

48-300: PRAXIS STUDIO I

CULTIVATING INFRASTRUCTURE: INHABITING STACKED ECOLOGIES

cul·ti·vate /'kʌltə,vāt/

1.

prepare and use (land) for crops or gardening.

"the peasants who cultivated the land became its owners"

Similar: till, plow, dig, turn, hoe, farm, work, prepare, fertilize, mulch

2.

try to acquire or develop (a quality, sentiment, or skill).

"he cultivated an air of indifference"

-- Oxford Dictionary

"The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think"

-- Gregory Bateson

CULTIVATING INFRASTRUCTURE is part of Architecture of Ecological Attunement Studio sequence pedagogy centered on architecture's response to climate change. The studio framework focuses on a role of landscape in architecture: uncovering its social, infrastructural and ecological histories, and related patterns of pollution and toxicity as they shaped cultures of post-industrial urbanization. Investigating conditions of aging infrastructure as a substrate for new forms of human and non-human habitation, the studio is situated within a landscape ecology of perpetual flooding. Structured as a coordinated studio with collaborative teaching sections, the pedagogy is supported with a series of lectures, analog and computational design workflows and an embedded simulation workshop unit that enhances student's agility to connect design impact across scales. The focus is to entangle qualitative design methods with evidence-based design, and an emphasis on environmental ethics beyond professional confounds of sustainability.

Architecture as a vehicle for ecological and communal restoration: Ecology works across boundaries imposed by social and political systems. Historically, large-scale ecological patterns have been disregarded within the practice of architecture and urban planning. Modernist design thinking as inherited from the era of industrialization has been largely co-opted by ideologies of capital that organize social systems according to political and economic engineering, rather than equitable access to resources. This studio nurtures drawing techniques founded in a rejection of reductivism, borrowing from cartography and dynamic landscape descriptions, while moving towards a data rich design framework. Resisting the current trend towards ever larger human ecological footprints, this studio aims to instill design of architectures and landscapes for creation of new forms of spatial democracy; to provoke novel architectural and urban aesthetics and enable a projective design imagination tightly linked to creation of bio-synthetic and natural, multispecies environments.