

URBAN FUTURES/FUTURE ARCHITECTURES AFRICA 4.0
Mediating the Multitude

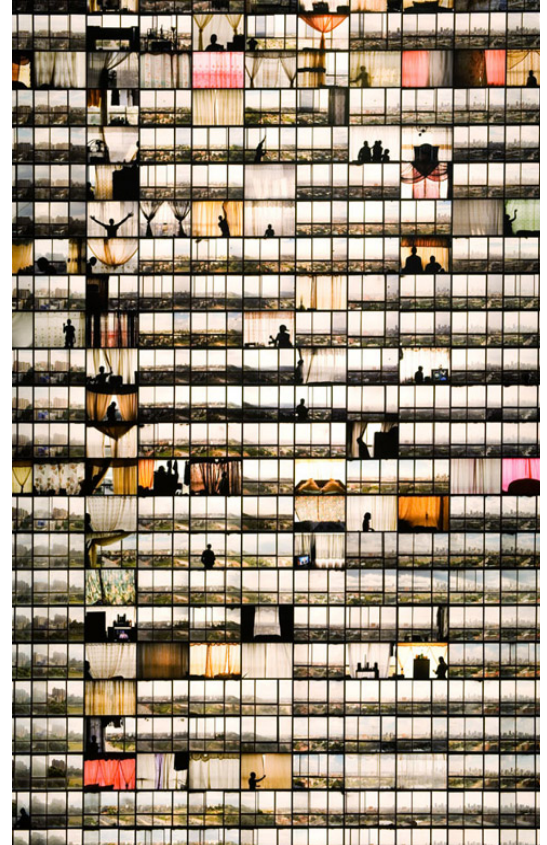
We do not isolate ourselves from the social world of the dominant culture but neither do we simply acquiesce to its powers. Rather, from inside the dominant culture we create not only alternative subcultures but, more important, new collective networks of expression. Communication is *productive*, not only of economic values but also of subjectivity, and thus communication is central to biopolitical production. From *Multitude*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri

“New collective networks of expression” aptly characterizes the recent revolts by groups of disenfranchised peoples, what Hardt and Negri dub the “multitude.” These global revolts became known as the Arab Spring and Occupy movement and were waves of protests facilitated in part through social media networks such as Twitter/Facebook and easy access to mobile telecommunications. As the simulcast images of these turbulent events broadcast on media outlets such as CNN and Al Jazeera revealed, the multitude also formed in cities throughout the world what might be called “new collective *spaces* of expression.” With the rise of these new mobile networks of communication what are the implications for how urban space is occupied and how it might be conceived and created in the future? What can we learn about new spaces of political action and everyday life from studying the dynamics of the de-/re-territorialization of state space and transnational corporate domains by the multitude?

Cities in their present context are modern inventions, and as the new electronic pathways that crisscross the globe circulate and readapt images of the modern city, they also produce desire for tourism that fuels new contacts and movements within already clogged global travel circuits, unraveling the strict hegemonic tendencies that have always made it difficult to read the map of spatial difference. From *Undersiege* Okwui Enwezor

Mediating the Multitude examines networks of media and systems of exchange between people, institutions, and places in the vibrant global hub of Johannesburg, South Africa (population 7.2 million). The urbanization of the African continent is occurring at a rapid pace and will soon produce some of the largest megacities in world: Lagos, Cairo, and Kinshasa. In Johannesburg, apartheid’s planned racial segregation that deliberately separated the “white city” from the rural “black townships” have become the underlays for today’s neoliberal hub of global capital and culture. This current urban and architectural organization, typical of many global cities, produces pockets of wealth, so-called formal sectors, that are surrounded by wide swathes of informal dwelling and commerce, with much of the historic racial and economic segregation still intact. The studio will probe how the mobility of residents and visitors, mobile technologies, use of social media, and use of infrastructures transgress and transform Johannesburg’s neighborhoods and enclaves.

The first half of the semester the studio will research the topological, temporal, and cultural conditions of media systems: mobile telecommunications, social media, various media networks, and other forms of cultural media. The other focus of research will examine infrastructure as a form of spatial mediation between residents: these will include water, waste, electricity, and various routes of mobility. The first four weeks of the studio hosts a series of workshops introducing techniques of data mining and parametric modeling (Processing) that will allow these systems of exchange to be studied in magnitude from the global to the local and back to the global. These animated models, spatio-temporal analyses, and conventional mappings will capture the dynamic dimensions of these systems and networks. This research will be further honed through a weeklong visit to Johannesburg midway in the semester for reviews, research and workshops at GSAPP’s new Studio X JNB space. Drawing on this rich body of research, the studio will develop propositions for a new institution dedicated to the study of global media: GMRC (Global Media Research Center) sited southeast of Johannesburg’s Central Business District (CBD). Throughout the semester we will confer with various experts from around the world on these topics.



Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse, “Windows”