HALF-TERM WORKSHOP_Spectres of Architecture: Investigating Belonging(s) at the MET Warehouse
SPRING 2023 SA+P MIT
Instructor: Deborah Garcia
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Tuesday 9am-12, Room: Long Lounge, AFK[1] and ON-SITE

Image of the Metropolitan Storage Warehouse Company, *The Cambridge Sentinel*, 1920

INTRODUCTION

"Listening is directing attention to what is heard, gathering meaning,interpreting and deciding on action.
Quantum listening is listening to more than one reality simultaneously."
        Pauline Oliveros, Quantum Listening

The Metropolitan Storage Warehouse was built in 1895, it is one of the oldest buildings in the MIT neighborhood and currently finds itself in the midst of redevelopment as it will become the new home of the School of Architecture and Planning in 2025. Upon completion the MET will provide approximately 110,000 square feet of academic, research, and gathering space including labs and studios for architecture students. As the building finds itself amidst active transformation this workshop will look back on the MET's past lives, investigate its current working state, and ponder on its future through the tools of phonography, or field recording, to better understand the multiple layers of reality that converge at this site.
The MET Warehouse operated as a storage facility since its construction and its architectural elements–two-foot-thick-stone walls, vaulted ceilings, its medieval crenellations—all stood witness to years of internal life, the drama of the storage facility; the secret life of boxes that end up in secret rooms. In 2015, when the MET closed, much more than boxes were revealed to have occupied the nearly 1,500 internal units: private offices, satellite walk-in closets, a wine collection dating back to the mid-90's, a saxophonist's recording studio, extension art storage for Boston museums, the list goes on. The MET Warehouse, like many other storage spaces, was a territory of exchange and protection for belonging(s): material, capital, life. How might the past lives of this building effect its future life as repository and vessel for a community of architects, designers, and thinkers (both academic and not, institutional and extra institutional)? In listening to the building might we learn more about its expansive ability to hold, archive, and safekeep and challenge our expectations for what forms of belonging might take place here next?

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[1] "Away From Keyboard", taken from Legacy Russell's use of the term in the *Glitch Feminism Manifesto* (2020).

The workshop introduces concepts and techniques of sound recording, sound design, audio-integrated model-making, and soundscape design as the basis for discussion and as a methodology for design. Students will be invited to conduct field recording sessions inside the MET Warehouse and will have first hand experience of its current state and of the processes of construction and deconstruction that are occurring in real time. These recordings will become the basis for the creation of new and speculative soundscapes about the building's past and future states. Students will work together to produce a loudspeaking model of the MET installed in the Keller Gallery in April.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- The course will provide an introduction to field recording tools and approaches on-site at the MET Warehouse.
- Students will learn workflows that integrate phonography, foley (the reproduction of everyday sound effects), and soundscape to develop site specific proposals for a building's life cycle.
- Students will have a hands-on opportunity to learn about processes of unbuilding in architecture
- Students will acquire skills to collect, manipulate, and create sounds for layered compositions
- Students will design and integrate audio hardware into one large group model at a scale of 1/16"=1' for the final listening party.
- We will use audio as a tool for tracing past histories, investigating current conditions, and speculating on possible futures of the built environment.

OVERVIEW

The workshop will launch on February 8, and will consist of on-site visits to the MET Warehouse and other sound-specific labs across the MIT campus, including the Spatial Sound Lab. The workshop will accompany these visits with audio software tutorials, in-class discussions, and a final presentation in the Keller Gallery.
Students enrolled in this workshop will construct and install a group model in the gallery and will de-install the work at the closing of the exhibition.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to be present at all site visits. Site visits will be essential to our workflow and cannot be made up/or rescheduled.
In this workshop we will host an introductory software tutorial after which you are expected to bring in-progress work to class to discuss, troubleshoot, and review. In-class time will be used to develop this work further, not to hold additional tutorials.

Everyone is expected to contribute to a group model and to develop individual research that will culminate in a soundscape. This research and sound piece may be done individually or in pairs depending on class size.

COURSE MATERIALS
Course materials and larger files, including audio files and sound compositions, will be shared using Dropbox.

SOFTWARE
We will be using Ableton Live, Audacity, Adobe Audition and Premiere, Rhino, and Vray.

SCHEDULE

TUES FEB 7	Introduction First Exercise Launch
Feb 14	Software Tutorial
Feb 21	Soundscape Sketches 1
Feb 28	Model Review + Research Proposal Presentations
March 7	Soundscape Review + Model Review 2
March 14	Artist Visit
March 21	Final Class Day, concluding discussion
Spring Break	
April 4	No Class
April 11	Final Performance in Keller Gallery