techniques of resistance

spring 26

MIT

techniques of resistance

architecture design workshop

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Instructor:
Rocio Crosetto Brizzio

Room 5-216 / Wed 2-5 pm

MIT / Dept. of Architecture
Spring 2026

Techniques of Resistance looks into communal construction practices in South America as a critical site of knowledge for contemporary architecture. The interest is centered on buildings, techniques and devices that offer a deep understanding of their natural and cultural ecosystems, offering insights that could transform contemporary architectural practices.

Could we imagine a possible scenario where ancestral techniques meet high-tech systems in a hybrid assemblage of parts? What happens when we collage together different forms of technologies? How do we design buildings that frame new relationships between architectures, cultures and ecologies, and at the same time resist the homogenization of global production?

Techniques of Resistance aims to create an archive of communal construction practices located across the heterogeneous territory of South America through the research and documentation of paradigmatic indigenous, vernacular, and popular buildings. This research will form the basis for the design proposal of a contemporary radical project that will emerge from these ancestral techniques and the cases studied in the course.

Architecture, when built, mobilizes a huge —and often invisible— network of resources, knowledge, beliefs, and people involved in


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the construction of a building. Techniques of Resistance will focus on the study of buildings that are strongly rooted in the environment and ecologies where they are located, with a sensitive understanding of communal cooperation and material cyclability.

From the Uros Islands in Lake Titicaca and the Putucos in the Peruvian plateau, to the Shabonos and Churuatas' large structures in the Amazon, the buildings that we will study offer a collection of construction techniques that serve as a resistance to the homogenization of architecture and the destruction of collective forms of construction.

The creation of an inventory of Techniques of Resistance presents the opportunity to broaden the definition of what a building could be in terms of its material technology and its role in a community, and will serve as the launching point for the development of a project that could redefine these techniques in a contemporary way through an understanding of material behavior, systems, structural details, and geometry.

The course will consist of a combination of theoretical lectures, discussions, research, and design. During the first half of the semester, students will develop drawings and graphic essays as methods of research and documentation of the case studies. These deliverables will be compiled to create the Archive of Techniques of Resistance, which will take the form of a publication.

In the second half of the semester, students will work on a conceptual design project for a communal building, structure, or infrastructure, proposing a critical revision of the cases and techniques previously documented. Considerable time will be given for the design process, working together to develop a conceptually and technologically strong project. Classes will take the form of workshop sessions, with design desk critiques and pin-ups. The projects will be communicated through large-scale, delicate, and well-developed drawings and, if possible, a small model.

The materials produced during the course—both the archive and the design projects—will be presented in an exhibition at the end of the fall semester.

The course will value commitment, technical precision, detailed representation, and a radical and critical approach to design.

Techniques of Resistance will also include contributions from guest speakers whose practices and built projects engage with the technologies and materials discussed during the semester.

SCHEDULE

Week 01 02 / 04	Lecture 1 **Power Alliances: Mingas as Practices for Collective Empowerment in South America** Presentation of Case Studies Kick-Off Research. Each student picks 3 Case Studies.
Week 02 02 / 11	Lecture 2 **Former student visit** Students' presentation of Case Studies Research.
Week 03 02 / 18	Lecture 3 **Guest Speaker** Desk-crit: Case Studies Documentation Drawings.
Week 04 02 / 25	Lecture 4 **Guest Speaker** Pin-Up: Case Studies Documentation Drawings.
Week 05 03 / 04	**CASE STUDIES DOCUMENTATION REVIEW**
Week 06 03 / 11	Lecture 5 **Building the Project:** **Architectural Assemblages,** **or How to Build a Frankenstein?** Presentation of the Design Project Exercise Kick-Off Design. Desk-crits of conceptual ideas

Week 07 03 / 18	**Design Project Session** Desk-Crits: Design & Arguments
Week 08 03 / 25	Spring Break
Week 09 04 / 01	Lecture 6 **Guest Speaker** **Design Project Session** Pin-Up: Design & Arguments [on Zoom]
Week 10 04 / 08	**Design Project Session** Desk-Crits: Design Project
Week 11 04 / 15	**DESIGN PROJECT REVIEW**
Week 12 04 / 22	**Book & Exhibition Preview** Final Adjustments
Week 13 04 / 29	**FINAL REVIEW** **EXHIBITION IN LONG LOUNGE** Archive, Design & Book Presentation

TASKS

ARCHIVE

The course is structured in two phases. The first half focuses on research, during which students are expected to develop a series of drawings to document their case studies and contribute to the creation of an archive of Techniques of Resistance, which will be a collective piece developed by the entire class. This work will take the form of a publication or website that we will curate together.

PROJECT

During the second half of the semester, students will apply their research in a design process, developing a small building, structure, or infrastructure that will involve a critical and contemporary implementation of the techniques and construction logics previously documented. This work will include the production of well-crafted, large-scale drawings and, if possible, a model.

EXHIBITION

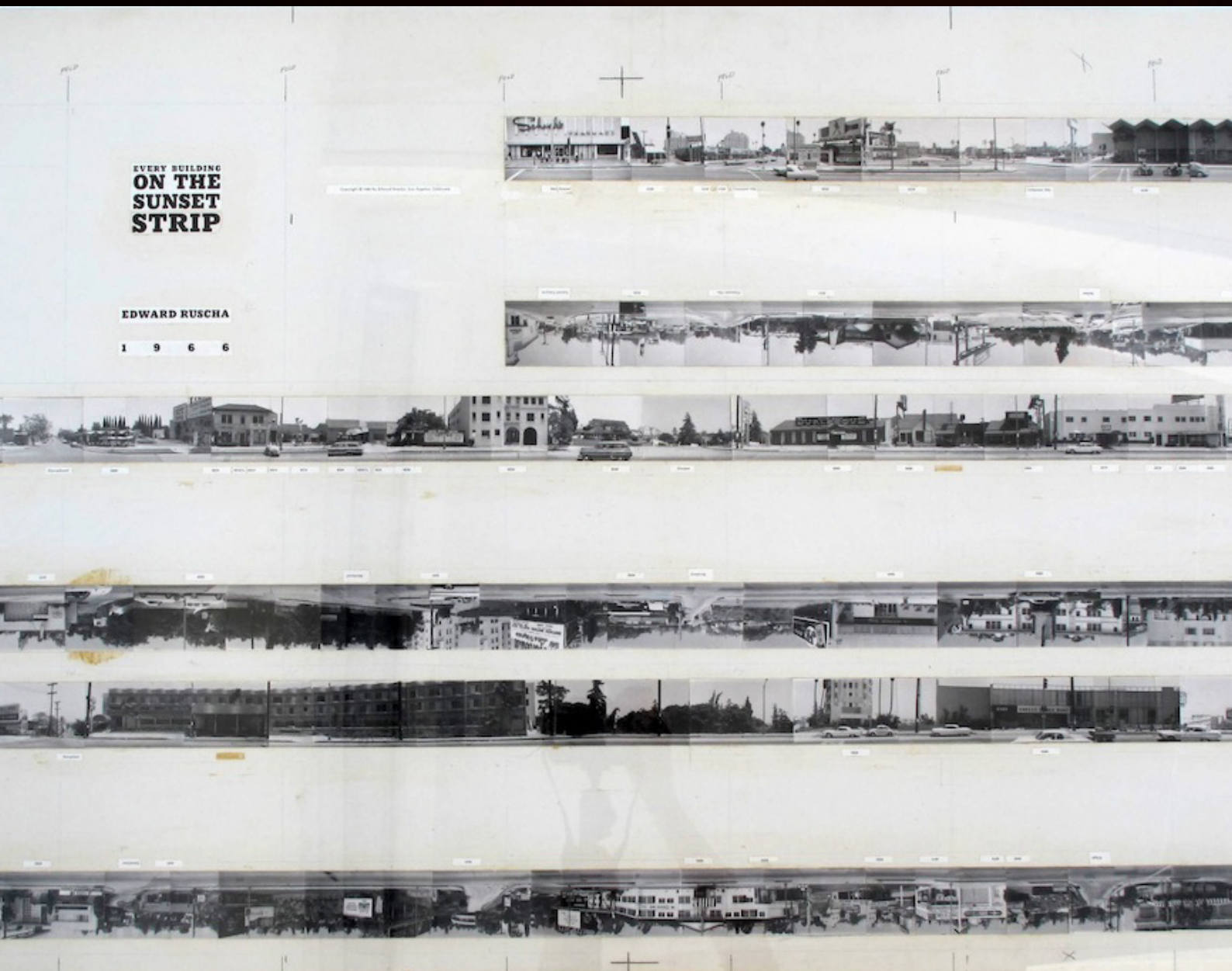
As the final stage of the course, the work developped during the semester will be curated and presented in the form of an exhibition.

DUE DATES

03 / 04 **CASE STUDIES DOCUMENTATION REVIEW**
[Episode 1]

04 / 15 **DESIGN PROJECT REVIEW**
[Episode 2]

04 / 29 **FINAL REVIEW : EXHIBITION OPENING**
[Episode 3]


EVERY BUILDING
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Vassallo, Jesus. *Making Do.* Essay in *Heterogeneous Costructions. Studies in Mixed Material Architecture* by Forrest, Schneider & Vobis.

Wigley, Mark. *Returning the Gift, Running Architecture in Reverse*, from Non-Extractive Architecture, On Designing Without Depletion, 2021.

Banchini, Leopold & Lucan, Jacques. *Soft Architecture. A Conversation between Jacques Lucan and Leopold Banchini.* 2G Leopold Banchini.

Rudofsky, Bernard. *Architectrue Without Architects. An Introduction to Nonpedigreed Architecture,* 1964.

Deplazes, Andrea. *Constructing Architecture: Materials, Processes, Structures: a Handbook,* 2025.

Aureli, Pier Vittorio. *Longhouse Lecture at Harvard GSD*, 2023.

Superstudio. *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas*, 1971.

Colomina, Beatriz & Wigley, Mark. *Are we human?* 2016

Frampton, Kenneth. *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance.* 1963.

Vriesendorp, Madelon. *The World of Madelon Vriesendorp: Paintings / Postcards / Objects / Games*, 2011.

Branzi, Andrea. *The Fluid Metropolis*, 1970.

Branzi, Andrea. *10 Humble Recommendations for a New Athens Charter*, 2010

Danowski, Déborah & Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. *Is There Any World To Come?* 2015.

Tavares, Paulo. *In the Forest Ruins*. 2016.

Pagano, Guiseppe & Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* 1936.

Moholy-Nagy, Sibyl. *Environment and Anonymous Architecture,* 1955.

Moholy-Nagy, Sibyl. *Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture,* 1957.

Scott, Felicity. *Bernard Rudofsky, Allegories of Nomadism and Dwelling*, 2016

Kallipoliti, Lydia. *The Architecture of Closed Worlds. Or, What is the Power of Shit?* 2018

Faas, A.J., *What Is Minga?* 2023

Giedion, Siegfried. *Architecture You and Me.The Diary of a Development*, 1958.

Rubin, William. *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage,* 1968.

Constant. *New Babylon*, 1965.

Office hours:

By appointment only

GENERAL NOTES

Course Objectives

—Strengthen students' ability to research, conceptualize, and develop an understanding of complex ecosystems, resources, networks, materials, techtonics and construction assemblies.
—Foster students' awareness of and engagement with popular, vernacular, and Indigenous forms of knowledge, building types and tecnological resolutions.
—Enhance students' ability to translate research knowledge into design strategies informed by a deep understanding of context, including its ecologies, resources, and political, economic, social, and historical dimensions.
—Advance students' ability to work critically across multiple scales, from the territory, to the building, to the detail.
—Develop the ability to represent research and design concepts through clear and accurate drawings, images and models.
—Cultivate a solid and critical position towards architecture practice and contemporary architectural design, welcoming ancestral knowledge into our current ways of designing and making buildings.

Evaluation Criteria

Students will be graded according to the following criteria:
—Quality and depth of analysis and design research.
—Engagement in collective discussions and contribution to the workshop's shared learning.
—Ability to process criticism in a productive manner and to self-evaluate.
—Clarity and organization of oral presentations.
—Completion of assignments by their deadlines.
—Individual growth throughout the semester.

Attendance

Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. Greater than three absences for the semester without a medical excuse supported by a doctor's note or a family emergency confirmed by a school official may result in a failing grade. If you miss six or more classes, you will be asked to drop the subject or receive a failing grade.

Grading Definition

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. This grade also signifies that the student must repeat the subject to receive credit.

Final Workshop Deliverables

Grades will not be posted for students to view on their grade report until their work has been archived. The projects need to be properly prepared and formatted, and delivered to the instructor. The instructor will collect project archives from each student immediately following the review. Detailed requirements and instructions for formatting will be posted to CRON, the Department website, and sent to students at the beginning of the semester.

Performance Criteria

The final grade will be based on a combination of attendance, participation, timely completion of assignments, and the quality of the work produced.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

All work submitted will fall under the jurisdiction of the MIT Policy on Academic Integrity. MIT's expectations and policies regarding academic integrity should be read carefully and adhered to diligently: http://integrity.mit.edu.

Disabilities

A student who has a documented disability, or any concerns which he/she thinks may affect his/her ability to perform in class are invited to consult with the professors early in the semester so that suitable arrangements may be made. For MIT's policy on accommodations for disabilities, please follow this link: http://mit.edu/uaap/sds/students/.

Diversity Statement

Massachusetts Institute of Technology values an inclusive environment. A sense of community in the classroom shall be fostered, while the classroom should be considered to be a place where students will be treated with respect. This class welcomes individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations – and other visible and non-visible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with any instructors.


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