

CLOTHESLINE BORDERLINE

decolonizing the body

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'to foreclose that vulnerability, to make ourselves secure at the expense of every other human consideration is to eradicate one of the most important resources from which we must take our bearings and find our way'

Judith Butler, Precarious Life, 2006



Background

This studio will examine the politics, economics and sustainability of the protective layer of textiles that we place on our human bodies. There are alarming statistics about all aspects of the clothing industry; the mountains of discarded clothes, the industrial/financial complex exploiting low paid workers, the oceans of water used in agricultural systems and manufacture supporting unstoppable demand for new fibres, the pollution of water courses in bleaching and dyeing of textiles. The studio will collectively examine the current research on these issues from a global perspective. Additionally the studio will look at the history of fabric manufacture in relation to colonial power and with reference to theoretical texts by J. Butler and S. Ahmed, will establish principals to shape attitudes towards our bodies and to the cleaning and repair of its coverings. The Clothesline-Borderline Studio takes on a radical analysis of attitudes to domestic life, to gender and to capitalism.



Privacy_

Privacy is the overarching framing for all the ASO studios in the S21 semester. It is a highly influential border between the visible and the unseen, private aspects to life. Culturally privacy is negotiated or denied through a relations of power and wealth. Why are bathroom stalls so short in the USA? How do we understand the dynamic where young women in East Africa are coerced into selling sexual favors in order to purchase feminine hygiene products and so be able to attend high school? Is the observation while washing and hanging out bedsheets or inner garments a territory for revelation and presumption.? The framing of privacy will be examined in relation to the construction of taboo and shame. With this rich reference the studio projects will contribute to the colloquy of ideas at mid and end of semester.



Context

This studio will evolve an analysis of the action of laundering domestic textiles with reference to wide cultural histories. The research will also be supported by the life experiences of members of the studio. Variable global and seasonal availabilities of water, sun and wind will generate a series of potential strategies in a micro spatial examples. A range of design typologies will be described, referencing the political nuances of collectivity and privacy, social equity and ecological impact.

Left
Laudrette, Los Angeles 2015
Top
Dyeing process, Silk and Willow, New Paltz, New York, 2020
Below
Werner Bischoff, Silk dyeing, Kyoto, 1951

Program

The design proposals in response to the examination of the topic of laundry will be developed with each student individually. The design could be in a fictional context or engaged in a real scenario. The proposition could range from a foundational view on dressing (clothes design) or devising a laundry system (social/building design) or engage in a manufacturing or technical innovation. Whichever focus is used, the outcome must be evident of a critical position, be analysed in explicit political, theoretical and environmental terms.



Above
Dibyangshu Sarkar, 2012 A Hindu pilgrim
dried saris in the wind, Sagar Island, West
Bengal

Learning Outcomes

1. to demonstrate a critical understanding of the interrelation of global patterns of contemporary and historic clothing markets; including raw material production, labor supply and energy consumption.
2. to use an ecological framing for a typological gazeteer of the details of laundering.
3. to develop a speculative proposition which uses social/material/cultural systems design, to pose an innovative and ethical argument.
4. to be familiar with the theoretical positions from the writing of M. De Certau, J. Butler, b. hooks and A. Lorde and be able to cite the counter positions embedded in your own design proposition.



INCLUSIVITY
The studio is committed to drawing references from at least 50% BIPOC and female writers, artists, architects and thinkers.

Production

This studio focuses both on the broad implications of the clothing of our bodies as well as the patterns of daily rituals. The designs produced within this framing might be micro or macro, might be gestural, systemic or structural. The studio will ask for experimental work in written, drawn, animated, stitched, woven and modeled forms.

Studio environment.

The topics that we're covering in this class are often difficult, not just intellectually but emotionally. While we expect there to be rigorous discussion and even disagreement in the course of our class discussions, you should engage in discussion with care and empathy for the other members in the studio. Critically examining and assessing our most basic assumptions and values is one of the tasks of the architect. You can have the courage to face the uncomfortable and we will work together to establish a classroom environment that is supportive of taking these intellectual and emotional risks.



Above
Kheng, Bamboo clothes lines,
Singapore, 2010

Below
F. Trovatten, Rooftop in Puebla City,
Mexico, 2018

