

**On the Ground/Touching Ground:**  
**Tuesday, March 31:** The first-year social chairs send out a survey to take the temperature on a Zoom-hosted prom. Survey results are still unclear as we go to press, but the lingering staleness of last week’s 6onZoom raises concerns. Should we suggest Habbo Hotel again?  
*1927: Cesar Chavez is born.*  
**Wednesday, April 1:** The “Yale School of ArchIZOOM” Whatsapp group lights back up after Dean Deborah Berke issues a response to the student body’s letter. Opinions are polarized: some wonder if it’s an April Fool’s joke, and others push for patience as the administration does their best to work with what they can. Two things are clear: student opinions will continue to be voiced, and many more web-based surveys and town halls likely to come.  
*1963: Workers of the International Typographical Union end their 114 day strike, which had shut down seven New York City newspapers.*

Info	Draft	Status	Title	Words	Byline
Editors' Statement	WC	Final	In	Out of Work // Out of Control	350 N/A
Keefer Dunn		Final	In	Organize, Proletarianize	2090/3672 N/A
Poem	W	Final	In	Eva Hesse knew what she was doing	246 Jeesoo Lee is a poet and editor living in Brooklyn.
Elisa Iturbe	C	Final	In	Emergency Brakes	1910/3683 N/A
Jen Shin	W	Final	In	A Return to Service	715 Jen Shin, M.Arch II/MEM '20
HOME–OFFICE	WC	Final	In	Maintenance Work	2042/3363 N/A
Joshua Tan	C	Final	In	Through Material and Media	645 Joshua Tan, M. Arch '22
Anonymous	W	Final	In	Big Boss Man	273 a replaceable architecture student
On the Ground		Final	In		388 N/A
Should we print this spreadsheet?				Total Words	8659/13335

## Organize, Proletarianize – An Interview with Keefer Dunn

*Keefer Dunn is an architect, a member of The Architecture Lobby, and the author of “Architecture and the Proletarian Ethic” published on Avery Shorts. We spoke with Keefer over Zoom to discuss his recent work toward unionizing architecture and the fundamental decisions to be made about the profession’s future. This interview has been edited for length. The extended article can be found at yalepaprika.com.*

**Andrew Economos Miller (AEM)** What is the proletarianization of architecture?  
**Keefer Dunn (KD)** Proletarianization is the process by which large groups of people, professions, or industries become proletarian. It means that architects are increasingly put in a position where they need to sell their labor power in order to survive. That hasn’t always been true of architecture. Architecture was a kind of gentlemanly profession, you had either upwardly-mobile contractors or downwardly-mobile aristocrats that formed the social basis of the profession. Marx calls this class the petty bourgeois or smallholders: they don’t own giant factories, they don’t own giant tracts of land, they don’t own huge swaths of the means of production, but they do own a small amount of capital. That’s not to say that there haven’t been proletarian workers in architecture. There was a whole class of draftspeople and support staff that was present from the early 1900s until the rise of big corporate practices. In some cases, those folks were unionized. But as the nature of the industry has changed, there’s no drafting staff anymore, right? We are the drafting staff. So increasingly it’s architectural workers that are proletarianized. We have to sell our labor power in order to get by.

**AEM** You also see proletarianization as a method for gaining political agency, not just as a relegation to the working class. What is that new form of agency?  
**KD** Historically, architects have seen their social role in a very paternalistic way, either the project is an agent of good or the architect is working on behalf of a government or institution with a social or political ambition. Proletarianization means recognizing that we’re workers: we might not have authority over budgets, we don’t always have authority over the projects that we get to work on, and we don’t have a say in much of the process of development, but we do have this immense power if we organize and collectivize because nothing happens without us. If we organize, and unions are an effective vehicle for that, we have the power to refuse en masse, and that might lead to changes in budgets or changes in priorities for the firm or all of these other things. That is an agency that emerges from the fact that we are labor. It runs counter to a different idea of agency that says we might have to make compromises about the clients that we work with, but like, we’re going to pepper in some “good” somehow, by a sort of innate genius or sneakiness or cleverness or rhetoric. You know, “I’m going to figure out a way to put a couple of drops of good into this building, and if I can do that then I’ve done my share.” I think that’s a perfectly fine ambition, but I think we have to be realistic about what that can achieve in terms of structural change. I think because we want to put something beautiful and positive into the world, not because we only want to sneak in a couple of good things, whatever that actually means. Organizing lets us achieve so much more, there’s so much more power in it. What you can accomplish in terms of moving the needle, shifting the Overton Window, and winning real power, winning substantive change, is an order of magnitude higher than if you are an individual trying to navigate the structurally problematic world of development in an upstanding way.

**Deo Deiparine (DD)** Are there any obstacles in the way of achieving this reorganization of us as architectural workers?  
**KD** Context is really important here. We’ve been coming out of 40 years of sustained neoliberal hegemony, an assault from the right on the institutions of the left. I think people are really jaded by that. People don’t have a strong imaginary that things can change, even though the evidence that things need to change drastically is all around us constantly. I think you see this in the election. Medicare-for-All, Green New Deal, these huge transformative policy positions and platforms and programs have a ton of support. But nevertheless, people end up voting for Joe Biden because of some weird concern about electability, right? That’s ideology at work. But that happens in small ways all the time in our lives. I think it’s interesting to be speaking in this moment where coronavirus is on everyone’s mind and we’re social distancing. My hope is that one of the silver linings that will come out of this hugely traumatic and negative situation is that people will recalibrate their imagination about the malleability of society. People tend to go about their lives thinking that everything that’s normal; the status quo is this kind of immutable thing. But we’ve seen how quickly we can actually reorder things when the historical conditions and the groundwork is right. I think that rigidity is an obstacle.

Organizing is a muscle. And it’s a muscle that’s been atrophied for decades and decades. There’s lots of people who are learning how to organize for the first time at the kind of magnitude that we’ve never seen. And there’s lots of us who have been in the movements for a bit longer and have some more familiarity with history and these practices. Bringing those two things together is super important, doing political education, fighting fights that we can win and building collective knowledge and confidence. All the things that we can do to exercise that muscle will make us better. There’s not a lot of people in architecture who have the kind of organizing know-how right now to build a union or even take the first steps toward organizing their workplace. There’s a lot of intermediate workplace organizing that needs to happen and a lot of smaller scale wins that need to happen between when you start organizing in a workplace and when you form a union. The Architecture Lobby is really crucial in this regard because it’s the kind of institution where people who are doing that work can learn from each other, share experiences, and strategize together. That’s really the function of an organization like the Lobby, to institutionalize that knowledge.

**AEM** We’ve been speaking a lot about changing the common sense of architecture. But thinking post-unionization or post-organization of the workers, what role does architecture, as a medium, play in changing larger public notions of “common sense”?  
**KD** I have a very particular relationship to this question. I just don’t think about it like that. It’s not that my politics and my architectural work are separate in any way, but I don’t put the pressure on my creative pursuits to enact political change in any sort of way. I’m a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) where I help out with political education quite a bit in the Chicago chapter. I’m not in the leadership of the Lobby anymore, but I am still a member, still involved. I see those places as the appropriate arena for affecting social/political change. And, honestly, when I’m doing my architectural work, it’s like a big breath of fresh air. I’m in this nice space where I’m a sole practitioner. So I don’t have a boss and in some ways, my work is not alienated from me, it’s very personal. So the work can be this opportunity to get to know myself and relax. Those are two things that help me do political work, which is not relaxing and for someone with my temperament can be rather stressful. I do think when we’re looking at it from a broader social point of view, people like to be in nice spaces and architects are good at making nice spaces. We know how to combine technical knowledge, aesthetic knowledge, knowledge of history, and socio/political critiques. We know how to work all of these things together. I think that that is a fundamental strength that is waiting to be released into the world, but is constantly thwarted by structures of private development—the developers who just want us to get the permits, get the thing done faster, improve the bottom line, and all those different things.

**AEM** Yeah, I find that really refreshing because what I asked was probably a bad question. Nobody asks, you know, pharmacists, “what can pharmacy do to save the world?” It inherently privileges power to architecture that might not exist—we’re just workers.  
**KD** Yeah, exactly. I think probably a lot of pharmacists are really upset that they have to sell medicine at exorbitant prices. But the way that you fight against that if you’re a pharmacist is not by trying to do pharmacy better. You go out there and lobby, you organize, you organize. You try to change the structure. You would talk to your congressperson about drug price legislation and it’s the same thing for us. As architects, we’re always like, “oh, if we can only crack the perfect design for public housing, it’s going to open up people’s imagination about what’s possible and they’ll see that they can do this beautiful thing and it’s going to be affordable and enriching.” It’s important that architects do that work. But the way that public housing is going to be realized in America is when the federal government allocates trillions of dollars to public housing. Yeah, architects need to be there to make the public housing affordable, functional, and fucking beautiful. We have this incredible anxiety about beauty in this profession right now, especially among the left wing. And if an architect’s only job is to make things beautiful, I’m actually okay with that. Honestly, I don’t see a problem with that personally. I think what a lot of people are really saying when they’re talking anxiously about beauty, is that they are not interested in doing beauty just for a bunch of rich assholes, and yeah if that is what beauty means then we have a problem. But I think the way that we untie that Gordian knot of class and beauty is not through speculative projects. It’s by getting out there and becoming engaged in movements beyond architecture, as architectural workers.

**AEM** One thing that we want to really focus on is immediate action. So our final question would just be, how can we help?  
**KD** I think joining The Architecture Lobby is a no brainer. The Lobby does periodic organizer trainings, which is I think super helpful because like I said, you have to go to the gym. Organizing is not particularly difficult, but it is a discrete skill set that people can learn from each other and from practice. I think becoming involved in DSA [Democratic Socialists of America] is also a really powerful vehicle for getting involved in fights that are related to architecture, but outside of architecture. The DSA is out there fighting for the Green New Deal, fighting for Medicare-For-All, fighting for public housing, all of these things. I think if we want to see more commissions for public housing, green infrastructure, all of those things, we have to engage in those movements, not just as architects but as citizens. What’s really important is to connect yourself with other people who are doing this work and raising your hand and saying, how can I help? And then questioning your gut instinct when you think maybe it’s a speculative architecture project, because maybe it’s not. Sometimes activism can be boring. It’s spreadsheets and knocking on doors. But that’s important work to do to lay the groundwork for the big public-facing campaigns. There is a kind of magic to it where you lay all of this groundwork and build the alliances and organize infrastructures and make plans and start projects and at some point—usually when you least expect it—things just line up to make a positive change. Those are the moments you work towards and when you have a real sense that you are a part of something bigger than yourself. It may seem like unglamorous work but getting the perfect organizer spreadsheet done can be just as satisfying as putting the finishing touches on a beautiful model.

**DD** Perfect. We’ll give that a shot. Awesome spreadsheets.

*On the Ground/Touching Ground (continued):  
**Sunday, April 5:** Gwyneth’s Pub is officially “closed until further notice.” The move is expected, but the student body begins to incorn free Millers after Thursday lectures, and holds onto hope for continued Monday musings via email from Samuel Haller. (Please?)  
**Monday, April 6:** Phil Bernstein presents “A First Look at the Current Building Economy” as Andrew Benner delivers nationalize steel mills to prevent a strike.  
**Tuesday, April 7:** 1772: Charles Fourier is born.  
**Wednesday, April 8:** The Class of 2020 organic crisis.  
**Thursday, April 9:** U.S. President Truman calls to nationalize steel mills to prevent a strike.  
**Friday, April 10:** Mario Carpio makes a surprise appearance at Peter Eisenman and Kurt Forster’s Renaissance and Modern II seminar to help discuss James Stirling. Even during a pandemic, Yale will be Yale.  
**Saturday, April 11:** Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata is murdered by the Mexican government.  
**Sunday, April 12:** 1933: inmates in the Federal prison in Lucasville, Ohio begin a ten-day riot against poor living conditions and forced immunizations.*

# Out of Work (Out of Control)

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## Editors' Statement

*The architect is stuck doing work they don't love. The office gives them okay wages for each week of labor they sell, working away on RCPs that position the ceiling tiles just so to make the steelwork, the ductwork, the electrical work all disappear. What remains is a grid of neat lines that look like no work at all. The architect loves the work of select individuals, these magicians that leverage their past work on corporate headquarters toward the procurement of institutional projects funded by those same corporations' CEOs. This star designer probably met the CEO at a distant relative's gala, the architect reassures themself. Meanwhile, the architect is still stuck in the office at 10pm on a Friday night. No overtime, I'm afraid. We can't afford to bill those added hours.*

**The architect is stuck: just as we sell our labor for increasingly meager wages, we continue to create documents of control that define the wage-labor of others. Not only does the architect control the immediate labor of construction, but Architecture—here defined as the unexceptional labor done by architects-at-large—is nearly always put forward to expand the profit margins of those able to mobilize large quantities of capital. The reduction of the once-bourgeois position of the architect to the “working class” makes those architects who yet move in the old paradigm appear as class traitors.**

*The emancipation of the architect from the precarity imposed by wage-slavery, we have called Out of Work.*

**The emancipation of the victims of architecture from the products of our captive labor, we have called Out of Control.**

*Out of Work asks us to examine the processes which determine the architect's position within neoliberal ideologies of performance, austerity, and market value.*

**Out of Control asks us to investigate architecture's output—typically the beautified commodities that enable oppressive and inequitable social arrangements.**

We believe these issues to be linked. This fold, a provisional attempt at escapism—though, an escapism concerned with the ground, as opposed to the clouds—aims to elucidate the qualities of this double-bind and seek strategies for a way out.

## A Return to Service – Jen Shin, M.Arch II/MEM '20

If the spirit of the architectural discipline emerges out of our academic training, then we are spiritually lost. So rarely does practice—with its attendant anxieties, like the precarity of the market and worker exploitation—resemble the dynamism of architecture school that they effectively operate as two separate cultures. But somehow, despite the trudge through office life that demands longer and harder unpaid hours of our labor, we never lose sight of our characteristic optimism and penchant to fashion opportunity amidst the world’s most challenging problems.

This idealism percolates from our intense and formative education where we become indoctrinated into a legacy of critical thinking dating back centuries and even millennia. Here, we develop our peculiar creativity in problem solving—some call it “design thinking”—that is seldom matched but often knocked-off in domains like the business world. But despite our hopeful disposition, we fall short at a critical moment: demonstrating the value of our carefully honed skills to those outside of architecture. In a globalization and climate change course I took last fall, we covered a chapter in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)(1) titled “Human Settlements, Infrastructure, and Spatial Planning.” Much to my chagrin and despite the promising chapter title, I discovered that no architects were included among its professionally diverse cast of 36 co-authors. As the foremost international authority on sustainability and cities, this chapter guides local, national, and international urban climate policy with recommendations like dense urban plans and transit-oriented development. Our noteworthy absence from this chapter, which so openly encroaches into our professional domain, shows that those in high-level decision-making spheres overlook architects. Instead, our role can be filled by a patchwork of engineers, climate scientists, sociologists, and ecologists. We are aestheticians of the material world, commissioned to decorate problems rather than help define them.

Our position on the lower rungs of the decision-making ladder reveals dire circumstances not just for the profession but for the governing bodies that are denied our expertise where it is needed most. In my experience straddling both environmental management and architecture, I’m often perplexed by alarming oversights in policy recommendations that sorely lack the expertise that architects could and should provide. Still trending among land managers, for instance, is the recommendation of New Urbanism as a prudent alternative to the suburbanization of the peri-urban. Although touted for its consolidation of land and replication of small-town social cohesion, the misguided export of New Urbanism to the rapidly urbanizing corners of the globe too often results in a socially deprived homogenization of neo-urban life. As the late activist-critic Michael Sorkin observed, New Urbanism “promotes another style of universality that is similarly over reliant on visual cues to produce social effects.”(2) While land managers write New Urbanism into policy worldwide, architects, who lack the political clout to advocate for more nuanced alternatives, remain unable to intervene. Reclaiming agency for the architecture profession, then, is not a luxurious ambition but rather a necessity.

This aspiration for our profession remains especially poignant in the context of the current global health pandemic. We face an unprecedented economic recession, continued climate threats, and severe inequality as a result of these converging global circumstances. The profession’s current mode of practice, “Design as Service,” does little to defend against the current slashing of the architecture workforce. Importantly, this signals a necessity for us to audit our professional assets and collectively build coalitions that empower us to successfully direct our expertise toward the right allies across the decision-making chain.

Creatively leveraging our problem solving skills while renewing our ambitions for public service can achieve twin goals—first, expanding opportunities for architects to meaningfully contribute their much needed perspectives to governing bodies through pointed policy recommendations and high-level analysis and second, lifting up architects as key strategists and go-to experts in the political arena. Our work need not remain in obscurity nor in the abstract. In fact, the current momentum toward an inevitable capitalist collapse(3) necessitates otherwise. Our ability to balance broad, multivalent objectives with technical and social intricacies remains a crucial missing link in policy spaces. But it need not and should not remain that way for long. It is time we rebuild the agency of the architecture profession, decouple it from disempowering capitalist mechanisms, and return to *public* service.

← (1) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations dedicated to providing the world with objective, scientific information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of the risk of human-induced climate change, its natural, political, and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options.

← (2) Sorkin, Michael. “Acting Urban” in *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 65.

← (3) The inescapable recession has motivated a redoubling of efforts in imagining just and sustainable economic alternatives; architects can and should be involved in these imaginings. See here a green stimulus proposal that lists “Housing, Buildings, Civic Infrastructure, and Communities” as the first menu item, among other relevant items, as part of creating economic alternatives: [https://medium.com/@green\\_stimulus\\_now/a-green-stimulus-to-rebuild-our-economy-1e7030a1d9ee](https://medium.com/@green_stimulus_now/a-green-stimulus-to-rebuild-our-economy-1e7030a1d9ee).

## NOTES APP

– Jeesoo Lee

*Jeesoo Lee is a poet and editor living in Brooklyn.*

freak skies on instagram remind me of nintendo glow all around us people really believe anything truly strange could survive attention i guess for love i'd risk time i could be productive but phillips smart hue costs \$50 seems sick to feel what you want in texas louis vuitton opened a new factory when i say lol i also mean :/ i also mean i have no emoji for the mood im in listening to party music on bootleg platforms bpm reaching understanding shit colored bags just out here under blue sky my neighbor's room emits pink light my heart gets soft

## Big Boss Man – a replaceable architecture student

Everywhere I’ve been, every place I’ve worked in this architecture world, I seem to always come across the same figure: the Big Boss Man. I’ve heard many tales of the “Boys’ Club” boss; the archetype that everyone says is on its way to extinction. Yet the Big Boss Man I’ve encountered is something different, something fresh and new: he’s a self-proclaimed feminist; he cares about the environment and racial justice. He’s a hip Gen-Xer; he listens to hip-hop or techno and watches John Oliver. He believes architecture can combat the evils of capitalism. A quick reminder that Big Boss Men are not always men—this is 2020 after all!

His trendy office, make-shift fabrication lab, or loft-apartment co-work-space is full of eager students and visa-seekers from all over the world. He’s helping us. Thanks to him we can pad our resumes with high-profile exhibits and big names. Surely it’s worth the endless hours and being paid under the table? By the way, he truly believes in fair compensation, but somehow always has “cash-flow” problems. For the Big Boss Man it’s the thought that counts. Some Big Boss Men are more sympathetic than others, but they are nearly always charismatic.

One Big Boss Man once told me that as a student he had sworn he’d never give into exploitation, but the reality is that budgets and timelines for trendy exhibits are just so tight—besides it’s a great opportunity. Another once made sure to let us know that he is the mind behind the work and we are the hands. We are all extremely lucky and extremely replaceable.



# OUT OF CONTROL (OUT OF CONTROL WORK)

## Emergency Brakes: An Interview with Elisa Iturbe

Elisa Iturbe is a critic at the Yale School of Architecture and the Cooper Union. She is a founding partner of her practice, *Outside Development*, and served as guest editor for Log 47: Overcoming Carbon Form. Deo Delapierre and Andrew Economos Miller spoke with Elisa over Zoom to discuss her current practice, architectural pedagogy, and the structural challenges facing the discipline. This interview has been edited for length. The extended article can be found at [yalepaprika.com](http://yalepaprika.com).

**Deo Delapierre (DD)** In this issue, we've been focusing on the structural forces that place architectural labor within a restrictive context. We've been in conversation with others about naming the forces that hold architecture back, namely, employment structures and market-based development. One idea that has come up is how the professional structure of the discipline can move toward collective organization in order to reclaim some political agency.

**Elisa Iturbe (EI)** I think along with questions of the profession comes the need to think about architecture as a mode of knowledge. I'm interested in how architects can leverage our knowledge about space and how space and power interact to make proposals for the city. We as architects are replicating the existing system in the way that we make individually commodified units of space. Specifically, I see two problems. One is that we're hired to do that. The typical relationship between the architect and the client often doesn't afford space for the architect to say that there's an alternative way of life that's needed here. There's also a problem with commissions and procurement and how architects find clients.

Parallel to that is the question of how architecture can be understood as a way to visualize and propose ways of living together and ways of living in the city. How do spatial and social form interact and how do we as architects conform to inherited models? You can address that through questions of the profession but you can also address that through architecture itself. We can do work as architects to visualize and think through what the nature of those problems are. Taking examples of pressing projects we have to take on today, such as the Green New Deal and climate change, we as architects need to make visible ideas and visions for the world that don't currently exist. That's a huge source of political agency that we have. Of course, that doesn't always dovetail well with the profession because when you're working in an office you're not being asked to make visionary proposals. We, as architects, need to find ways to free our labor from the yoke of private development so that we can actually do work that helps us visualize society. Right now our work is captured in order to replicate the profits of someone else.

**Andrew Economos Miller (AEM)** In your practice's work with a community land trust in San Diego, is there a difference in your process of making these representations of the future? Are you able to embed yourself in their political structures to widen your understanding of the context?

**EI** The reason why I like working with this nonprofit is that it operates with a certain level of internal democracy. In general, a community land trust will have a board of representatives elected from the community. Any architectural representation we produce for this project will be discussed with this group. There's some visioning that we've done verbally with them to figure out the ambitions of the project in terms of scale and site and how many of their properties they can bring into it. Our expertise on the built environment has contributed to that conversation.

Often the public's experience with architectural representation is walking by a construction site and seeing a rendering plastered on a poster. That's when we see the architectural representation of the project. We need to find different moments in the process to insert ourselves. Our representations can develop within the community's decision making process to help them think about whether they like something or not. My hope is that this would be a long term relationship. And so, we would make drawings and then they would say, actually, we've decided that we don't want X or Y and we would go back to the drawing board. But then there would also be days where we would show up and say, listen, we really think there's an opportunity for you to have artists' workshops in this building, because we noticed when we were doing our site study that you have people living in the community who are working with their hands—there are a lot of leatherworkers et cetera. My view is that the architect becomes integrated into the team and we deploy our research skills and our understanding of space and the way that social relationships play out in space and the way all of those things can then be embodied into architecture. We make representations, we distribute them, they get talked about, we go back to the drawing board rather than just slapping the rendering onto a fence and being like, "Hey everyone, this is what you're going to get."

**AEM** It slows down architecture. I love looking at those quick renderings in detail because you can tell that market forces and clients require them to have the quickest Photoshopped jobs and it feels like a bad sign for the whole building.

Is the CLT project moving slower because of legal barriers or a planned slowness in the process?

**EI** We always understood that this was sort of a long game because they haven't formed the CLT yet. They also are an operating nonprofit that is involved in many projects, ours being one of them. So I don't think that there's any particular hold up. It's just that it always was going to be a longer process.

Going to this question of slowing architecture down, if we look at the longer arc of the built environment's history and if we understand the context of climate change and the ecological footprint of construction, architecture needs to slow down. It's interesting to talk about this in the context of the pandemic now where suddenly all production has had to stop. It's terrifying thinking about the economic fallout but it's also foreshadowing a lot of the things that we will have to stop by choice and not because there's an immediate health crisis. Climate change is obviously a crisis, but it is the kind of crisis that moves so slowly that the halting we will have to do will have to be by choice. How do we understand that kind of slowing down as something that we do on purpose? This, then, poses questions about having enough work when compared to typical firm business models. For myself, this is one of the reasons why it's really important for me to stay in teaching. I would like my projects to go slowly. And I support myself through teaching so that I can do projects slowly. But obviously, not everybody can do that. It is a very big structural question for the profession.

**AEM** Yeah, we're going to be the coronavirus issue and it's interesting how quickly even a Republican government comes around to something like UBI (Universal Basic Income). It's insane.

**EI** It is wild how quickly the brake can be pulled if it needs to. We never knew capitalism had an emergency brake and now we found out that it does. That's really good for us to know and we have to figure out how we can keep a hand on that brake. Given the kind of economic fallout that we'll see, probably there will be a huge push to return to production as quickly as possible and to try to compensate for the slowdown. But there's a big question now about what we get to see now that the emergency brake has been pulled? What are the new organizations of a society that can happen now? Who would have thought that a Republican administration would be the first to implement any kind of UBI in the United States? I mean, that is crazy and not only a Republican administration, but Trump's administration. It's like, what in the hell?

**DD** Returning to the question of the Community Land Trust, do you see any continuity with examples from history or even examples from current practice that speak to how architects engage with communal interest?

**EI** Working with a community land trust engages with questions of architecture as a way of thinking through social form. There are many precedents for how architecture addresses the organization of production and social reproduction, ranging from something very radical like the Russian constructivists to something that ended up being rather conservative, which is the modern movement. Modernism's aims were as much about reorganizing social relations as much as it was about reorganizing space. In fact, you can't really separate them. And of course, as we discussed in class last semester, a lot of it was just about reorienting toward industry. But I think that there are ways in which the architect throughout history has addressed these questions of how we live. It's something that fell off the map a bit toward the end of the 20th century, as postmodernism kind of turned into whatever it turned into. You could say it fell off the map for a couple different reasons, not because architecture lacks the capacity to think through these problems, but in part because disciplinary questions took on other concerns, which in themselves I don't think are bad or wrong or uninteresting.

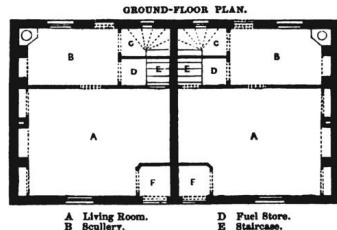
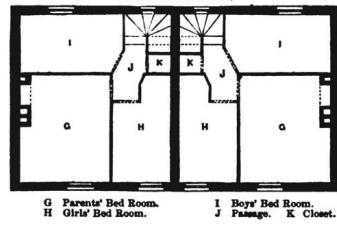
**AEM** Yeah, you can sort of map the changes in architecture against increasing ideas of neoliberal "freedom."

**EI** It also maps onto changes in the profession as well. The privatization of forces that make the built environment has had a big impact on whether architects feel like they can even address any of this or not. It makes a difference in the psychology of the architect if we feel powerlessness going into a design. And of course, the opposite of that is not to feel totally maniacal and feel like we have a ton of power. The opposite is to be aware that we are players in the formation of lifestyles and to take that responsibility seriously. I don't think you have to think of yourself as a power hungry, top down architect egomaniac, or resign yourself to the existing forces. I don't think that's a good dichotomy. I think it's much more about taking responsibility for the power we actually have which means being very critical of what we currently make and realizing that architecture is changing the world. Saying that architecture changes the world is sort of rejected as an idealist notion, but architecture is changing the world. The way in which mega-projects have totally transformed the surface of the earth tells us a lot that architecture has a lot of power and often it's not for the better. We have to take responsibility for that as we consider how to reshape the profession. Through our knowledge of the built environment, we can make visible certain power relations, reveal how they're embodied, and point toward ways of redefining them. Often, our work reaffirms existing hierarchies of power. Speaking of an emergency brake, we need an emergency brake for architecture too.

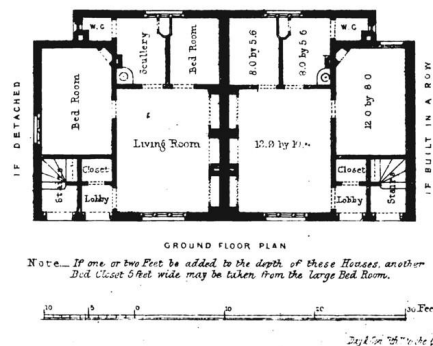
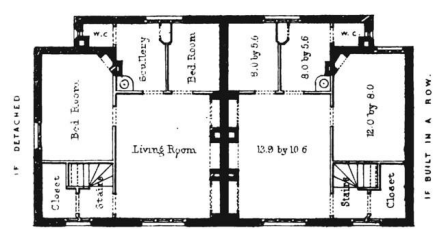
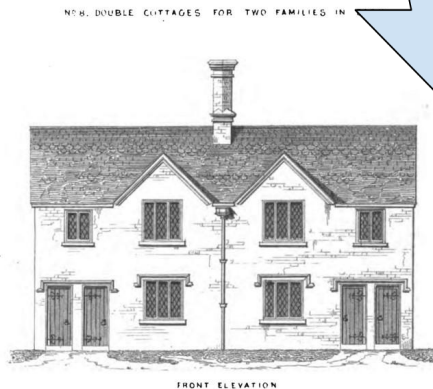
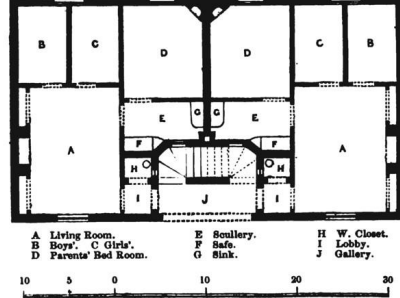
Plan for a Double House, Henry Roberts, 1850.

87  
FOR WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS IN TOWN  
TO BE BUILT IN PAIRS, OR IN A ROW.

PLANS OF A DOUBLE HOUSE FOR ONE FAMILY IN EACH.



PLAN of a DOUBLE HOUSE, with FOUR DISTINCT TENEMENTS on Two Floors, the Upper one being approached by an Open Staircase.



Through Material and Media  
Joshua Tan  
M.Arch I 2022

Defining a theory of what power is, as Foucault notes, is not possible without first understanding the mechanisms that enact it.(1) Through its encrustation into material form, architectural representation has the power to fix rituals and create habits. Perhaps far more importantly, these same representations can also become models in which power is reproduced through their dissemination. Through material and media, architecture and its representations are able to exercise power over others, making it critical that we evaluate both.

Mid-19th century Britain was plagued with slums that were largely left unaddressed when considered with the economic advancements of Industrial Britain.(2) Proposed in a set of recommendations to the Society for Improving the Condition of the Laboring Classes, Henry Roberts' 1850 Plan for a Double House sought to provide the working class with housing that would improve sanitary conditions and raise the standard of living.(3) While it was lauded by critics as one of the first projects where an architect focused on low-cost housing,(4) it also reveals how architectural representation becomes a mechanism to control others.

In the Double House, workers are reduced to generic inhabitants that are meant to fill up the spaces regardless of any specific identity. The two units on the first floor are therefore designed as mirror images of each other, most likely also to take advantage of standardized materials. Likewise, the two levels of the plan are almost exactly the same, showing that the project is designed as a replicable model. Furthermore, while the plans were developed by a Society that sought to improve living conditions, financial profit through rent was still vital for the project.(5) The plan and its financial motivations reveal that efficiency and standardisation were the chief concerns of Roberts, and that the plan was, as Pier Vittorio Aureli notes, "the most legible hieroglyph of a political economy."(6) The plans show how architecture was able to regulate the lives of the working class by standardising routines and tethering them with financial obligations.

Similarly, the scale and room layout of the units abstracted workers into family units fixing traditional gender relations and normative sexuality through built form.(7) With the clear assignment of the parents' and children's rooms and the allocation of the kitchen within the housing unit, the plan enforces the nuclear family unit and encourages "reproductive labor."(8) In its spatial organisation, the kitchen is placed next to the parent's bedroom and overlooks the living room that is connected to the children's' bedroom. This reveals a priority on domestic labor and the optimisation of its performance. In doing so, Roberts suggests a method of living. It is also important to note here that Henry Roberts' proposal to the Society only included dormitories for single working men and women and houses for families.(9) There was no in between. In other words, for Roberts, the working class only had two options, to live in shared housing as a single laborer or live in private housing as a family. In this way, the plan forces familial structures of society on the working class.(10)

The Plan for a Double House was eventually built in Windsor, Berkshire, and named the Prince Consort Cottages. While the built manifestation of the project enacts its prescribed ways of living on its inhabitants, Roberts' representation ultimately had a far greater impact by influencing the design of other domestic spaces. The Double House project displayed an intricate roof design with elaborate window details and bare white surfaces on the facades. This aesthetic presented an image of housing that was both clean and orderly, a vast improvement from the slums that the inhabitant would have come from. In other words, the project's aesthetics accelerated its circulation, culminating in its eventual display at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Seen in this way, aesthetics played a major role to hinder a critique of the Double House's interior genericity and its gendered assignment of spaces.

The Double House's Architecture, both built and drawn, is a mechanism of power. Both in its organisation and its aesthetic, the project engenders larger social forces which simultaneously abstract and concretize life.

- ←(1) Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (London: Picador, 2009), 16.
- ←(2) Alison Ravetz, "Housing for the Poor," in *Council Housing and Culture: the History of a Social Experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001), 30.
- ←(3) Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes*. (The Society for Improving the Condition of Labouring Classes, 1850), 1.
- ←(4) George Saumarez Smith, "House Plan," *Architect's Journal*, 2015.
- ←(5) William Ashworth, "The Improvement of Central Urban Areas," in *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954) 85.
- ←(6) Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Life, Abstracted: Notes on the Floor Plan," *E-Flux*, 2017; <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/representation/159199/life-abstracted-notes-on-the-floor-plan/>
- ←(7) Jeffrey Weeks, "Sexuality and the Labouring Classes," in *Sex, Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, 1980) 82.
- ←(8) The term "Simple Reproduction" was introduced by Karl Marx in *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 23, and propagated by feminist authors Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici in the 1975 Pamphlet, *Counter-planning from the Kitchen*. Reproductive labor is labor that is performed for domestic life and ultimately reproduces the conditions for production.
- ←(9) Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes* (The Society for Improving the Condition of Labouring Classes, 1850) 36–61.
- ←(10) In *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes*, Roberts also prescribes a strict set of rules for the inhabitants, or "Unmarried Workmen and Labourers". These included a schedule for resting, pre-allocated areas for storage, a list of activities that were not allowed, the standards of cleanliness and religious rules. This schedule shows how housing societies would be able to influence the lifestyles of the laborers with the provision of housing.

## Maintenance Work:

## An Interview with HOME-OFFICE

Daniel Jacobs (YSoA, 2014) and Brittany Utting (YSoA, 2014) are co-founders of their design collaborative, HOME-OFFICE (<https://www.home-office.co/>). Daniel Jacobs teaches at Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. Brittany Utting teaches at the Rice School of Architecture and previously taught at the University of Michigan where she was the 2017-2018 Willard A. Oberdick Fellow. On Thursday, April 9th we Zoomed with Daniel and Brittany to discuss their recent work and their concept of a labor-form in architecture. This interview has been edited for length. The extended article can be found at [yalepaprika.com](http://yalepaprika.com).

**Andrew Economos Miller (AEM)** In your recent article "UN-WORKING," you lay out the idea of a general labor-form of architecture. How does that labor-form inform your work and how we might think about our own labor as architects?

**Daniel Jacobs (DJ)** We've been imagining this idea of labor-form pretty extensively. It's not just the production of the architectural document, but it spans a much broader and more fundamental set of conditions, all the way back to the resource extraction of material. That's where the RE-TAGGING project started from. There's this whole supply chain of different moments where labor takes place along the production of architectural objects. As architects, we often have no sense of what quantities of embodied labor or what labor footprints are implicated in those elements. The original ambition was to track these issues, going all the way back to the inception of a built piece of architecture.

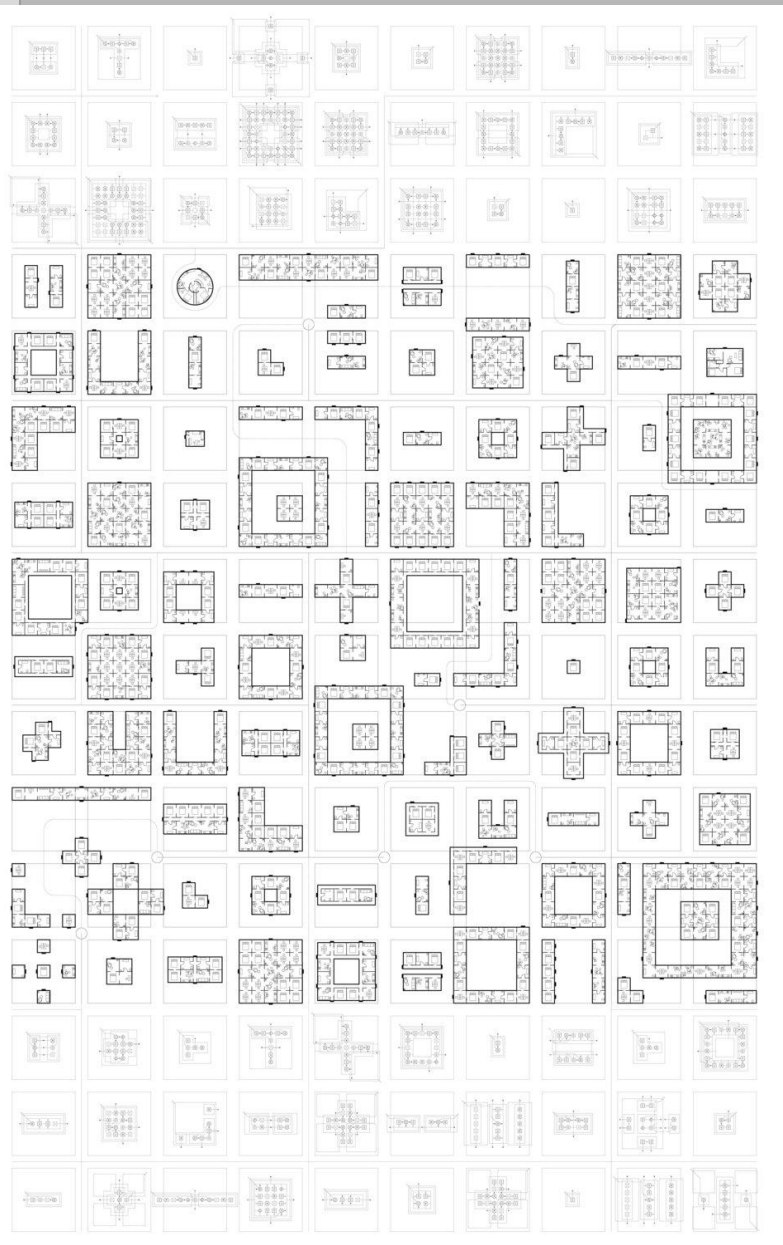
**Brittany Utting (BU)** There's also an idea about making visible the material, social, technological, and industrial histories that are sedimented over time onto objects, affecting their form and changing the way we appropriate, extract, and use material. Labor-form is about looking at how the built world is not a product of the will of the architect, but actually results more from a flux of ideas, of histories, of personal stories, and of displays of power and generosity. It's about the generosity of the architect to step back and not think that we're the only shapers of the world, but that we're one player, one lesser player in a much larger material history. That's the conceptual background, but it also affects the way we design, not just the way we see the world, but the way that we act on it. A lot of our practice is about setting the terms of what labor-form can be, what its capacity is. It's also about mobilizing data, documentation, details, the stuff of architecture, and the stuff of production. We use those to start changing tectonics, changing material assemblies, and changing the way that we understand form. In our work, we try to always push the tectonic detail, push the reveal, push the way that a few pieces of material come together and use that as a way to start indexing how labor has shaped architecture.

**AEM** Yeah, I think this is a good point to just jump right into RE-TAGGING, how does that project make labor-form apparent?

**BU** Part of the project is looking at contemporary critical fashion practices that are reappropriating the label, making visible the relationship between use-value and exchange-value. For example, a shoe has value not because it's a great fit and you can run really fast with it, but because of how it participates in that branded enclosure. We were interested in that fashion apparatus, that labeling apparatus, and how we can detourn this relationship between use-value and exchange-value, using it as a way to rethink one of the documents that is embedded in architectural practice: the finish schedule. There's something about the quickness of the label: it's cheap, it's accessible. The tags that we produced reference a continuously updating online data sheet. They're a relabeling of architecture, not just by its authorial provenance, but by its material provenance. How do you lay bare the actual material assemblies? The way that we choose and define materials in architecture is that moment in which we put into motion a vast chain of material resources, environmental economies, and labor networks (despite the finished building looking so static). But in fact, the building is just in pause in this heaving logistical network. The quick ready-made label is a way to start indexing these larger ecosystems at play.

**DJ** The reality of the physical makeup of the built environment is that once it is in play and physicalized, there's no going back, there's no undoing it, no un-working it. The key is that the labeling system is a nonproprietary set of labels. It's not the serial code on the window that allows the corporation that produced it to understand which batch it came from. It's for a different constituency entirely to be able to say like, "oh, this is this material." Obviously, we're being cheeky when we say it's just "MT-01." It would actually be a much more complicated set of parameters and labels that would allow you to retrace that lineage through all of the heaving logistics.

**DD** I had a question about deployment because the tags do bring this participatory aspect to the work that reflects the collective knowledge in the spreadsheet. It seems like the spreadsheet is ripe for different modes of deployment. Do you see other modes of deploying that information or other ways of creating different publics around the spreadsheet?



MODEL-HOMES, Brittany Utting and Daniel Jacobs, 2018. <https://www.home-office.co/model-homes>.