

Fall 2025 Opening Workshop & Yearly Program

The Waste Lands of To-Morrow



School of Public Architecture
Michael Graves College
Wenzhou-Kean University



Picture from Kevin Lynch, *Wasting Away*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990.

Introduction

The Waste Lands of To-Morrow

This year's workshop opens **the second chapter in a three-year cycle** devoted to the possibilities and limits of care and repair in architecture. Each year takes a distinct trajectory, conceptual and temporal, local and global:

- **2024–25: REUSE (How).** Teach and Practice with CARE: Tend, Mend, and Repair focused on acts of attention and stewardship at the scale of the building.
- **2025–26: RECLAIM (What).** The Waste Lands of To-Morrow shifts scale and scope: from the project to the landscape, from the singular to the systemic.
- **2026–27: RETHINK (Why).** After Repair: What Public, What Architecture, What Common? (provisional) will confront the future of architectural publics and the reinvention of the commons.

If **care** was last year's center, this year turns to **context**, to the waste we inherit, produce, and live among. Inspired by Kevin Lynch's *Wasting Away*, we interrogate not only the waste of things but the waste of places, systems, and opportunities, imagining not only current but **future wastes**.

Against the Tabula Rasa: Beyond Modernism and 大拆大建 (Dachai, Dajian)

If the architecture of European modernism once operated under a *modus tabula rasa*, razing what exists in pursuit of idealized futures, China's last forty years of 大拆大建 (large scale demolition, and construction) have carried this logic to an unprecedented scale. Entire neighborhoods have been erased, villages swallowed by cities, and infrastructures erected only to become obsolete within a generation. The result is a landscape dense with the residues of accelerated development:

- abandoned new towns and half-finished real estate projects,
- infrastructures built too quickly to last, already crumbling or redundant,

- territories degraded by extraction, pollution, and toxic accumulation,
- the climatic toll of floods, droughts, and heat islands amplified by reckless urbanization.

What remains is not emptiness but **zones of systemic neglect**, the shadow landscapes of development, resistant to ownership, maintenance, or memory. These conditions form part of what Alexandre Monnin call the **negative commons**: collectively inherited but structurally unwanted.

Global Ruins, Local Consequences

In contrast to last year's locally grounded repair, this year insists on an expanded lens: to trace the global circuits of waste and their local materializations. From supply chains to shipbreaking yards, from exported demolition rubble to offshored toxicity, from the industrial landscapes of Southeast Asia to the invisible infrastructures of e-commerce, students are asked to track how **global forces crystallize into local ruin**.

Wenzhou itself exemplifies this dual position: both a **node in global production networks**, exporting goods across continents, and a site of displacement, offloading manufacturing and waste onto other provinces and countries. This vantage compels us to ask not only where waste comes from but where it ends up, and how architecture can situate itself within this **political geography of abandonment**.

Pedagogical Trajectories

The theme is not confined to an opening statement. It will unfold throughout the academic year across **multiple pedagogical formats**:

- **Workshops**: like this first week, immersing students in vertical collaborations to confront waste experientially.
- **Studios**: semester-long investigations, each tutor translating the theme into a specific design lens.
- **Lectures**: such as this week opening one, bringing external voices into the conversation, as well as our school faculties, sharing their work and perspectives on

the subject.

- **Seminars:** offering space for critical reading, debate, and theoretical expansion.

Together, these interlocking formats form a curriculum where waste is not only studied but tested, speculated upon, and reimagined.

Speculative Imperatives

This is not a call for nostalgia nor for resignation. It is a call to imagine how **design might operate within, against, or alongside waste.**

- Can architecture produce value without extraction?
- Meaning without erasure?
- Futures without forgetting?

We invite projects that confront:

- the surplus and leftovers of modern construction,
- the waste economies of fast architecture and global supply chains,
- the footprints of climate catastrophe,
- the disciplinary waste embedded in outdated typologies and unquestioned practices.

The **waste lands of tomorrow** are not only sites of despair but of possibility. They demand of architecture an imagination attuned to decay, latency, and contingency—an imagination that dares to reclaim what has been disowned.

* Vincent Peu Duvallon



Packing site in Kenya for roses sold in Europe during Valentine's Day. (Source: nzz.ch)

Schedule

· Monday, Sept 1

8:30 AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Introduction of the
Workshop Week

8:45 AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Assignment 1,
Food and the City

*Bruno Malusa

*Dan Given



9:15 AM -10:00AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Group Making

4:00PM

CSMT 121

Keynote Lecture:
Architecture has Never
Been So Unpopular...

Really?...

*Nasrin Seraji

· Tuesday, Sept 2

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Assignment 2,
ClothMaking

*David Vardy

*Peta Carlin



5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

CSMT 121

Inheriting Systemic Ruins:

Ecological Redirection
and the Care for

Negative Commons

*Alexandre Monnin



· Wednesday, Sept 3

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Assignment 3, Design
Waste Convenience

*Anastasia Gkoliomyti

*Daein Cheong



· Thursday, Sept 4

All Day

Gehekai Design studios

Improvement of the
work and preparation of
the presentations

· Friday, Sept 5

8:30 AM - 11:30AM

Gehekai Hall Atrium

Presentation by the groups

Note:

All Architecture Courses as suspended during the first week.

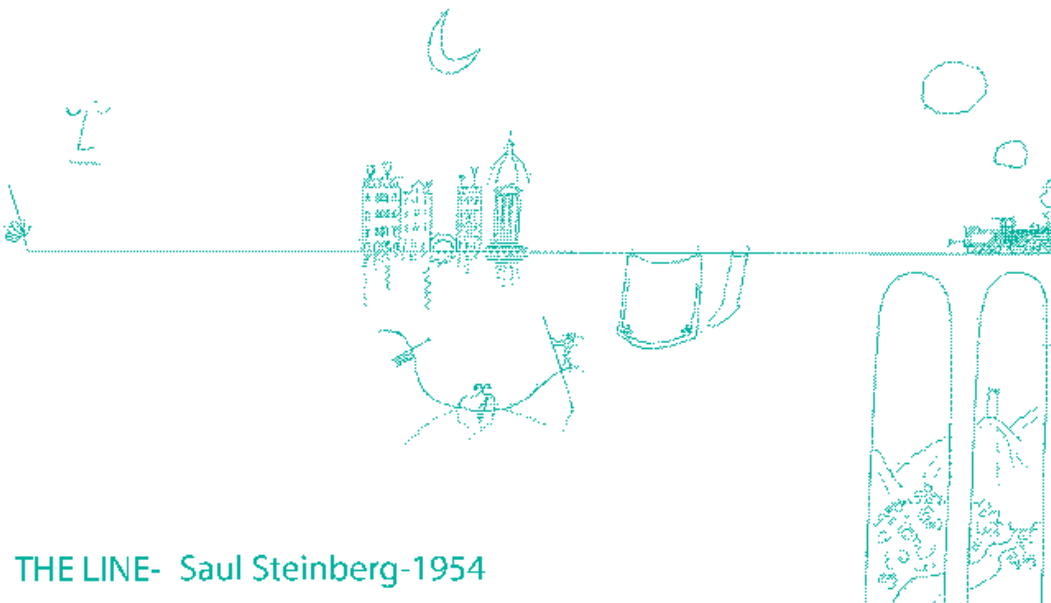
Keynote Lecture

Instructor: * Nasrin Seraji

ARCHITECTURE HAS NEVER BEEN SO UNPOPULAR... REALLY?...

Lecture Introduction:

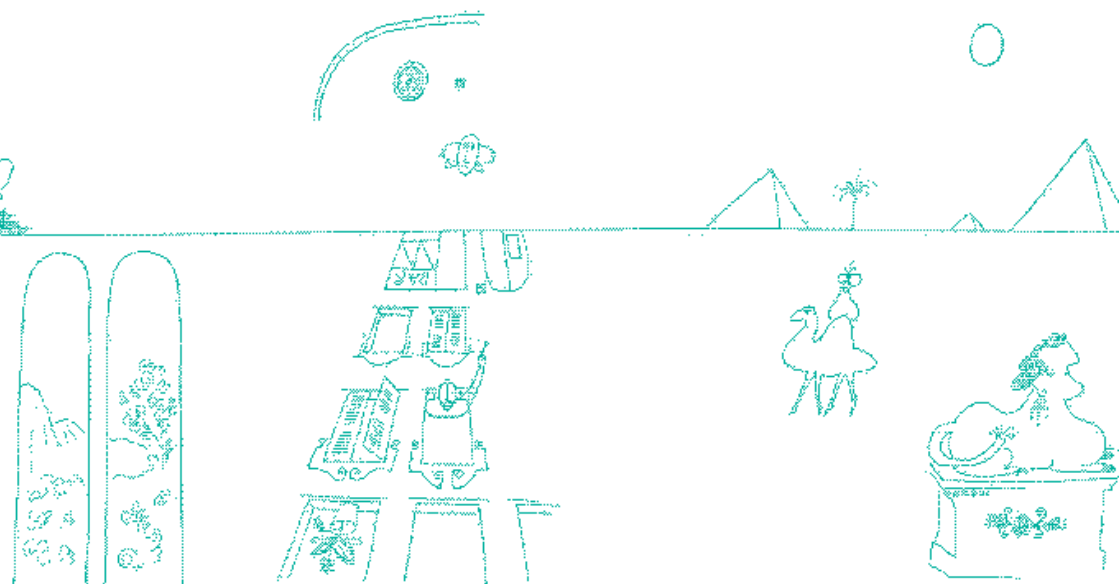
Architecture and design have always been disciplines apart from all other fields in academia, though highly regarded and praised, they have never really been understood in Universities. This notion, however, is proper to the United States and new cultures. Europe [old according to some] has always praised architecture, and its education as architects were the designers of the territories, its infrastructures and landscapes as well as its symbols of power. BUT THIS IS ALL IN THE PAST... We are at a critical time. In the first quarter of the 21st century we were warned about how architecture needs to change environments that we live and work in. All schools of architecture are trying to change their design curricula to be based on research (knowledge production) and no longer problem solving object producers. We at WKU are a young school and in an Ideal position geographically as well as intellectually. China is setting the rules of the new world, the complex, connected, collaborative, integrated, research, learning and teaching will be the future of architecture. LET US LEARN, TEACH AND PRACTICE TOGETHER... (ns@wku2025.cn)



THE LINE- Saul Steinberg-1954

Speaker Introduction:

Nasrin Seraji, Distinguished Professor of Architectural Design and Research at the Michael Graves School of Public Architecture, in WKU has had a distinguished career in both academia and architectural practice. She has taught in leading schools such as the Architectural Association, Princeton, Columbia; and served as Professor and Chair of Architecture at Cornell University, Director of ENSA Paris-Malaquais for ten years, and Professor and Head of Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. She is currently a Full Professor of Architectural Design at University College Dublin. Professor Seraji's architecture studio has produced many notable projects, from the Temporary American Centre in the French capital which started her career to Big-heavy-beautiful, a complex mixed-use building for the Paris transport authority that was inaugurated in 2017. The student housing project in Paris and the School of Architecture in Lille earned the studio two nominations for the Mies van der Rohe Prize, and the Romeo and Juliette apartments was granted a special mention of the Équerre d'Argent. Professor Seraji AA DIPL FRIBA has received a number of honours, including the Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres, Officier de l'Ordre National du Mérite, Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, and was elected a fellow at the Royal Institute of British Architects.



Guest Lecture

Instructor:* Alexandre Monnin

INHERITING SYSTEMIC RUINS: ECOLOGICAL REDIRECTION AND THE CARE FOR NEGATIVE COMMONS

Lecture Introduction:

This lecture explores how architecture can engage with the negative commons - abandoned infrastructures, toxic legacies, and degraded environments inherited from industrial civilization. Rather than turning away from these systemic ruins, it proposes a framework of ecological redirection, grounded in care, withdrawal, and strategic renunciation. Through examples from France and elsewhere, the talk outlines emerging practices that doesn't seek to erase or redevelop, but to inhabit and tend to what remains. It invites a rethinking of design as a tool for composing with unwanted and obsolete legacies, creating value without extraction, and building futures attuned to planetary limits.

Speaker Introduction:

Alexandre Monnin is a philosopher, lecturer, researcher. He holds a PhD from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. He worked on the philosophy of the Web before co-initiating the ecological redirection movement. Scientific director of POPSU Transition of the métropole Nice Côte d'Azur, he is currently leading a project run by the Imaginarium-S association. He co-founded and directed the Master of Science program "Strategy & Design for the Anthropocene," run jointly with Strate Ecole de Design in Lyon between 2020 and 2024. He is the author of several books, including *Héritage et fermeture. Une écologie du démantèlement* (Divergences, 2021, with Emmanuel Bonnet and Diego Landivar) and, alone, *Politiser le renoncement* (Divergences, 2023).

Image credits:
Gregory Chatonsky





"Demolition Wastes in Wenzhou"
Credits: Vincent Peu Duvallon

Yearly Activities Related to the Topic

Public Lecture:

September 2025

*Nasrin Seraji, Distinguished Professor,
Wenzhou-Kean University.

Architecture has Never Been So Unpopular... Really?...

*Alexandre Monnin, Philosopher, Associate Professor
Clermont Business School, Founder and Director of Msc.
Strategy & Design for the Anthropocene.
Inheriting Systemic Ruins: Ecological Redirection and
the Care for Negative Commons

October 2025

*David Vardy, Associate Professor, Wenzhou-Kean University.
Director, Wenzhou-Kean Design Lab (WKDL).
WKDL Projects and Wastes.

November 2025

*Peta Carlin, Associate Professor, Wenzhou-Kean University.
On Collage and Architecture Design.

December 2025

*Hyungmin Pai, Curator and Professor of Architecture,
the University of Seoul.
Curating Uncertainty: from North Korea to Climate Change

Spring 2026

*Jeong Hye Kim, Research Professor, Korea University
*Matthieu Duperrex, Associate Professor in Social Sciences,
ENSA Marseilles (School of Architecture)

Guest Workshops:

Fall 2025

*Alexandre Monnin

Spring 2026

* Matthieu Duperrex

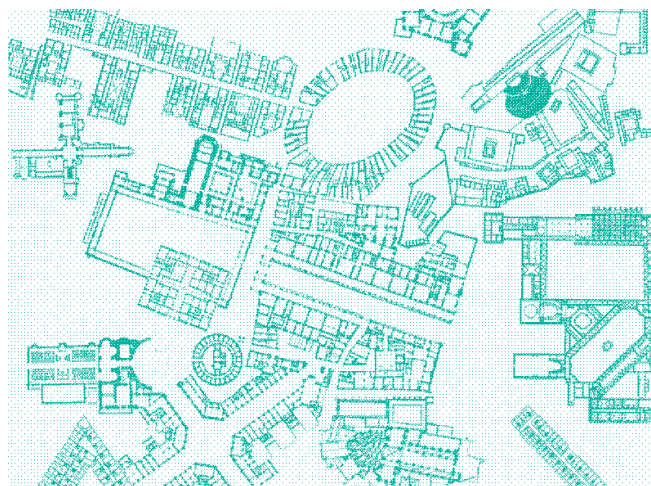
Semester Studio Topics

Year 1. ARCH 1101. Urbanism and Architecture.

Instructors: *Peta Carlin, *Bruno Malusa, *Daein Cheong

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF WASTES-TO-BE

This first-year studio introduces students to basic ideas of urbanism such as density, threshold, infrastructures, and public space, through the lens of wastelands. These are not only abandoned or residual sites, but also “wastes-to-be”: infrastructures at risk of obsolescence, vernacular settlements under pressure, and fragments of modernist planning that no longer fulfill their promises. In Wenzhou, such terrains coexist uneasily, challenging traditional ideas of the city. The studio approaches these landscapes as an archaeology in two senses: a reading of the territory itself, its forms, traces, and mutations, and of the ideologies that have shaped it, from modernist visions of order to current narratives of growth and efficiency. Students will learn to observe, analyze, and reinterpret both space and discourse. Through drawing, mapping, and model-making, they will develop an urban imagination that situates architecture within inherited landscapes, questioning how the city is built, but also how it is thought.



City of Composite Presence.
David Griffin and Hans Kollhoff.
1979

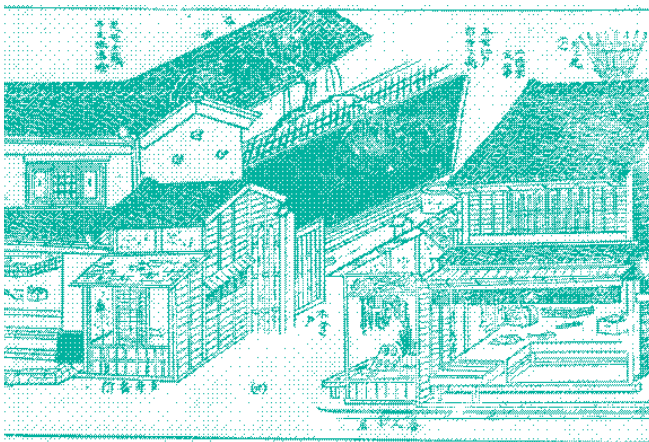
Year 2. ARCH 2103. Landscape and Architecture.

Instructor: *Anastasia Gkoliomyti

LOST THERE, FOUND HERE: LANDSCAPES AS FORMS OF LIFE PRACTICE

Historical time assumes shared progress, where new forms replace old in a linear sequence. Catharina Gabrielsson notes how the notion of origins has justified modern architecture's autonomy, yet origins found in landscapes are grounded in local resources and resist extractive narratives of progress. Said (1984) reminds us this is a matter of "the permission to narrate." Bamboo scaffolding exemplifies such alternative origins: a centuries-old craft foundational to Chinese landscapes and even Hong Kong's high-rises. Despite proven safety and sustainability, it is being phased out in favor of industrial materials. What does "safety" mean today, and what is wasted when sustainable traditions are discontinued?

This studio, based in a bamboo village in Wenzhou, situates itself in these transitional landscapes—heterotechnics where embodied knowledge and digital systems intersect. Through hands-on and speculative work, students will explore how practices endure, adapt, and critique narratives of obsolescence in architecture.



Communal Privacy: Dwellings with Store fronts. 'Ura-nagaya' in Edo.
(From 'Ruiju Kindai Fuzokushi'
[類聚近世風俗志])

Year 3. ARCH 3105. Complex Program I

Instructors: *Linnéa Moore, *Evan Saarinen

WASTELAND TO COMMON GROUND STUDIO 5: COMPLEX PROGRAM

Studio 5 investigates the transformation of post-industrial and manufacturing wastelands, reframing them as inclusive urban territories. Students will conduct research into a specific neighborhood marked by decline and residual production, examining how spatial interventions can reorient these sites from functional remnants into lived spaces. The challenge is to operate simultaneously at the urban scale—addressing infrastructural footprints, circulation, and public life—and the architectural scale, where collective housing typologies can generate frameworks for social interaction. Emphasis will be placed on informal and existing networks of care, mapping how residents already support one another, and exploring how architecture can formalize and expand these practices. Projects will explore housing as social infrastructure, building opportunities for collective life within reimagined urban ecologies.



"DOMESTIC FACTORY",
HUANG TIERU, 2024

Year 4. ARCH 4107. Urban Design, Planning, Housing

Instructor: *Dan Given

COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, CAPITAL & CAMERAS.

The C4 Studio connects Kean University's US and Chinese campuses through cross-continental student groups working collaboratively in Fall 2025. Built around four "C's," the studio emphasizes: Collaboration, fostering teamwork across campuses; Communication, both as a skill and as a recorded process of exchange; Capital, the central theme, prompting students to investigate economic and cultural differences between contexts—from manufacturing and trade to food production and scarcity; and Camera, a tool for documenting research, mediating collaboration, and shaping perception. Rather than aiming for a conventional architectural project, the studio prioritizes spatial research, encouraging students to observe, record, and critically analyze their findings. By engaging with diverse perspectives and using the camera as both communicative and generative medium, the studio equips students to approach design as a process of investigation and dialogue, expanding architectural education across borders.

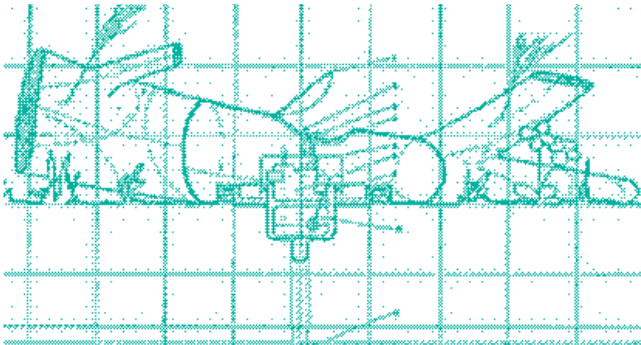


Photo by Fan Ho

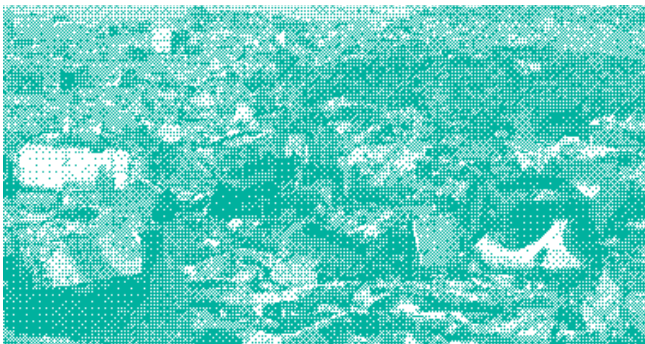
Instructor: *Daein Cheong

DIGITAL WASTELANDS: ARCHITECTURES OF OBSOLETE DATA

In the late 1960s, Archigram's David Greene imagined artificial nature hiding high-tech systems in remote landscapes—a vision now realized through the smartphone and digital networks. Yet what seems immaterial, data streams, instant connectivity, and nomadic freedom, is grounded in vast infrastructures: submarine cables, server farms, e-waste deserts, and space debris. The digital revolution reshapes cities not only through convenience but by redefining urban value via hashtags, algorithms, and viral images. Tourism, too, is re-scripted: Mount Xiqiao, our studio site, is branded as a cultural destination, its villages reborn as curated experiences. In this condition, plazas become film sets, and neighborhoods content studios. This studio interrogates the paradox of immaterial culture resting on immense material foundations. Through observing data flows and digital waste, students will craft speculative devices and spatial scenes that expose the hidden realities of the digital age and explore how architecture might operate within them.



Logplug, David Greene, 1969



E-Waste desert in Guiyu, China

Year 5. ARCH 5109. Complex Program II

Instructor: *David Vardy

BEYOND-CONCRETE: EARTH

Concrete, once hailed as the wonder material of modern China, is now recognized as “the most destructive material on Earth.” Unlike Roman lime concrete, which strengthens over time, modern cement-based concrete deteriorates, leaving behind mountains of debris. Since 2003, China has poured more cement every three years than the US used in the entire 20th century. By 2050, the challenge will be how to move beyond concrete—transforming its relics and debris into resources rather than waste. This studio rethinks innovation not as creating the new, but as designing cycles of transformation: quarry dust and demolition rubble reimagined as a new kind of earth, reconstituted through printing, robotic aggregation, or earthen construction. Set in 2050, with global temperatures 2°C above pre-industrial levels, students will explore architectures of waste metamorphosis, where material, climate, territory, and public space converge to form hybrid, zero-waste futures.



Robotic aggregation of low-grade building material, loose aggregates and twine, Gramazio Kohler Research, 2021.

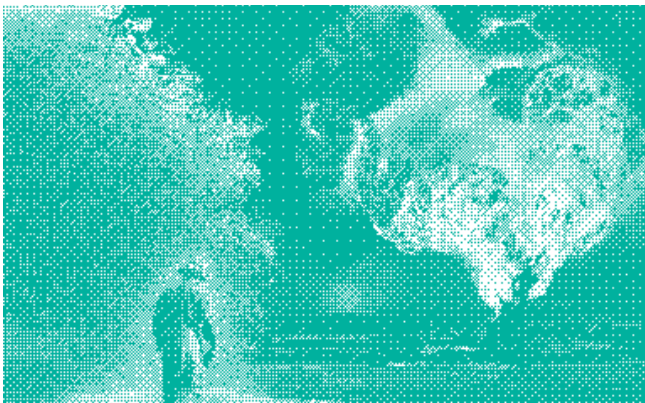
Year 6. ARCH 5110. Thesis I

Instructor: *Bruno Malusa

COOPERATIVE FUTURES :

SPATIAL PRACTICES IN EMERGING WORK LANDSCAPES.

China's late 20th-century opening-up policies reshaped its territory, shifting from agrarian rhythms to hyper-urbanised, infrastructure-heavy environments. This was more than a matter of scale: it was an ideological transformation that turned land into a stage for state-led modernisation, speculative development, and global integration. Special Economic Zones, high-speed rail, and megacities reorganised space around speed, connectivity, and economic performance. Architecture became both tool and product of this shift, producing typologies that privilege efficiency and homogenisation. Today, amid ecological crisis, inequality, and geopolitical tension, the very notion of work remains largely unquestioned, even as it structures our environments, from domestic interiors to national infrastructures. What if work itself could be reconsidered as a form of waste? This studio will investigate residual landscapes, abandoned infrastructures, displaced labour, degraded ecologies, not to erase them, but to reformat them. Through research-driven design, students will speculate on cooperative futures grounded in responsibility, inheritance, and collective agency.



Sebastião Salgado – “Desert Hell” exposes the hidden forms of work and their placement in geographies of aggressive extraction.

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Notes and comments

<http://design.wku.edu.cn/cn/>