



4.154 S22

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T, TH, 1-5pm

COLLECTIVE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO: Roxbury

with

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

The Food Project

and Boston Plan for Excellence

15 minutes southeast of MIT (a short trip on the #1 bus plus a bit of walking) is a Roxbury neighborhood of mostly small residential houses, white and pastel colored—wooden New England triple-deckers and some single-story, single-family homes—as well as a few brick apartment buildings. At the time when other parts of Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester were hit hard by the housing and market crisis in 2007-2009, the area around Dudley Street fared well. Here, in the urban triangle governed by the Dudley Street Land Trust (Dudley Neighbors Incorporated-DNI Inc) and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), relative resilience to the housing market dive was secured by the existence of over 200 “permanently affordable” single- and multi-family housing units . This “permanent affordability” is a direct result of their particular ownership structure, as stipulated by the Dudley Street Land Trust, such that the Trust continues to own the land underneath them in perpetuity, while the equity to owners accrues more slowly than elsewhere. Both mechanisms enable the land trust and DSNI to develop the neighborhood without displacing its inhabitants and thus (with their collective involvement) stave off gentrification. The area now includes a lovely park, a community green house, an urban farm as well as commercial and non-profit spaces. It might be hard to grasp the importance of all this from street-view, but the “radical imagination” convened for the formation of DSNI and DNI in 1984 is legend for a reason—important not only for what it has already achieved, but also for what it continues to effect.

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From the 1950s to 1980s, this part of Roxbury, the heart of Boston's African American community, suffered the dire consequences of redlining, the Federal Housing Administration's discriminatory mortgage insurance policies, swindling contract mortgages, widespread vacancies, and neglect. In response, the trailblazing campaign led by the inhabitants of this corner of Boston and the sustained political organization (and commitment) that followed, seeded and now maintain this particular model of social ownership and urban stewardship.

The Collective Architecture Studio will work to understand, internalize, and celebrate this model as we begin to work with DSNI and its partners: The Food Project and The Boston Plan for Excellence.

There was a saying, I want to call it an "old saying" the way science fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson did recently in his *The Ministry of the Future*, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism. This notion, now part of Leftist folklore, attributed alternatively to Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek, was also important for Mark Fisher's framing of "capitalist realism". Fisher was concerned with the "widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it." What he calls "capitalist realism" is precisely the naturalization of this notion; that the politically mutable has become immutable. A few years after Fisher's (2009) writing on the topic, many cataclysmic climate events later, and two years into the global pandemic that has locked us down, the cliché seems to have grown teeth and started biting. Thankfully, alternative models like Dudley Street do exist, and it is precisely within the logic of capitalist realism to ignore them, even when they are—like Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative—real, tangible, specific. We, and by "we" I mean members of the discipline of architecture who want to transform the status quo, look for ways to sidestep the naturalizing force of "capitalist realism" (and of the market)—those of us in the Collective Architecture Studio—need such alternative models to fuel the rewriting of architectural and pedagogical values. DSNI's values are vital precisely because they produced and continue to produce a material reality.

Architecture has had (and will continue to have) an important role in the work of DNI and DSNI, always constrained by the financial realities of DNI and its partners. The Food Project and the Boston Plan for Excellence are considering different ways of expanding their activities and collaborating on a food and neighborhood social hub, and we will work with them to offer architectural proposals and systemic hacks that support their missions.

We will begin by constituting an archive of alternative modes of city- and architecture-making out of the Dudley Street experience and history, as well as from other US land trusts, including

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among them lessons from cooperative ownership elsewhere. Like in its first edition, the Collective Architecture Studio will both study and self-experiment with forms of collective authorship. For this, too, we will tap into important local examples.

Every student will participate in the constitution of our studio's own archives, work and broadcasts. We will read, plan, and play together. Everything we make (including our building proposals) will also function as critical broadcasts, catalyzing discussion and/or revelation among our projected audiences. Commitment to the collective (in the studio organization and as a topic of investigation) and architectural follow-through are critical components of each individual student's, as well as the Collective Architecture Studio's, success.

Once the members of the studio are sitting at the same table, we will refine this plan, and add skilling, playing, workshopping, discussions, dinners, etc., as needed (and as COVID protocols permit). The rough outline of the studio involves:

- 1) A deep dive into the archives of DNI and other land trusts, which we will share in the form of interactive broadcasts.
- 2) Research on Collective Authorship in Architecture and (physical and digital) tools for working together.
- 3) Research on The Food Project (mission, operation, and context) and the production of Architectural Proposals for the Dudley Miller Park site, as well as for Adaptive Reuse sites that we identify.

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Logistical Issues, Studio Culture, Evaluation Criteria:

- 1 WE WILL WORK HARD THIS SEMESTER!
- 2 We will often work in groups this semester and your dedication to making that work out well for all is paramount.
- 3 Everything we make will function simultaneously as a proposal and have the potential to be understood as a critical broadcast.
- 4 Though, and because our topics this semester are serious and demand care, as well as loads of political, architectural and social imagination WE WILL NEED HUMOR in order to manage it all.
- 5 Readings are currently on Dropbox as that may be the fastest way to share material right now.
- 6 Attendance in studio and for the duration of all formal ~~reviews~~ events is mandatory. Greater than two absences from studio without medical excuse supported by a doctor's note or verifiable personal emergency could result in a failing grade for the studio. But if COVID comes through our little collective, the key to dealing with it will indeed involve the group structure of the Collective Studio. We will discuss this together, but when needed we will turn on our Zooms, and step in for each other.
- 7 Your grade in the studio will be based on the quality, craft and timeliness of your intellectual, architectural and representational production. It will also take into account your contributions to class discussions and the group dynamic, your productivity, as well as your responsiveness to criticism, and all-around design and intellectual growth. But, it will also be a result of our collective agreement on how these evaluations will occur and by whom. In order to discuss that, we will consider the grading framework that we have been using at MIT for studio production.

For information on the academic integrity at MIT, check the student handbook:

<https://integrity.mit.edu/>

Studio Timeline Draft

Week 1	2/1	T	Lottery/Presentation
	2/3	Th	First day: Hello! Archival Probe Launch Documentary on DSNI and Games
Week 2	2/8	T	Archival Probe Conversations + Susanne Schindler
	2/10	TH	Archival Probes Pecha Kucha Commoning Games (+Stories) Launch
Week 3	2/15	T	Short Reading discussion + Commoning Games work
	2/17	TH	Refine and Play the Commoning Games with friends (maybe w/ Collective Studio 2018)
Week 4	2/22	T	Monday Classes - No Studio
	2/24	TH	Land Commoning Games with BPE (TBC) + Pink Comma visit (TBC)
	(2/26)	S	A Zoom conversation organized by DSNI Youth organizers and the Food Project)
Week 5	3/1	T	Readings + Launch Research on Coauthoring + Visit The Food Project
	3/3	TH	Archive of Coauthoring + (Zoom lecture by Luke Bulman)
Week 6	3/8	T	Archive of Coauthoring + Luke Bulman in person
	3/10	TH	Postcards from the Future Launch - Dreaming with DSNI + The Food Project
Week 7	3/15	T	Postcards from the Future + Yolande Daniels on her Black City Project (TBC)
	3/17	TH	Coauthoring Tools Launch (Ana may be going to ACSA in LA, will try to leave after studio, TBD)
Spring Break: 3/21 - 3/27			
Week 8	3/29	T	Dreaming with DSNI + The Food Project (with Coauthoring Tools?) + Defining the shape/form of Proposals
	3/31	TH	Open House - Work in Studio on Organizing the Archive again and developing "standards" for the rest of the production
Week 9	4/5	T	Proposals in progress
	4/7	TH	Proposals in progress
Week 10	4/12	T	Studio Self Review - Ana away: giving a lecture UMass Amherst
	4/14	TH	Proposals in progress
Week 11	4/19	T	Proposals in progress - Invite DSNI and The Food Project to MIT
	4/21	TH	Proposals in progress
Week 12	4/26	T	Dreaming with DSNI + The Food Project (maybe in the green house)
	4/28	TH	Regrouping
Week 13	5/3	T	Final Event planning
	5/5	TH	Collective Production of the Final Event
Week 14			
	5/10	T	Final Event

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Archival Probes I

We will frequently meet this semester to collectively determine the form of deliverables. But, first, let's dive into the studio archive through several specific topics that will get us up to speed on both the history of organizing in the Dudley Neighborhood and different models of collective ownership of land and architecture. We will think of these few initial topics as directions in which we are sending our archival probes. They will in turn help us begin constituting our studio archive of historical and architectural knowledge that will eventually support our design decisions (and broadcasts). Fragments of old and living utopias, segments of disciplinary discourse, as well as practical knowledge, will be reconfigured and revived with the help of your own observations, values, design ideas and labor.

The topics we need to discuss and eventually research (in pairs of two, for now) are: History of DSNI, Historical and Demographic Palimpsest of this part of Roxbury, the theoretical underpinnings of Commoning, Urban Renewal projects in Roxbury + Dorchester, Community Gardens in Boston and The Food Project, Land Trust Movement in the US, as well as Community and Food-Centric Architectures.

The first medium/format for collecting and sharing this knowledge will be pecha-kucha. As you do this please begin thinking about possible systems for organizing our collective archive. Libraries, as you know, have their Dewey decimal and Library of Congress systems for this purpose, museums and archives have their own systems, INS and IRS have their own, CSI their own, surely the great Mashup artists in music have theirs as well. We each have some way of organizing files on our machines. Our Collective Architecture Studio will need to develop systems for organizing new knowledge, and equally importantly, for retrieving that knowledge in a useful format. For now, your probes can "pick up" artifacts and images just as they are in the documents you find, as well as include your provisional conclusions and speculations in the form of diagrammatic and analytical drawings. This is an "extreme learning" exercise, and pecha-kucha will enable you to test narration and the power of images quickly.

Deliverable: Pecha-kucha presentation on the topics you are researching.

Due: 2/10

Schedule:

2/3	T	Launch Studio + Launch Archival Probes + Play Games + DSNI Movie
2/8	TH	Suzanne Schindler presentation + Desk Crits
2/10	T	Pecha-kucha presentations +

Read these texts (for 2/8):

bell hooks, "intro to Teaching to Transgress"

Mabel Wilson, "Radical Repair" Log 48

Suzanne Schindler, "Housing Beyond and Within the Market, Part 3: Cooperative in Boston" (skim Ana Miljački, "Not-Habits" Log 48)