

PAPRIKA! 5-06B

State of the Carpet
March 20, 2020

Editor's Note

At 7:52 p.m. on March 10th, Yale President Peter Salovey sends an email notifying the community that University courses will be conducted online following Spring Break, in response to increasing global concern about the spread of COVID-19. At 3:04 p.m. on March 11th, Dean Deborah Berke confirms that the School of Architecture will be moving to online instruction until at least April 5th, with the majority of access to Rudolph Hall being limited after March 22nd. Dean Berke states that the school will reassess the situation during the week of March 30th, while other schools in the region commit to online instruction through the end of the semester as COVID-19 spreads along the east coast. At 1:53 p.m. on March 14th, Director of Yale Health Dr. Paul Genecin confirms the first case of COVID-19 within the Yale community, and later that evening, President Salovey extends online instruction to the end of the semester.

Meanwhile, at Rudolph Hall, a team of maintenance staff rips up the old, stained, paprika carpet to be replaced with a “new, brighter shade”¹ in preparation for the end of the 2019–2020 academic year. A group of seven students, stragglers among a population currently scattered across the globe, watches the process from the 5th floor bridge, wondering when and whether they should start packing up their studio desks.

As a student-run publication, *Paprika!* has worked to balance its dual responsibilities of on-the-ground reporting from inside the school and contributions to a broader discourse outside of it. In this spirit, we are using this bulletin to address the “State of the Carpet” at the Yale School of Architecture, to put student voices behind these unprecedented changes.

The editorial team has decided to continue as planned with the remaining issues of Volume 05, to be published online as scheduled until on-campus activities resume. We will plan a joint physical release event for any issues published during this period as soon as we regain access to Rudolph Hall. Copies of these issues will also be mailed out to physical subscribers as soon as campus operations resume.

In the meantime, we are planning to hold space for 500–800 word opinion pieces in each upcoming issue from current students at the school, to continue discussion as the situation unfolds. If you are interested in contributing to this content, please contact info@yalepaprika.com.

The entire *Paprika!* team wants to express our concern for everyone affected by the current situation and an ongoing commitment to remaining a voice for the community throughout this time. We'll be around as long as there is paprika(!) carpet in the fourth floor pit, stained or not.

1. [@yalearchitecture](#) on Instagram, March 13, 2020.

Open Call: HOME OFFICE

Dear fellow students,

We have come upon an unprecedented situation that is altering the way we study, work and live. In the name of continued collaboration we are announcing an open call for contributions to a collaborative project titled *HOME OFFICE*. The project will explore the diverse approaches, ingenious inventions and hyper specific measures taken to make our new temporary workplaces. As a collection of plan drawings the project will trace similarities and differences in our organization of space while rendering the collective image of a transient organizational typology specific to the online semester of Spring 2020.

→ THE HOME OFFICE PLAN

We are asking for a plan drawing of your workplace in your home (only the room in which you are primarily working from). Choice of drawing style is completely free but should stay within general conventions of the architectural plan drawing and have an indication of scale for reference (½” or ¼” scale will probably work for most drawings). The drawing can be as elaborate as you wish, and should fit within a 12”x12” box when printed to scale.

→ SUBMISSION

Send us your plan drawing as a PDF file by email to gustav.nielsen@yale.edu or upload it to a folder called *HOME OFFICE PROJECT* on the temporary drive on the school server by Friday, May 8th, at 5:00 p.m. Your file name should include your name as well as the city and country in which your home office is located. For any questions please write to gustav.nielsen@yale.edu.

We hope that you will take part in this collaborative project which we believe will be a joyful way to reflect upon the situation and stay together despite being apart! Stay safe and sane!

—Rachael, Jack, Diana and Gustav



In Spite of the New Austerity

Jack Rusk, M.Arch I/MEM 2022

As public life has been evacuated and the anxiety of the moment seeps into every interaction, we've sought refuge in digital worlds. These are sterile worlds, in every sense of the world. The virus cannot be transmitted over SMS or e-mail, but neither can the richness and grime of our life within Rudolph Hall. While we can receive assignments and submit drawings over Canvas, we are unable to have spontaneous conversations on our way to the laser cutter room, to peruse our deskmate's books for new precedents or references we'd never find on our own, to look at other students' work pinned up in the pits, or to borrow tools and ideas from each other during the long nights ahead of a final review.

These digital worlds, a poor replacement for direct interactions, are an unfortunate necessity given the reality of our entirely digital education. And the move towards digital education, while certainly able to prevent the virus's transmission, contains within it a larger idea about the trajectory of the profession and the world within which it is situated. While the school was required to act quickly in order to continue instruction, we shouldn't treat the move towards digital education as neutral or inevitable. While we adapt in the short-term, we should also plan our resistance: these changes in education reflect changes in the profession that are impoverishing architectural work and the architects that do it.

The feeling of inevitability behind teleworking in academic environments follows behind its aggressive implementation in workplaces. The AEC firm I worked at last summer had begun providing 40 desks for every 50 employees, hoping a combination of teleworking and site visits could allow them to squeeze the same amount of work

into 80% of the office space. In some of the smaller studios where I've worked, most workers are considered 'independent contractors' with few or none of the protections afforded to full employees. The response of the architectural discipline to the pandemic—professionally and academically—has been to double down on these measures, asking increasingly precarious architectural workers to perform similar work but in their own spaces, on their own internet connection, and often with their own software.

We've been lucky, of course, that schools have provided a studio for us and the means necessary to do our work. These resources are necessary for us to learn to think like architects. But our education also prepares us to enter a discipline where work has become increasingly precarious and the move to teleworking is an object lesson in this darker side of the profession. So there may also be educational merit in this mass teleworking experiment—receiving our architectural education at our kitchen tables and parents' spare rooms is the perfect preparation for practicing architecture in similar circumstances.

All in all, this is a dismal prediction. If there is any hope to be had, it's in looking to the widely speculative projects put forward during previous recessions, when architecture's financial imperative has taken a backseat. The current pandemic is deeply enmeshed with global dynamics like climate change, shifting migration patterns, friction at the rural edge, and accelerating urbanization. Our work should no doubt address these things head-on; our practice in self-isolation should reflect the reasons for the separateness we will have in common. But our work on these grand projects is deeply inflected by the way in which we work. This is a moment when the practice of architecture as labor is at a crossroads; our response to this crisis, as students, can have serious effects on the future of the discipline.

The first step, perhaps, is to find each other again. This was my motivation in starting an all-school text group. This group opened with an apology for the platform being “unwieldy, annoying, and overwhelming” but it's since proved to be a useful avenue for coordinating studio move-out, coping with Yale's laggy VPN, and scavenging for paprika-colored carpet to decorate our new home offices. These experiments in communication should continue as we find ways to collaborate in spite of our physical separation. Recovering some of the messiness of studio

culture, some of the capacity for chance interactions, feels paramount.

This is an opportunity for us all to practice together in finding new ways of collaborating in response to both the present circumstances and the larger trends in architectural labor. The digital worlds in which we've found refuge are imperfect, but create opportunities as well as limitations. The erasure of geographic distance afforded by teleworking could bring new voices into the studio, as students hunker down with old friends and collaborators in their hometowns. That this condition is shared by students across programs means that we needn't limit ourselves to other Yale students. The distinction between being at Yale, Rice, the GSD, or Woodbury is blurred if we're all at home. Harnessing this diffusion, and finding new ways of working together despite our atomization, feels essential to thriving in the short-term emergency and in re-figuring architectural labor in the long-term.

As we practice new ways of interacting, we can better advocate for ourselves as students. This may mean sharing digital or physical resources, providing care to people who get sick, supporting people with visa issues, or coordinating our responses to the administration's announcements.

There has been murmuring of asking for a stipend to recoup unexpected expenses in this transition (as the Yale School of Music has provided its students), of coordinating a request for tuition reimbursement, or of receiving wages despite being unable to work. These things become more possible when we are better coordinated, within and between schools. Atomized, we default to the guidance of academic administrations or upper management to determine our working conditions; together, we have the ability to influence these changes, set our own terms, and discover new models for co-work and co-creation.



Making Friends with My Apartment

Angela Lufkin, M.Arch I 2021

When planning my move to New Haven in the summer of 2018, I had simple criteria for my new living situation. I grew up in a small, shared bedroom with my two sisters and cycled through various co-living arrangements in college and thereafter. I wanted to finally try living alone, to have complete control over my own domestic experience, and to embody the Marie Kondo fantasy of waking up in a space filled only with the things that I love. I also wanted to live as close to Rudolph Hall as possible—without, you know, being too close. I thought my new apartment would be my new best friend, where I'd host game nights or wine nights or movie nights, where I'd return after productive days at school and indulge myself in sophisticated meals, where I'd curl up with tea and history/theory readings before drifting off to sleep. I settled on the first place I checked out, a modest one bedroom on Howe street.

In our year and a half together, I've developed intimacy with my apartment. I've grown to expect the scream of the fire alarm every time I try to cook (turns out ventilation hoods have an essential function), I've learned which knobs in the shower are actually hot (they're all labeled "C"), and I've come to accept the orange glow of the flood light outside my window and that, despite all of the noises it makes, the radiator will never feel warm to the touch. My apartment has undoubtedly observed my own quirks, too—if it has come to accept them about me, I may never know. I leave as soon as I wake up, return late, fall into bed, and repeat. But I still open the blinds every morning and close them every night. I don't wash the dishes immediately because I don't make many dishes because I don't often cook (that damn fire alarm!). I forget to water my plants. I had a game night, once.

If the coronavirus pandemic has given me anything, it's the realization that, in all of my extroversion, my would-have-been-best-friend apartment had become much more of an estranged lover in practice and that my sense of domesticity had really only existed outside of its walls—triangulated somewhere between Atticus, Rudolph, and Rudy's. In the past couple of weeks, as each of these spaces have closed their doors to me, one by one, I've been left to wake up and stay in with my apartment. I imagined it would feel isolating or suffocating as just the two of us, but

I actually think we are finally getting to know each other, you know, as friends. I've been removing the batteries from the fire alarm when I'm hungry, washing the dishes slowly to loud music, and fussing with the arrangement of pillows. I've been writing from my couch and unconsciously pausing to watch the sun move slowly then quickly across the white plaster walls. I've been constructing a new sort of studio space and asking myself, and my apartment, where to put all the spray paint cans, or lay the cutting mat, or dangle the rulers. We've been collaborating. Hanging out.

In this time of social distancing, it's objectively weird that our domestic spaces will become our new studios for the rest of the semester. Beyond the social cohesion and collectivity of physically being at school, I believe we gain a lot from Rudolph Hall itself, a sentiment shared in former Dean Stern and Jimmy Stamp's historical account of YSoA in *Pedagogy and Place*, where the building is recognized as "an integral part of the architectural education at Yale, providing the students and faculty who work within it lessons in mass, volume, texture, and affect. To attend the Yale School of Architecture is to gradually discover the building's myriad spaces and surfaces. From its stairwells to its orange carpets to its collection of reliefs and sculptures, it is a vivid argument against the banal."² In our newly forced proximity, I am finally getting to know my apartment as I have come to know Rudolph Hall. And in doing so, I'm discovering that even the banal, under the surreal light of our abnormal global circumstances, offers its own lessons in mass, volume, texture, and affect. If we run into each other on Zoom, I'll have to show you around!

² Robert A. M. Stern and Jimmy Stamp, *Pedagogy and Place: 100 Years of Architecture Education at Yale* (New Haven (Conn.): Yale University Press, 2016), p.571)



Creating Meaning in Isolation

Jen Shin, M.Arch II/MEM 2020

The last ten days at YSoA—no less the world—have been a cascade of disappointment, uncertainty, and restlessness. I can predict, with perhaps the only certainty left in these times, that more disheartening cancellations, closures, and protective measures that erode student life, and thus the very soul of YSoA, are ahead. It seems no academic traditions are safe from the sudden and steadfast threat that is the global pandemic of COVID-19.

Devastatingly, access to our beloved Rudolph Hall will soon be denied; Dean Berke's school-wide message to "pack up for the year" rings painfully in our virtual ears.³ On WhatsApp chats and Instagram, YSoA collectively ponders the mundane: how will those currently in countries with newly closed borders move out of studio? Will our personal computers be able to handle Rhino? Some members of the Class of 2020 lament that we will never get to play badminton on the new paprika carpet. Others express dismay at the sudden realization that they may never see some of their classmates again.

Commencement still remains the lone holdout for salvaging what remains of the semester. But this tradition has not survived COVID-19 fears at peer institutions, suggesting that chances of graduation happening at Yale remain precarious at best.⁴ For the master's student who signs their email with "expected 2020," the end of this semester, or rather lack thereof, is deeply saddening.

In addition to allowing myself to wallow in the collective sadness of what we no longer have as a community, I'd like to share a realization—or perhaps a re-realization—that #WFH has reminded me about architecture education: it's unequivocally a team sport. Of course, as those who daily enjoy the social serendipity that Rudolph Hall affords, we know this already.⁵ But COVID-19 has forced upon us a new appreciation that both the marginal and deliberate interactions interwoven throughout YSoA are, in fact, the material of our education. Despite our best attempts at self-sufficiency in studio, we simply cannot learn without one another. And while architecture pedagogy—which is, in Phil Bernstein's words, a "tradition that's literally centuries old"—continues to codify the myth of the individual genius through institutions like the review jury, the reality is that almost all components

of architecture education are carefully and intentionally entrenched in ritual.

From the fortuitous inspiration gained from talking out a vague idea with a desk mate, to the ever-anticipated and widely-attended badminton finals, to the customary mid- and final-review cheese plate debrief, education at YSoA necessitates that we look to one another for not only support and inspiration but simply to bear witness—together—to the miracle that is architecture education. As students of architecture, gatherings big and small give our daily lives meaning. Without them, we risk falling into the trap of ennui, left without a fire beneath us nor the prospect of celebrating with friends and classmates after a satisfying review.

As we migrate all of student life—academic and otherwise—online, we must come to terms with the impossibility of an adequate translation from an education IRL to one via Zoom. We will need to consider that in order to create meaning in our online gatherings, we need to experiment with how to retain and augment the daily rituals that we have otherwise taken for granted at YSoA. These might include a 24-hour studio-wide Zoom charrette before reviews, student and faculty Thursday quarantinis⁶ (no bar-tenders required!), school-sponsored post-Zoom review cheese gatherings, online pong tournaments, a minecraft graduation ceremony,⁷ among other substitutes.

The loss experienced by the student body in light of COVID-19 is undeniably a physical one. No amount of Zoom can make up for the elimination of physical social cohesion generated within Rudolph Hall. But online academic gathering need not be only functional or utilitarian. In fact, we need for it to be more, to fill the void in civic life created at YSoA. With all the pent-up creativity in our homes and apartments worldwide, we can replicate and even elevate the meaning that's usually created within the bush-hammered walls of Rudolph Hall. Perhaps COVID-19 can teach us how to better create meaning in our gatherings, if not because we need each other but because this is the very stuff out of which our education is made.

³ <https://www.architecture.yale.edu/news/covid-19-updates>
⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/17/us/wellesley-college-graduation-coronavirus.html>
⁵ <https://yalepaprika.com/articles/health-hazards-of-ysoa>
⁶ <https://twitter.com/hashtag/quarantini>
⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51930728>



On the Ground

Tuesday, March 10: Yale President Peter Salovey announces that University classes will be moving online after Spring Break, through at least April 5th, in response to the spread of COVID-19. He asks traveling students to remain at home, and cancels all Yale-related events of 100 people or more.

Wednesday, March 11: Dean Deborah Berke confirms that the School of Architecture will be moving to online instruction, to be reassessed during the week of March 30th.

Thursday, March 12: Dean Berke sends a follow-up email detailing the "transition [of] the School of Architecture to an entirely on-line enterprise." Fabrication Shops are immediately closed until further notice, and YSoA staff will begin working remotely. The building will remain accessible to students, unless the University instructs otherwise, until Sunday night, March 22nd at midnight, after which Rudolph Hall will be closed to everyone except those using the Library. All classes will be held by remote collaboration through Canvas, Zoom and Box, following the usual schedule, starting Monday, March 23rd.

Friday, March 13: Maintenance staff begin removing the paprika carpet in Rudolph Hall for replacement. Students fight to grab the least-stained pieces when Richard isn't looking.

Students are invited to an "all-architecture," student-organized WhatsApp group via email. Rosa Congdan shares an image of her cat nuzzling a scrap of the old carpet.

Saturday, March 14: Director of Yale Health Dr. Paul Genecin confirms the first case of COVID-19 within the Yale community.

The "Yale School of ArchiZOOM" WhatsApp group grows to 138 participants. Content remains 20% COVID-19 news articles, 20% memes, and 60% photos of the carpet demo.

President Salovey confirms that online course instruction will be extended through the end of the semester.

Sunday, March 15: Some studio desks begin to empty out, while others become stockpiles of carpet scraps.

Monday, March 16: Installation of the new carpet is completed in the 7th floor pit, and debates ensue as to whether it is actually a different shade of paprika, or if the coffee stains and sun bleach were just distracting.

Tuesday, March 17: "Yale School of ArchiZOOM" pivots from offers to help pack up studio to discussions of tuition rebates. Most agree to let administration deal with the global pandemic before adding another log to the fire, but the idea of paying the same for VPN access as the KUKA Robot does not sit well with most.

Wednesday, March 18: soupduj.org pauses at Black Bean, Roasted Tomato & Cheddar, and Chicken Chipotle after Atticus closes with papered over windows on Chapel St. Arethusa is one of the only shops to remain open (I am planning to get ice cream immediately after I finish writing this).

Thursday, March 19: Second and third years wonder if first years will continue to host digital 6on7s or perhaps even virtual prom via Zoom (or Habbo Hotel)? Still Halloween themed? Let us know.

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