

AFTERSTUFF

Architecture Design Option Studio
MIT Department of Architecture
Fall 2022
Tu+Th 1-5pm
@ Studio 3-415

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Img 2: Salt storage in MI.

AFTERSTUFF

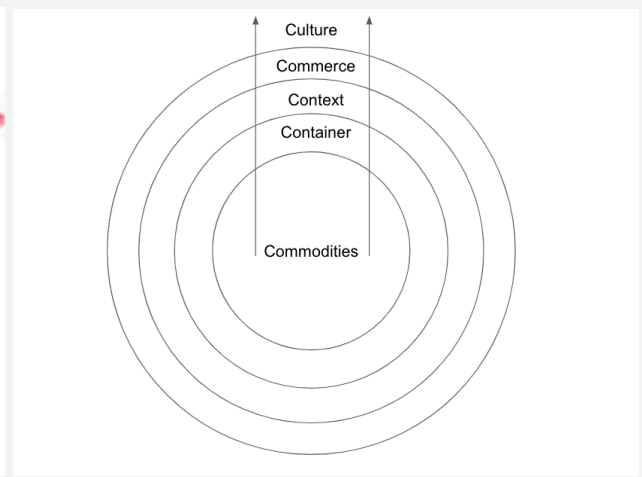
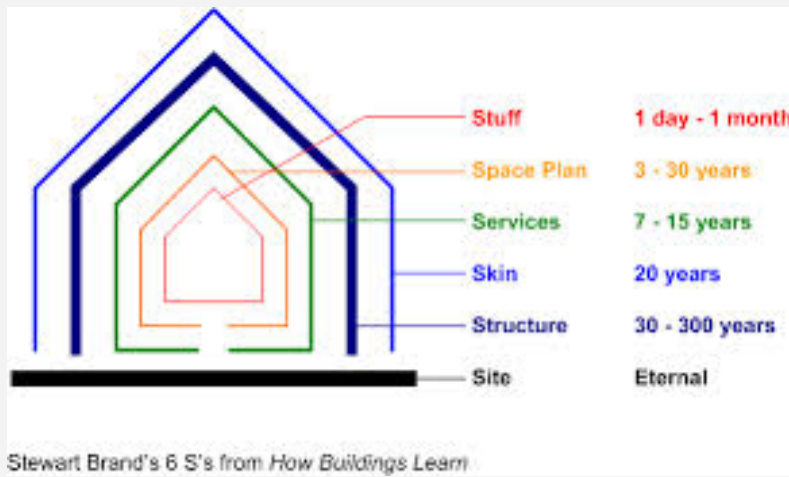
We have made too much stuff. The pervasive production model of more, faster, cheaper has created a counterproductive muchness of simultaneous material excess and environmental precarity. This persistent push for newness makes what is culture today, product tomorrow, trash the next and is contributing to social inequity and climate crisis alike. From sites of extraction to storage units to distribution centers and Pinterest boards, architecture is implicated at all scales of this saturation.

AFTERSTUFF begins from this context of material excess, experimenting with tools and methods that point designers towards less extractive material paradigms, ones that divert resources out of existing commercial loops and towards an approach where resources are gathered, not purchased.

AFTERSTUFF proposes to design by rearranging what we have already made, by putting it towards different uses; by looking at the existing through a lens of newness rather than producing new. Instead of turning culture into a commodity we will use existing commodities and their sites towards the production of culture.

Throughout the term, each student will research the multiscale world created by a commodity of their choice. From the Commodity itself (object scale) to Container (architectural scale) to Context (landscape scale) to Commerce (economic scale) and finally to Culture (socio-aesthetic scale). Students will pay equal regard to the material as well as the immaterial factors that affect it and our observations will span from the technical and the architectural to the aesthetic and the personal. Students will then design an intervention on a select scale of

that research, by rearranging its components to point them towards more culturally beneficial outputs.



Left: How Buildings Learn Right: AFTERSTUFF diagram

In 1994 Stewart Brand, the writer and environmentalist behind the Whole Earth Catalog presented this diagram (left img.) where he reduced architecture to a series of layers of change. Starting with **stuff** which circulates most rapidly to Site which circulates in deeper timelines.

For this studio, we will build on this transcalar mode of operating (right img.) to look at how **stuff** (or Commodities) governs and organizes all other scales as its influence trickles up to define how our built environments are arranged, what they look like and what they are used for at all scales.

This term, each student will research the transcalar world created by a commodity of their choice in order to eventually design an intervention on a select aspect of that research, by first arranging and later rearranging the components that make the world around this commodity. They will do this in order to point this commodity away from predictably commercial interests and towards more culturally beneficial outputs.

To do this, **AFTERSTUFF** proposes a specific 2 part formula for design which will divide the semester along 2 big exercises: First one titled '**X1: Arranged (AS IS)**' which will serve mainly as the research portion and the second one titled '**X2: Rearranged (AS IF)**' which will serve as the design portion.

1. **X1: Arranged (AS IS):** This phase will focus on mapping out how things are currently. Students will engage in creative research, accumulating not just information but gathering visual content, material samples, anecdotes, building components etc. Each week students will move up a scale with the goal of completing a fuller picture of the forces, sites and architectures that organize the circulation of this commodity. The exercise will ultimately take the shape of an amateur desktop documentary about their learnings, which will require them to develop a number of scenographic and animation skills. Students are expected to use this exercise as a prompt for research, as a time for representational skillbuilding, as a way to find new interests and unlikely sites of intervention towards meaningful change.

2. **X2: Rearranged (AS IF):** In the second half of the semester, students will select a scale upon which to intervene by rearranging the world of their commodity to serve less predictably commercial ends and instead pointing these resources towards more cultural outputs. Some students might choose to introduce a new way of distributing this commodity, some might choose to reassemble a building's components while others might choose to introduce a new program to the site. Students may nudge the project towards their existing interests in design by choosing the scale and character of this intervention as long as it follows the commodity pointing towards the culture logics mentioned above. The output of this second exercise will vary from student to student but will all be required to make use of the animation / scenographic tools from the 'X1: Arrange (AS IS)' exercise, making the work of the semester cumulative. In addition to the research and design, we will develop a number of 'low hanging fruit' XR techniques to augment and further immerse the audience into the student's final productions.

AFTERSTUFF will foreground designers and thinkers who set their practices in this moment of material reckoning and propose other modes of operating within material culture. From adaptive reuse projects to those creating recycling tools to those advocating for a commercial antagonism. All in all, **AFTERSTUFF** focuses on developing creative architectural reuse strategies while using research as a way to get designers away from common sites of intervention and towards less likely candidates for architect's design efforts.

This cumulative research and eventual design proposals will be published in a multi-year public website.



Img 3: Commodity City

KEY LINKS:

- Most updated [Calendar LIVE](#) here, which will include weekly readings and includes a [Variables tab](#)
- You will upload weekly progress to an individual Miro Board (individual links will be emailed)
- In addition, there is a shared [Miro Board](#) for shared references
- And a [Miro Board](#) with tutorials
- Final studio Submissions will be dropped here: [Submission folder](#)

COURSE INFORMATION:

- Every Tuesday you will need to have discernable progress.
- Every Tuesday a reading will be due
- Every Thursday we will have a Pin-Up. You will upload to your individual Miro board and present to the group select aspects of your research that week and you will present progress on your design work.
- The work is cumulative.
- We will use Miro / Google Drive

SOFTWARE:

- A number of introductory tutorials on these softwares will be made available while technical problems will be resolved as a cohort of classmates.
- You will receive a link a few essential tutorials:
 - Rhino animation
 - Adobe Suite
 - Premiere video editing w/ greenscreen keying
 - Rhino-autocad-sketchup warehouse workflows
 - OBS screen recording
 - Enscape visualization
 - Enscape VR
- You may choose to experiment with:
 - Aftereffects
 - V-ray, mayamash, lumion
 - Lidar scans
 - To add people / avatars:

- Mixamo
- Photoshop 3d
- Renderpeople.com

SCHEDULE			
1	Tu 9/6	Balloting	X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 9/8	Intro X1	
2	Tu 9/13		X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 9/15		
3	Tu 9/20		X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 9/22		
4	Tu 9/27	X - remote	X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 9/29		
5	Tu 10/4		X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 10/6		
6	Tu 10/11	X - studio will start at 2:30	X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 10/13		
7	Tu 10/18	X1 SHOWCASE	X1 Arranged / AS IS
	Th 10/20	Intro X2	
8	Tu 10/25		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 10/27		
9	Tu 11/1		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 11/3		
10	Tu 11/8		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 11/10		
11	Tu 11/15		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 11/17		
12	Tu 11/22		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 11/24	Thanksgiving - NO CLASS	
13	Tu 11/29		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 12/1		
14	Tu 12/6		X2 Rearranged / AS IF
	Th 12/8	X2 SHOWCASE (Date and Time TBD)	
15	Tu 12/13	Fall semester ends	X2 Rearranged / AS IF

READINGS:

All readings / lectures can be found as links in the course [Bulletin Board](#) (tabs below) or in the [Drive](#)

READINGS	TYPE	LOCATION
Postcommodities...Architecture after stuff	Symposium	Link
Generic Objects - Gean Moreno & Ernesto Oroza	Article	Link
Accumulation - E-flux	Collection of articles	Link

How Buildings Learn ' What happens after they are built' - Stewart Brand	Lecture	Link
Crafted Images - Aude-Line Dulière	Article / Lecture	Link
Disassembly - How to	Manual	Link
Disassembly guide with a focus on case studies - How to	Manual	Link
Subtraction - Keller Easterling	Article	Link / Drive
Landscapes of Fulfillment - Jesse Lecavalier	Lecture	Link
Views from the Plastisphere - Heather Davies	Article	Link
The 3D additivist cookbook - Heather Davies	Collection of articles	Link
Radical Matter - rethinking materials for a sustainable future by Kate Franklin and Caroline Till	Book	
Non-extractive architecture - Space Caviar	Book	Intro in Drive
Our aesthetic categories intro - Sianne Ngai	Article from book	Link / Drive
Waste & Want: A social History of trash - Susan Strasser	Book	
Unbuilding: Salvaging the Architectural Treasures of Unwanted - Bob Falk	Book	Drive
PostGrowth : Life After Capitalism by Tim Jackson	Book	
Wasted: When trash becomes treasure - Katie Treggiden	Book	
Climate Lockdown	Instagram Account	Link
How to build your own living structures - Ken Isaacs	Manual	Link
Life and death in the anthropocene - Heather Davies	Article	Drive
Sustainability's image problem - Esther Choi	Article	Drive
The Devil is in the details	Article	Drive
Geographies of consumption - Stanley & Rutenberg	Article	Drive
Being plastic - Holland	Article	Drive
Climate gentrification	Audio: Color of Law chapter	Link
Extrastatecraft - Keller Easterling	Lecture	Link
The uses of decorating - Nicholas Korody	Book	Drive
Black hole catalog - Nick Korody	Lecture	Link
Styrofoam - Ang Li	Lecture	Link

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

- [Critical Research and Representation](#): The ability to comprehend and construct abstract relationships between the multiple scales of elements in architectural design and its implications. This includes a range of media used to articulate information including writing, investigative skills, speaking, and designing.
- [Communication Skills](#): Ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively.
- [Design Thinking Skills](#): Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test them against relevant criteria and standards.
- [Visual Communication Skills](#): Ability to engage new forms of representational media to convey essential formal concepts at each stage of the design process.
- [Investigative Skills](#): Ability to gather, assess, record, apply, and comparatively evaluate relevant information within architectural coursework and design processes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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

COURSE CLIMATE:

- These can be heavy topics, we will need humor and cheer along the way!
- In this course we will learn from each other as well as from the faculty and the syllabus. In order to do that we must engage each other with respect and must have as a goal to engage all kinds of learners. The tone of the course aims to be fun and open-minded.
- The course is designed for you to simultaneously advance your research interests as well as develop new representational skills. You will be treated as a designer who wants to engage the topics of the studio, through the act of designing. To that end, you are expected to push yourself towards acquiring new skills and engaging unfamiliar tools of production.
- Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation. If you tend to have a lot to say, make sure you leave sufficient space to hear from others. If you tend to stay quiet in group discussions, challenge yourself to contribute so others can learn from you.
- This is a reminder to all of us to work together to actively construct and maintain the classroom as spaces of mutual respect and safe spaces: "A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others." (<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/safespace.pdf>, pg. 67)

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Students are required to attend all class sessions and to be well prepared. Students must be in attendance for the entire class session or their allotted time.
- Students who miss deadlines due to valid extenuating circumstances may submit their required work at a later date, as agreed upon with the instructor. University regulations limit such circumstances to serious personal illness and death in the family. Unexcused late work will not be accepted, incomplete projects will be evaluated in relation to their degree of completion, and a student will be allowed to present such work only with instructor approval.