

**INSURGENT DOMESTICITIES**  
**TEACHING TOOL**  
January 21, 2022

**MATERIAL INTIMACY**

**Module 01**

***Lydia Muthuma responding to the work and literature selections of Lilian Chee***

*Readings*

- Chee, Lilian. "03-FLATS: Architecture Filmmaking, Disciplinary Questions," in *Architecture and Affect: Precarious Spaces* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).
- Navaro-Yashin, Yael. "Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects: Ruination and the Production of Anthropological Knowledge." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol. 15, No. 1 (March 2009): 1-18.

*Themes*

- A counter representation of Singaporean public housing, interior spaces, household objects and domestic routines
- Gendered sense of self and space
- Film's role in architectural discourse
- Disciplinary convergence and divergence between ethnography and architecture

*Questions*

- The direct and intimate supply of material and spiritual sustenance to humans, at the smallest scale of society, comprises domesticity. Its *raison d'être* is to make people more human, more intelligent, more sensitive and emotionally accomplished than they otherwise might be. How does this play out (or could play out) in 03 Flats?
- A relationship between politics and domesticity is writ large in the article 03 Flats (and Navaro-Yashin's work too) —Government policy determines intimate domestic living. The play between the principle of subsidiarity and solidarity is at the heart of both articles. If the aim of larger political society is to serve human persons what role does domesticity play?
- Scholars have theorized about civil and political society. They have theorized much less about the domestic configuration. Yet 03 Flats alludes to the interweaving of single women's housing condition with the country's government policy, thus bringing together the home and the city (or country). What relationship obtains, in scholarship, between the polis (metropolis) and the domestic (home) especially regarding humanizing society? Can theories or approaches to city studies be applied to domesticity?

## **Module 02**

### ***Barbara Penner responding to the work and literature selections of Annapurna Garimella***

#### *Readings*

Garimella, Annapurna. "Craft and Contemporary Indian Art." An upcoming volume edited by Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherjee and Rakhee Balaram, Thames & Hudson, London 2021

Silva, Annemari de. "Women, Handicrafts, and Entrepreneurship in the Postcolonial World." (December 2020). <https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas/ideas/women-handicrafts-and-entrepreneurship-in-the-postcolonial-world>

#### *Themes*

craft, tradition, modernity, female artists, communalism, lived experience, tacit knowledge, intimacy, double discourse, obsolescence, hybridity, kitchens, grindstones, mixies

#### *Questions*

- In the 1990s, a shift was made away from conceptualism in Indian art towards craft in order to find more materialized, local 'ethnic and ethical' modes of production. How have these objects been used in contemporary art? And what does it mean to use craft and traditional objects in contemporary art, especially for female artists?
- In what ways does the use of craft empower through its evocation of intimacy and lived experience?
- In what ways does the use of craft overwhelm or obscure through those same qualities?
- Are there other ways in which we might imagine objects in these works being used--ways that more critically engage 'humanist fantasy' and contemporary globalized modernity, for instance? Speculate.

## **Module 03**

### ***Delia Wendel responding to the work and literature selections of Debashree Mukherjee***

#### *Readings*

Mannil, Bindu Menon. "The gendered film worker: Women in cinema collective, intimate publics and the politics of labour." *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 11, no. 2 (2020):191-207.

Mukherjee, Debashree. "Short Circuit Struggle." In *Bombay hustle: Making Movies in a Colonial City*, 269-312. Columbia University Press, 2020.

#### *Themes*

film industry; filmic labor  
situated experience  
desire, affect  
planned vulnerability  
struggle; hustle

#### *Questions*

- What do we learn about the "interior" of the film industry from this chapter?
- How do injuries and accidents figure the structures and experience of filmic labor in Bombay?

- What interfaces of desire and power do you read in this work?

## **Module 04**

### ***Ana Ozaki responding to the work and literature selections of Lydia Muthuma***

#### *Readings*

Kabo, Felichism. "The evolution of the heart/kitchen: a look at traditional and contemporary kenyan families." In *Space Syntax Delft Organising Committee. Space Syntax 5th International Symposium. Delft: Space Syntax Delft Organising Committee.* 2005.

Muthuma, Lydia. "The Representation of Womanhood in Kenya's Contemporary Painting: Mukabi's mama kibanda." *PARALAXE* 6, no. 1 (2019): 38-52.

#### *Themes*

Local and community-based scholarship  
Hegemony of stylistic analysis vs lived experience  
Home grown aesthetics  
Fluid domesticities  
Exterior vs Interior  
Syntactic analysis  
Ethnographic work  
Female spaces  
Spatial and social integration within the home  
Social life in the Kenyan family  
Postcolonial house and servitude

#### *Questions*

- What changes when we include lived experiences in studies of local aesthetics and space? What are the different ways we can define an academic work ethics that is invested in "furthering a more engaged homegrown aesthetic," as Muthuma suggests?
- Both Muthuma and Kabo expand the field of art and architectural histories to argue that everyday life is key in furthering discussion about the social, political, and cultural experiences of a place and its most taken for granted actors. How can we incorporate local methods in our historical analysis of architecture and visual arts? How can us, scholars, take into account local lived experiences that are not necessarily within our reach?
- Both authors contextualize fluid understandings of domesticity within urban and historical contexts. How can we incorporate local/regional dynamics in our inquiries of domesticity?

## **Module 05**

### ***Annapurna Garimella responding to the work and literature selections of Ana Ozaki***

#### *Readings*

McKittrick, Katherine. "The Last Place They Thought Of: Black Women's Geographies." In *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*, 37-61. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Ozaki, Ana. "Afro-Brazilian Lenses: "Quilombo Urbanism in Rio de Janeiro's *Pequena Africa*." In Publication by CENTER 24 "Arguments for Decolonizing the Architectural History of the Americas," Center for American Architecture and Design, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin, Forthcoming 2021.

### *Themes*

Conceiving freedom  
The intersections of oppression, captivity, control and agency  
Mystery as productive concept for living and thinking at the intersections  
Visibility and transparency  
Invisibility and opacity  
Planning peripheries  
Migration and transformation  
Ancestral to local cultures  
Spatial agency in a regime of private property  
The liberatory work of architectural history

### *Questions*

- What are the materials and architectural forms which allow oppressed people to gain spatial agency?
- What does spatial agency look like at the periphery?

### **Module 06**

#### ***Debashree Mukherjee responding to the work and literature selections of Barbara Penner***

### *Readings*

Hamraie, Aimi. "Conclusion: Disability Justice" In *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, 255-261. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.  
Penner, Barbara. "Designed-in Safety: Ergonomics in the Bathroom." In *Use Matters*, 161-176. Routledge, 2013.

### *Themes*

Deep historical view of questions of design thought in tandem with bodily comfort and safety  
Material intimacy  
Cultural practices vs hygiene practices  
Claims of style, modernity and progress against claims of safety  
Design and the body, as conceived of between automobiles and the bathrooms  
Access and accountability

### *Questions*

- What are the material consequences of aesthetic practices? What are the different ways in which meaning is made in the world, not just through representation and design aesthetics, but in the material conditions of making and use of designs?
- How do we inhabit the built world and how do we practice and understand belonging?
- How do we think of intimacy beyond the individual, to the collective?

### **Module 07**

#### ***Lilian Chee responding to the work and literature selections of Delia Wendel***

### *Readings*

Hartman, Saidiya. "Intimate History, Radical Narrative." *AAIHS blog* (22 May 2020).  
Wendel, Delia. "Introduction.", In *Rwanda's Genocide Heritage*, 1-42. Forthcoming Duke

University Press.

### *Themes*

Rwandan genocide heritage  
Materiality of violence  
Delineation and curation of evidence  
Narrative forms  
Materialized memory

### *Questions*

- How does one write about the emotive within an academic frame? How does one bring the intensity of the material evidence to bear on an audience who are removed from these scenes?
- Where is the researcher placed in such a project? Where will her intimacy to the material carry the trajectory of the work? Will intimacy interfere with critical distance?

*This teaching tool was prepared by the [Insurgent Domesticities](#) working group.*