supreme Court of the United States. In this case, *Muller v. Oregon*, a woman’s employer had been fined for making her work more than 10 hours – all due to a load of laundry. Brandeis argued to uphold the state’s fine based on scientific consensus about a woman’s physical abilities and role in society. The resulting decision marks an early attempt to regulate labor and move past the desire for ever increasing work in the industrialized world – all with morally questionable flaws.

To fulfill the modern desire for efficiency, we have faced a number of ironies – none more apparent than the desire to launder our surroundings by pushing waste somewhere else.

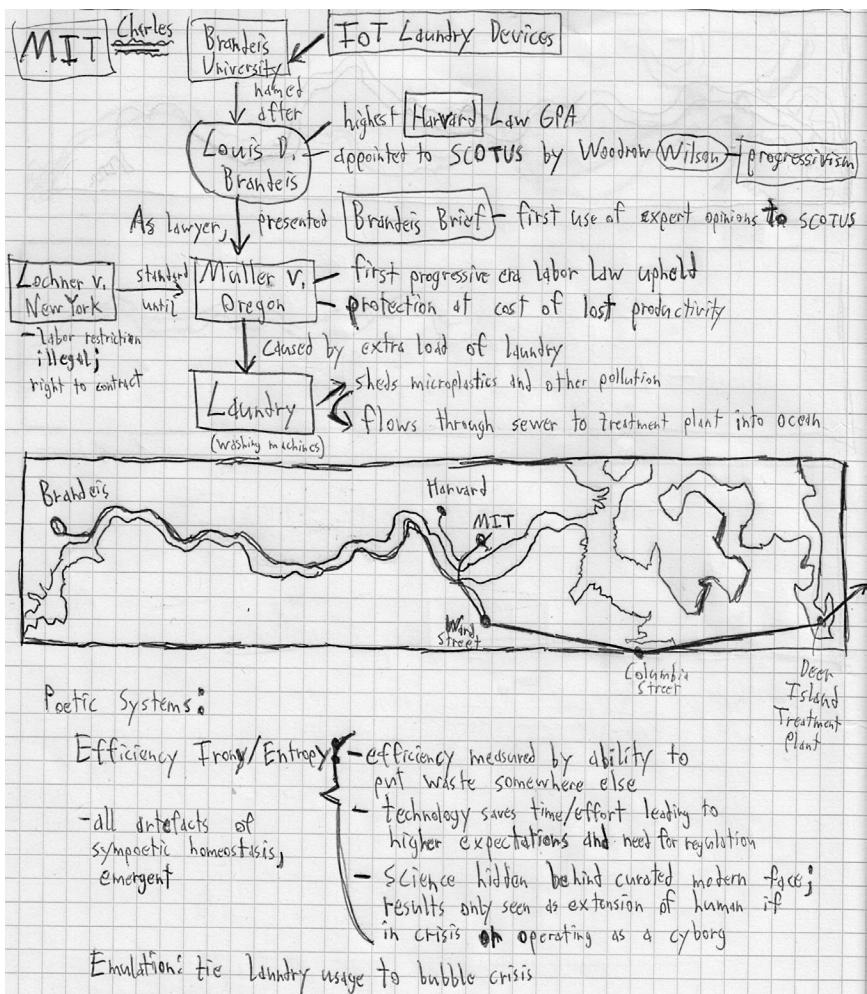
More alarmingly, we continue to facialize our world in a particular way. We see scientists and engineers on a journey towards infinite efficiency as we are presented with well-curated displays of progress rather than the haphazard laboratories behind. Worse, the most hidden of laboratories are in the early stages of tracking new critical zones – investigating runaway effects so that others may design a solution.

So when does the face of a critical system become an extension of our species and our problem? The answer may continue from our scientific fantasy – when it achieves for us like a monkey in orbit or is surviving a crisis where corporations may appear to intervene like ducks in an oil spill. At most other times, the artist holds the role of spreading concern.

Like Brandeis, our critical zone begins with a load of laundry. In particular, we observe the phenomenon of microfiber pollution – one of many unchecked sources of ubiquitous marine plastic. In our cybernetically-controlled monitoring lab, we see the efficiency-driven publically-accessible usage of washing machines at

Brandeis's namesake university. After tracing the battered fiber remnants through the sewer system, we emulate their spread and staining of the environment by metaphoric bubbles.

This is Brandeis's Laundry.



MULLER, PLAINTIFF IN ERROR, *v.* THE STATE OF
OREGON.

ERROR TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON.

No. 107. Argued January 15, 1908.—Decided February 24, 1908.

The peculiar value of a written constitution is that it places, in unchanging form, limitations upon legislative action, questions relating to which are not settled by even a consensus of public opinion; but when the extent of one of those limitations is affected by a question of fact which is debatable and debated, a widespread and long continued belief concerning that fact is worthy of consideration.

This court takes judicial cognizance of all matters of general knowledge—such as the fact that woman's physical structure and the performance of maternal functions place her at a disadvantage which justifies a difference in legislation in regard to some of the burdens which rest upon her.

As healthy mothers are essential to vigorous offspring, the physical well-being of woman is an object of public interest. The regulation of her hours of labor falls within the police power of the State, and a statute directed exclusively to such regulation does not conflict with the due process or equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The right of a State to regulate the working hours of women rests on the police power and the right to preserve the health of the women of the State, and is not affected by other laws of the State granting or denying to women the same rights as to contract and the elective franchise as are enjoyed by men.

While the general liberty to contract in regard to one's business and the sale of one's labor is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment that liberty is subject to proper restrictions under the police power of the State.

The statute of Oregon of 1903 providing that no female shall work in certain establishments more than ten hours a day is not unconstitutional so far as respects laundries.

48 Oregon, 252, affirmed.

21378	21379	21380	21384	21385	21386	21390	21391	21392	21369
									
21370	21371	19674	19675	19676	19677	19678	19664	19665	19666
									
19667	19668	21402	21403	21404	21396	21397	21398	27228	27229
									
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27232	27233	27234	6102	6103	6104	6116	6109	6110	6111
									
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27210	27211	27457	14576	14577	14578	14579	27219	27220	27221
									
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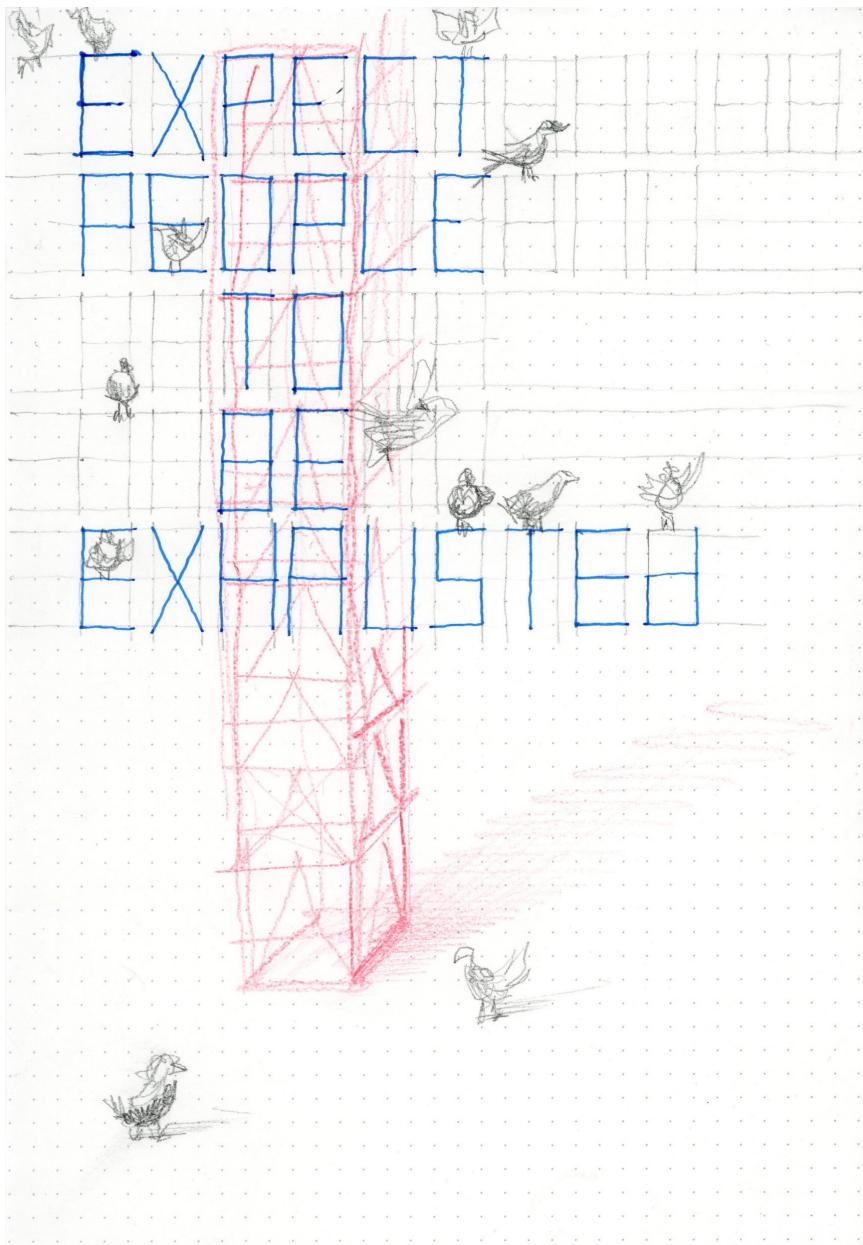
Castillo

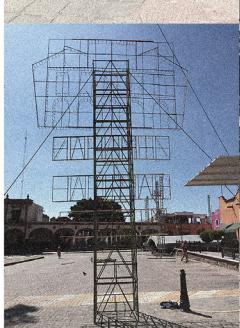
Chucho Ocampo SMACT 2021

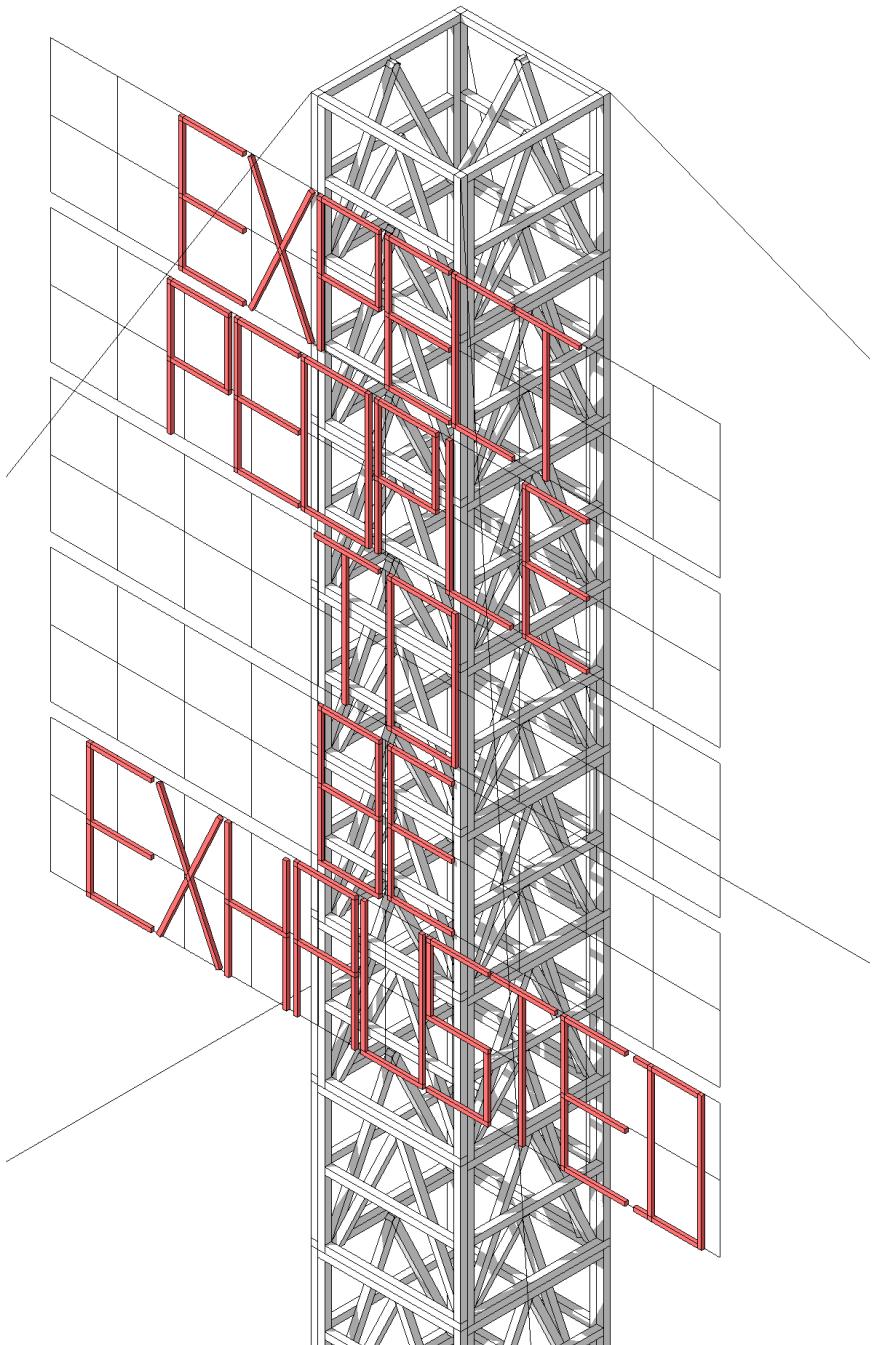
A human body traveling north searching for better opportunities, a non human body traveling south searching for a better climate, both bodies coming back and forth, north and south through continental migratory routes that overlap in physical space; both bodies being displaced by climate change and geopolitical forces.

Castillo is an artistic research exercise that overlays the connections between two systems that have no apparent or physical manifestation of interdependence but are connected indeed.

The piece's research revolves around the movement of human and non human bodies and their relations with ephemeral structures and displays of communication in the city. The piece overlays a traditional form of display from Latin American festivities with animal conservation rhetoric, mixing words and creating new meanings through replacement.







Children of the Anthopocene

Annie Zhang

Course 2, 4B

If we look to the very beginning of the Anthropocene (circa Agricultural Revolution), almost every early human civilization had belief in a deity that controlled the weather and more importantly, the rain. Most cultures prayed and sacrificed to these deities in hopes of receiving a rain that would nourish the earth and bring forth life and food. For millennia we've collectively come to accept that the weather is out of our control, and perhaps subject to the whims of higher powers. However, we can no longer operate under this assumption because it makes us blind to reality. While we cannot control the rain, we are starting to understand for the first time in our human history that we are affecting it. Rising temperatures will intensify the Earth's water cycle and create longer and drier droughts in some areas, as well as more severe and more frequent storms in others. This reality is not far away. We have already seen an increase in the severity of tropical storm systems, and a corresponding increase of drought-fueled wildfires.

Children Of The Anthropocene is an installation that invites the audience to imagine a post climate crisis future in which warming temperatures have intensified the Earth's water cycle to a point where our weather systems consist only of severe storms and severe drought. In such a world, our relationship with rain will undoubtedly change: we will antagonize, and be antagonized by the weather. This installation aims to frame this potential reality and provide a space in which to reflect on and rediscover our relationship to the environment we live in.

Children Of The Anthropocene speculates on how our children will have to adapt in order to survive and thrive in such a different world. Child-sized mannequins display speculative outfits of the kind of climate-proof clothing that might be necessary for our children to just make it through a normal day.

Each futuristic outfit is designed to meet the functional needs of protecting our children from the environment, but also to meet the cultural needs of families from around the world. The focus falls on children in order to instill a sense of urgency in the audience: the climate isn't a distant future problem, it is a "now-problem" that our children and grandchildren are inheriting.

All members of the public, especially the MIT community, are invited to participate in Children of the Anthropocene which is installed in MIT Media Lab lobby. This installation hopes to bring the conversation of climate change to those at MIT who are charged with "examining the deeper implications of where technology creation and adoption has led us—and where we want to go next." Children Of The Anthropocene urges the students, faculty, and researchers who are tasked with inventing the future to not forget that their work will eventually need to exist in context of a deeply wounded world.





(Re)Introduction

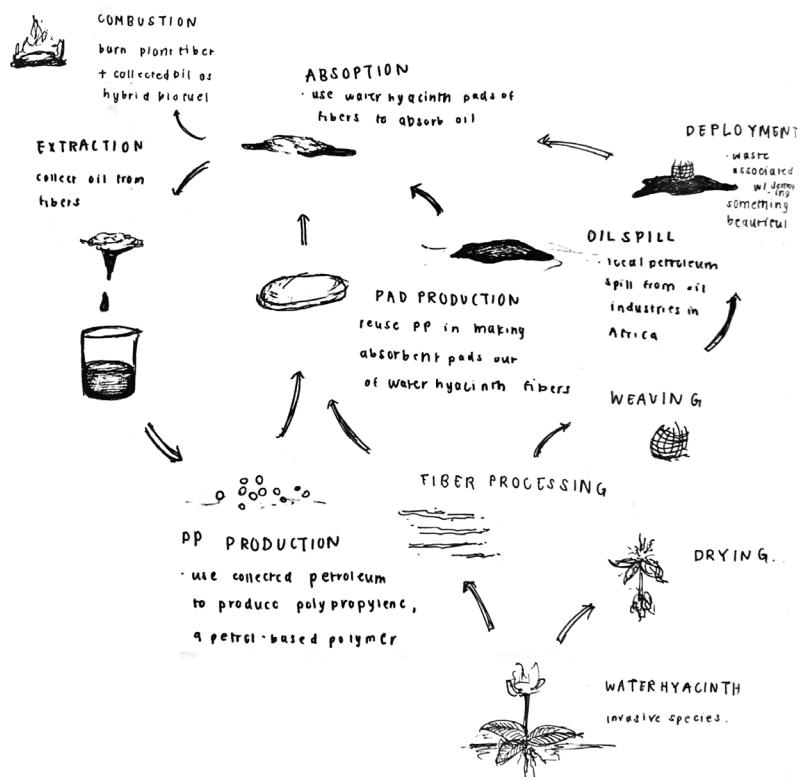
Kedi Hu
Course 10

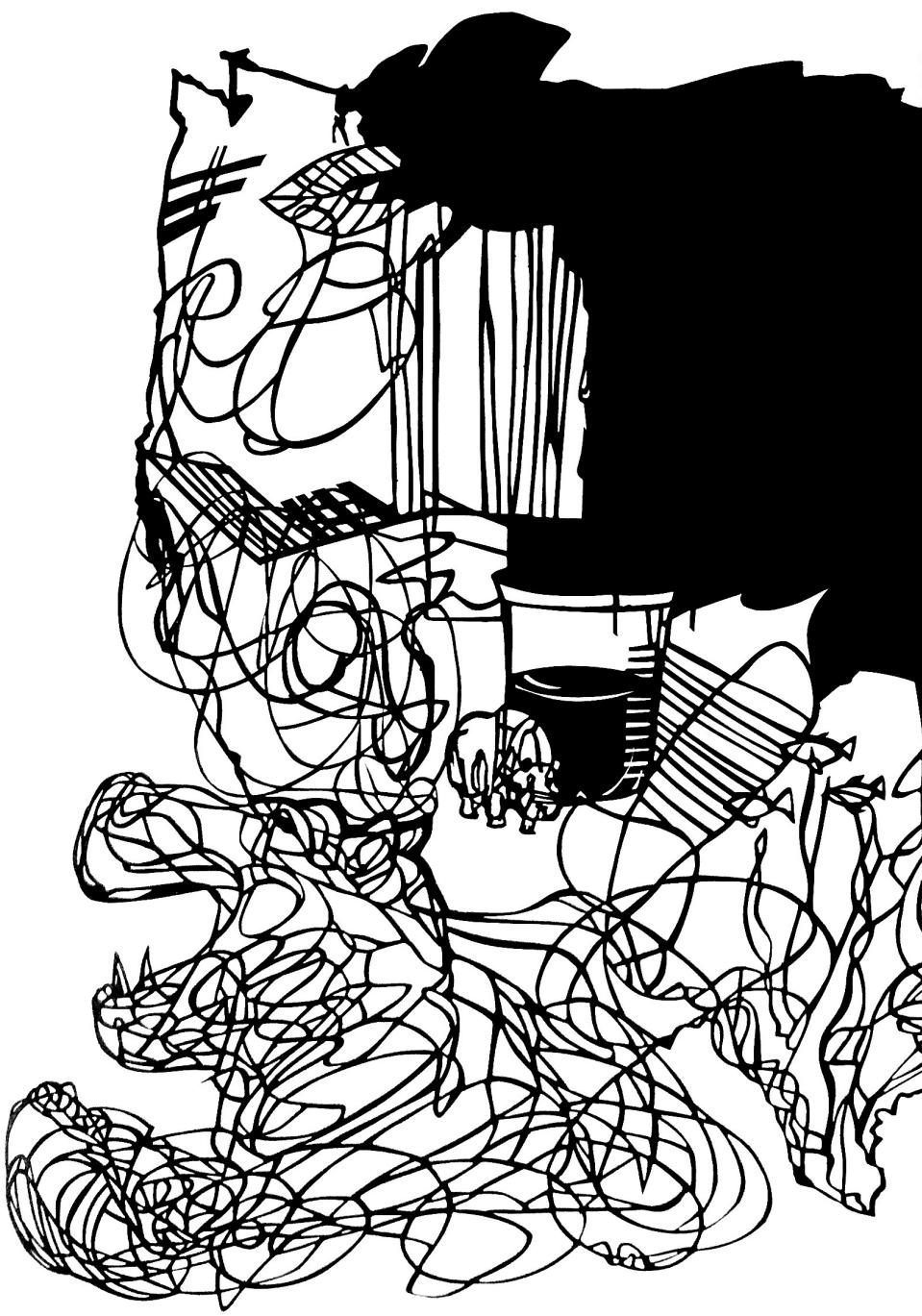
A sculpture built on Norbert Wiener's definition of homeostasis (organisms struggle between states of homeostasis and entropy through decay and reconstitution), (Re)Introduction makes an engineering assumption to simply homeostasis to a one - directional goal. If we define an environmental problem that deviates severely in one direction, a continuous antiparallel effort is all that is needed for remediation. (Re)Introduction illustrates the correction of two environmental deviations: 1) removal of invasive water hyacinth and 2) cleanup of oil spills. This coupled approach to solving environmental problems parallels organisms on the physiological scale as ATP hydrolysis is coupled with energy - intensive biochemical pathways.

This exhibit proposes a movement for a larger collection of water hyacinth sculptures, deployed at the sites of oil spills. Intricate and ephemeral, the sculpture is crafted from hand - cut cotton paper and dried water hyacinth fibers. Water hyacinth is unique compared to other phytoremediation plants because the species itself poses a huge threat to the homeostasis of ecosystems. Introduced to the United States for its beautiful purple flowers, water hyacinth quickly became an invasive species, but its fibers can be harvested and dried for their excellent oil sorption properties. As dried water hyacinth is (re)introduced into the environment as something beautiful, the sculpture absorbs oil and slowly crumbles. This destruction at the surface is only the tip of the iceberg, calling to public attention the destruction of beautiful ecosystems below

LOCAL
cyclic manufacturing
process to keep PP

PP = poly propylene.
cheap plastic polymer







Wild Caught in Asia

**Qian Guo
MDES 2020**

A bottle drops in America.

A ship of waste arrives in Asia.

In Genges river, Indonesia , plastics are floating
They go with river, and rivers rush to the sea,

Some head for California, and

Some are eaten by fish, when they become tiny.

Fisherman in Asia caught a big fish.

Whose name is tuna.

So popular In America, it ranks number three.

Yesterday I saw a tuna. It reads,

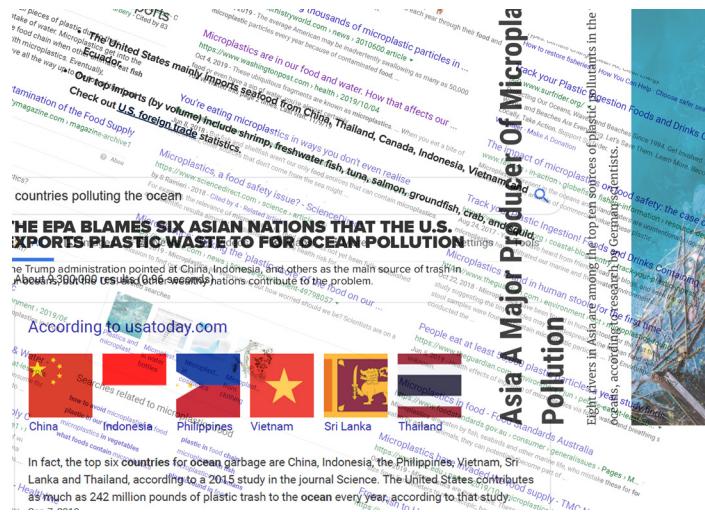
“product of Indonesia, wild caught.”

He swam in the dirtiest Asian Sea

Four kinds of seafood are served, coming from four Asian countries, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand, meanwhile an entangled story about the fish is being told.

Those four countries are among the top sixth countries that pollute the ocean most, according to a research done in 2016. They're also among the main countries to which developed countries like US ship their plastic waste: in fact, US is the largest exporters of plastic waste. There plastic waste are usually recycled unsafely and to low standards - and often simply incinerated, landfilled or leaked into the environment. In 2018, China banned plastic waste import and stopped being the world's open dump.

Mismanaged plastic waste in those countries often enters the ocean. Waste would degrade into small particles called microplastics and enters the food chain. A research done in 2016 reveals that all the 21 species of fish in sea water of China were proved to be contaminated by microplastics. Similar results also came out in researches done in Thailand and Indonesia.

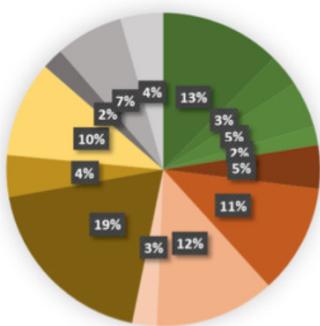


Some of the contaminated fish would go to America. According to NOAA Fisheries, the United States imports more than 80 percent of the seafood people eat. Seafood in US is imported mainly from China, Thailand, Canada, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Ecuador.

I'm fascinated by the connections between those parallel stories about plastics. In the article *Living in the Anthropocene*, Jill Bennett wrote, "The shape it takes, its final form, is only part of the story: suddenly matter matters. Such material connections are the threads that structure an aesthetic investigation of ecologies and global networks." In real life, such connections are not really tangible. A label of "made in China" doesn't say anything about the working conditions and environmental issues of the manufacturing industry there. A recycling symbol on a rubbish bin won't tell us where the waste would actually arrive. Each of us shares only a small fragment of the grand narrative that we're living in. For this project, the only concrete and tangible things are the fish and plastic pieces in sight. What's happening in Asia is just a distant and vague story.

The twist of the plastic story is that, in the end, we're all digesting microplastics. "Above all of the diversity stand one global economy, one global culture, one total Earth. As it gathers pace the tyranny of the Earth System will overrule the plurality of local stories and cultures." The story *Wild Caught in Asia* is never just about Asia.

Destinations of 2018 U.S. Plastic Waste Exports



**Exports to
Countries with
Poor Waste
Management =
78%***

- Canada
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Other Countries Good Mgmt
- China (74% Mismanaged)
- Hong Kong (to China & Asia)
- India (85% Mismanaged)
- Indonesia (81% Mismanaged)
- Malaysia (55% Mismanaged)
- Mexico (12% Mismanaged)
- Thailand (73% Mismanaged)
- Turkey (17% Mismanaged)
- Viet Nam (86% Mismanaged)
- Other Countries Poor Mgmt

2018 Total U.S. Plastic Waste Exports = 1.07 million metric tonnes

*Countries with Waste Mismanagement Rates >5% (Jambeck (2015), World Bank data)

U.S. Census Bureau Data

Data Analysis by The Last Beach Cleanup

2017 U.S. Trade with East and South Asia*

50%
of U.S. edible imports
come from East and
South Asia*

**Total Pounds
and Value of U.S.
Edible Imports and Exports**

EDIBLE IMPORTS

3.4
billion pounds **\$10.8**
billion

EDIBLE EXPORTS

1.9
billion pounds **\$3.1**
billion

TRADE DEFICIT
\$7.7
billion

Pounds and Value by Category
of U.S. Edible Imports and Exports

LEGEND

VOLUME (pounds) VALUE (U.S. dollars)



Whole Finfish Fresh/Frozen

60%	1,124.9 million pounds	\$1,404.4 million
46%		



33%	1,127.8 million pounds	\$5,158.6 million
48%		

* Countries included:

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- China (inc. Hong Kong & Macao)
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Lao
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Sri Lanka
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam



NOAA FISHERIES



Critics

Indrani Saha

Indrani Saha is a third year PhD student in the History, Theory, and Criticism of Art and Architecture program at MIT. She specializes in modern and contemporary art of the United States. She is particularly interested in the intersection between migration studies, histories of medicine/the body, and modern art. Her current research explores the notion of the “curative” and the place of Eastern spiritualties in the curation of American modernism. She is currently a Junior Fellow at the Center for Black, Brown, and Queer + Studies. Indrani holds a BA in Cognitive Aesthetics from Duke University where she was a Mellon-Mays Fellow. Her distinction thesis examined perceptual disruption, disorientation, and social interaction in Carlos Cruz-Diez’s Chromosaturation.

Lorena Bello Gómez

Lorena Bello is Lecturer in architecture and urbanism at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning since January 2013. Lorena's research focuses on the potential of infrastructure as catalyst for design across scales. She examined this topic with her PhD in urbanism "Hybrid Networks; " and founded TERRALAB, within the Center for Advanced Urbanism at MIT, to continue this research through design studios and collaborative projects with foundations and universities. Lorena participated in the Futurity Island Workshop within the 2018 Venice Biennale Swamp School with her work on Swampification that examines topics of equity, resilience and environmental justice in the swampy lands of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

Nomeda Urbonas

Nomeda Urbonas is artist, research affiliate at M.I.T. and PhD researcher at NTNU in Norway. Nomeda is a co-founder of the Urbonas Studio (together with Gediminas Urbonas), an interdisciplinary research practice that facilitates exchange amongst diverse nodes of knowledge production and artistic practice in pursuit of projects that transform civic spaces and collective imaginaries. The Urbonas's work has been exhibited at the São Paulo, Berlin, Moscow, Lyon, and Gwangju, Busan Biennales and Folkestone Triennial; at the Manifesta and Documenta exhibitions; and in solo shows at the Venice Biennale and the MACBA in Barcelona among others. Urbonas 5 year-long research project on Zooetics exploring the potential to connect with the noetics and poetics of non-human life in the context of the planetary ecological imbalance, concluded in 2018 with the symposium at MIT and opened a new research program focusing on sympoiesis and critical climate.

Sohin Hwang

Sohin Hwang is an artist and writer working on issues around art, technology, and society. Her recent project involves performance art and cybernetics in the mid 20th century with an attention to materiality, producer-audience relationship, and publics formation. Her writing and artworks have been presented in research institutions and experimental journals. She is currently a College Fellow and Visiting Faculty at Harvard University, having finished a doctoral degree at the University of Oxford as a Clarendon Scholar. She enjoys imaginary gardening.

PROFESSOR

Gediminas Urbonas

Gediminas Urbonas is an associate professor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Architecture, and co-founder (with Nomeda Urbonas) of the Urbonas Studio, an interdisciplinary research practice that facilitates exchange amongst diverse nodes of knowledge production and artistic practice in pursuit of projects that transform civic spaces and collective imaginaries. The Urbonas's work has been exhibited at the São Paulo, Berlin, Moscow, Lyon, Gwangju, Busan biennales, and Folkestone Triennial; at the Manifesta and Documenta exhibitions; and in solo shows at the Venice Biennale and the MACBA in Barcelona among others. Urbonas co-edited Public Space? Lost and Found (MIT Press, 2017) an examination of the complex interrelations between the creation and uses of public space and the roles that art plays therein. Urbonases curated the "Swamp School" – future learning environment at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale 2018. More at: <http://www.nugu.lt/us/>

STUDENTS

Annie Zhang

Annie Zhang is an artist, designer, and engineer and her practice is focused on creating tools that empower people to share their stories and to create new ones. She operates at the intersection of art and engineering because she firmly believes that elegant engineering solutions are elevated by approaching the problem with the human sensitivity of artists. Likewise, she also believes the creative process is strengthened when executed with the rigor and system-level thinking of engineering. Storytelling is a central theme to her practice, and through her work she explores how technology enables creators to bring their stories to life, and how the way we shape our physical world can shape the way we relate to one another. Currently her practice is heavily centered hardware interaction design, and she has designed for many organizations that create tools for creators and storytellers including IDEO, Bose, Formlabs, and Apple.

Christopher “bowties” Miller

Christopher “bowties” Miller is a junior at MIT, majoring in physics and minoring in ACT. He investigates the geometric underpinnings of models in physics and how models of science appear in unexpected contexts through artistic experiments. He is also the assistant shop manager in the Edgerton Center Student Project Lab and can often be found doing science outreach or spontaneous art projects. Since growing up in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, he has been a collector of an increasing number of items including bowties, socks, novelty cereals, cheeses, and long-distance walks.

Chucho Ocampo

Chucho (Jesús) Ocampo Aguilar (Mexico City, 1991) is an architect and artist. He graduated with honors from Tecnológico de Monterrey with his project thesis “Open Space” in the city of Tijuana, proposing a new pedestrian crossing and public space for the US / México border.

Chucho is currently a Partner in dérive LAB, an art, architecture and urbanism firm, where he works as Creative Director, particularly with projects related to housing, urban design, public space interventions and cultural management.

In 2016 Chucho co-founded BEMA, a cultural center in the heart of Querétaro, México; dedicated to Art, Architecture and the City. Chucho’s artistic practice uses psychogeography, architecture, landscape and public space as a tool to shine a light on the beauty and complexities of everyday life.

Kedi Hu

Kedi Hu is a senior at MIT double - majoring in chemical engineering and architecture. Interested in sustainable development, she has worked on a number of academic and professional projects addressing environmental problems - water scarcity, pollution capture, & grid - scale energy storage. Kedi dreams of uniting her passions for science and art by deploying environmental technologies in functional public art installations able to harness renewable energy or capture pollution, to create immersive experiences that inspire people to conserve resources and preserve our planet.

Qian Guo

Qian had a long-time interest in narrative and space. She had a background in architecture and experimented with several projects exploring the way space tells a story. The major concern of her works is mainly about the separation between people and the world. Using comics and illustrations, she explored her personal feelings and imagination, and then projected them on three-dimensional media. She's now shifting her concentration to installation and performance.

Rae Yuping Hsu

Artist from Taipei, holds an undergraduate degree in rehabilitation medicine from NTU, and a MFA from RISD. Works range across various mediums, and has adopted glass and biomaterials in recent years. Often uses the process of fermentation as a muse for the body, in its abjectness and with its symbiotic affordances, to create a space where empathic gut feelings can emerge. In collaboration with the Umami Collective, recent works speculate on microbial ethics within interplanetary travel, reconstructing it against narratives of space colonization that works to assign difference on a hierarchical scale through dialectics of otherness. Works have been shown in Taipei Art Awards, Kaoshiung Art Awards, NTMOFA Art awards, Taipei Digital Art festival, Huashan creative park, Rhode Island convention center, ARTTaipei, Taipei Yiri Art Gallery, Waley Arts Gallery. Residencies include SymbioticA, hangar.org, MedialabPrado, _V2 institute for the unstable media.



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