

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GSAPP A4106 | ADVANCED STUDIO VI**

600 S Avery Hall, Thursdays, 5 - 9 pm ET + Zoom Sessions | Justin Garrett Moore + Alicia O. Ajayi



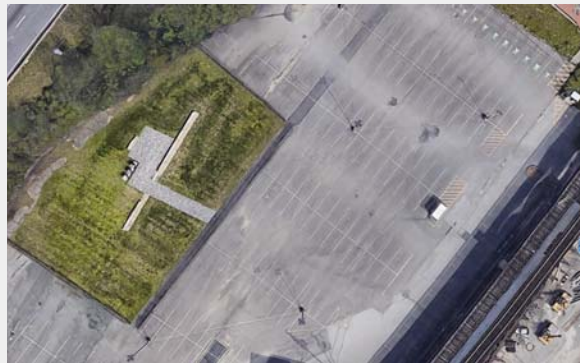
^ IUPUI lot near Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana



^ US 40 'Highway to Nowhere,' Baltimore, Maryland



^ Gikondo wetland restoration area, Kigali, Rwanda



^ Shockoe Bottom, Richmond, Virginia



^ District Six development area, Cape Town, South Africa



^ Nina Simone's Childhood Home, Tryon, North Carolina



^ Taholah flood zone, Quinault Nation, Washington



^ Standing Rock Reservation + Dakota Access Pipeline, ND

## Mark-Making and Place-Keeping: Erasure, Emergence, and Imagination

“...[T]he act of imagination is bound up with memory. You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. ‘Floods’ is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.... And a rush of imagination is our ‘flooding’.”

—TONI MORRISON, *“The Site of Memory”*

### **BACKGROUND**

What are we designing, building, and maintaining? Where, why, how, and for whom? This studio charges designers to develop an anti-racist and decolonial approach for contributing to communities, cities, and environments that have been *marked* by erasure and neglect. We seek the liberation of people and stewardship of the environment by seeking an ethics of care in our fields of practice. For fourteen weeks, we will use our time and imagination together to generate conversations, questions, ideas, images, and projects to grow our capacity and power as architects and designers to make positive change.

The past year has been historic, and it shaped and reshaped many of our experiences and patterns as the global pandemic and protests have impacted them. There have been significant changes in how people interact with one another and their environment, making it necessary to (re)design. Everyday life has shifted and created new possibilities for many, yet existing inequalities and injustices have become worse for the multitude. This challenging time also demonstrates that change is possible, and we are all bound to this change. As author Octavia Butler put it in *Parable of the Sower*, “all that you touch you change / all that you change changes you.” Architects are among those whose interests and purpose are to help shape change. Built environment design must increasingly navigate between mark-making and place-keeping. While our present and future remain uncertain, this moment is also an opportunity to reorient and recenter our purpose, learning, practice, and imagination as designers. As the last studio in the Architecture and Advanced Architecture sequence, this semester is a space and time to experiment and engage with your ideas and interests for whatever comes next.

“My own effort is to try to bear witness to something that will have to be there when the storm is over, to help us get through the next storm. Storms are always coming.”

—JAMES BALDWIN, quoted in Ed Pavlic, *“Who Can Afford to Improvise?”: James Baldwin and Black Music, the Lyric and the Listeners*

This studio also seeks to respond to calls for action by the Black GSAPP students’ [On the Futility of Listening](#) and the Black GSAPP faculty’s [Unlearning Whiteness](#) and engage in GSAPP’s ongoing work on social [equity](#) and [climate](#). At the same time, and as Baldwin stated, “storms are always coming,” and our objective is not merely to react and respond to this moment but to equip us for future challenges. As a cross-disciplinary point of reference, we will relate our research and programmatic explorations to the United Nations’ [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). These broad and comprehensive social and



environmental goals, first launched in 2015, highlight global challenges made even more apparent by our collective experiences in 2020, including calls for action in addressing climate, equity, and justice. Relating our work to the SDGs is a means to link our practice as designers to global and local scales and concepts of understanding, impact, connectedness, and emergence. Our studio, along with numerous studios and design practices at GSAPP and beyond, are in the process of learning and unlearning and, hopefully, toward an emergence that brings positive and transformative change.

“Nothing is wasted, or a failure. Emergence is a system that makes use of everything in the iterative process.”

—ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*

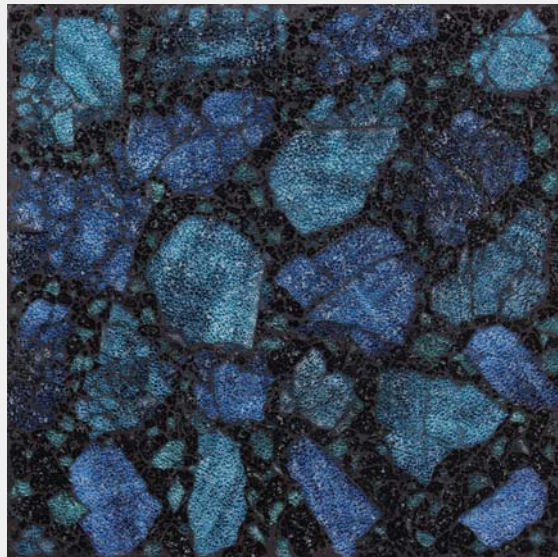
## **OBJECTIVES**

“[T]he future can be conceived in terms of acts and political movements, but “I believe we must not only look but also listen for it in other, less likely places . . . in some of the least celebrated, often most disposable archives” (16). That is, decentering Eurocentric logics is not just a theoretical exercise of decolonization but a realignment of sense through affective infrastructures, an affective mattering in the discourse of materiality and its worlds.”

—KATHRYN YUSOFF quoting TINA CAMPT, “*Insurgent Geology: A Billion Black Anthropocenes Now*”: *A Billion Black Anthropocenes Or None*.



^ Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square*, 1915



^ Alteronce Gumby, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 2019

**Places that have not been fully celebrated or valued still deserve our care and good design. Designers in the studio will reclaim, reimagine, and reconstruct a place that has been erased, suppressed, dispossessed, or colonized.** We will look and listen for the future and mattering of these places. Due to current travel limitations, the ‘site’ will not be given and will likely be researched and experienced remotely. It is recommended that your project’s context be a place that you know, care about, or with which you are connected. Each student or group will develop the specific site, program,

and scope of the project at the beginning of the semester. The studio faculty will also recommend sites (and programs) for students who prefer a given site for the studio. In either case, students are encouraged to conduct and document interviews to better understand and value a diversity of people throughout the process of generating their ideas and proposals. The selected locations can be global so long as there is sufficient access to the spatial and other relevant information needed to create a developed design project.

The purpose of your site selection is to explore how the act of design can support a more just and sustainable present and future built environment as a *place*. Designers will develop a set of analytical tools grounded in a close analysis of these places' social, economic, environmental, and political contexts. The studio encourages expanding our references and knowledge to include local and indigenous memory and understanding of place, space, value, material, craft, and experience. The various references will be compiled for collective use using [Are.na](#).

With a grounding in place and their intuition and imagination, each designer or collective will need to articulate their vision and mission and their understanding of ethics as a basis for their power and agency as an architect. While we know that design is a means for making places, it is also a means for keeping places. **Our objective is to design places and experiences through the process of mark-making and place-keeping. Our responsibility is to communicate and visualize ideas for how places transform to diverse stakeholders and the broader public.**

## **STUDIO ORGANIZATION**

The studio is organized by [Justin Garrett Moore](#) and [Alicia Ajayi](#). Alicia will be more involved during the first half of the semester and have reduced participation during the second half of the semester. Architect and urban designer [Natasha Trice](#) will lead a design workshop following the spring break. The studio will actively encourage, empower, and acknowledge the students' role as contributors and leaders in shaping the semester's outcomes. We also encourage students to connect with other related studios and courses at GSAPP and Columbia University, the [Dark Matter University](#) network, and other relevant networks and organizations that are of interest to your work. The '[Virtual Kinne](#)' week is an opportunity to augment and amplify your interests, skills, and personal and professional networks. There will also be cross-studio activities at the beginning of the semester, during the Advanced VI Studio Friday evening sessions, and for the Kinne week.

## **COLLABORATION**

Students in the studio will be able to work individually, in teams, or collectively. Together we will encourage a shared learning environment that promotes a combination of both individual and collective ideas and development throughout the studio. Once we have the roster finalized, we will co-create a set of agreements for our time together, and students that choose to work in groups will need to do the same. Each student or group will work with the faculty to develop reasonable requirements for developing and completing their projects, so long as the results are defined and detailed architecture or built environment design with multiple dimensions and scales of resolution. The studio will use Miro, Are.na, and Google Drive platforms to collaborate, share references, and archive work.

## **SCHEDULE AND FORMAT**

As of this syllabus's posting, all classes will be conducted remotely through Monday, January 25th. The studio will be conducted in a hybrid format beginning January 14th, 5-9 pm ET via Zoom and with in-person meetings on Thursdays from 5-9 pm ET in 600 S Avery Hall starting January 28th. In-person sessions are subject to change based on GSAPP's latest COVID-19 policies. The studio seeks to create a collaborative environment that will oscillate between scheduled individual conversations and consultations via Zoom and the standing Thursday evening group meetings focused on discussion and discovery. Our time together on Thursday evenings is to share our ideas, progress, options, questions, and we will also share our frustrations, impasses, and even failures. Some Thursdays will be working and interactive sessions; others will be reserved to share our work and thoughts, generate constructive feedback, and create moments for reflection.

We hope to promote an alternative pattern for developing ideas and balancing our time, energy, creativity, and labor to produce and communicate design projects. Rather than reinforcing traditional stress-inducing and production-heavy reviews at the middle and end of the term, we will share our work throughout the semester through a series of forums. Progress and will vary but will generally occur across stages for action: reach, reclaim, reimagine, render, reconstruct, and rejoice.

### **WEEK 1: REACH**

The beginning of the studio is an opportunity to connect and better understand our individual and collective goals and reach an agreement for how we will spend our time and energy together.

*Deliverables: A few quick drawings/sketches/montages to introduce yourself and your imagination*

*Decisions: Studio agreements, identify initial interests*

### **WEEKS 2-3: RECLAIM**

Our early work together will define each project's issue and site focus for the semester by identifying places, knowledge, practices, and ideas to reclaim for design. During this time, students will work both individually and collectively to share research and interests. Any ongoing collaborations or collective goals for the semester-long project should be identified at this time.

*Deliverables: A dossier of background materials along with additional presentation materials (TBD) for a studio forum to share each project's progress*

*Decisions: Determine if you will work individually or collectively*

### **WEEKS 4-5: REIMAGINE**

Once projects have identified their issue and site focus, the designers will articulate a vision and mission for their work. The vision and mission will be developed using a conceptual design, including drawing and model explorations at appropriate scales for the selected site.

*Deliverables: Conceptual design (specific drawings TBD) with written and graphic vision and mission, background, and additional materials as-needed for a studio forum to share each project's progress*

*Decisions: Scale of design project and scope of responsibility*

### **WEEKS 6-9: RENDER**

With the vision, mission, scale, and scope of the project defined, develop a series of renderings or illustrations as a visual narrative to further develop and define your proposal at the appropriate scales and time frames for your place and program.

*Deliverables: Renderings of the developed design and additional materials as-needed for a studio forum to share each project's progress*

*Decisions: Storyboard of the project narrative and choices for what to develop at architectural scales for the remaining time*

### **WEEKS 10-12: RECONSTRUCT**

Based on feedback from peers, guests, the faculty, and your intentions and imagination, reconstruct your place by developing a detailed architectural proposal and any materials needed to communicate it to a diverse audience.

*Deliverables: TBD on an individual project basis*

*Decisions: Who to engage and consult in the development of your project, how to be responsible for your project's vision, mission, and ethics and how to make a mark and keep place through design*

### **WEEKS 13-14: REJOICE**

In place of the final review, we will celebrate and acknowledge our work's culmination in a format to be developed with the studio's input and consensus. Guests are invited in an online 'public' format.

*Deliverables: TBD on an individual project basis and studio consensus*

*Decisions: How to celebrate the collective work of the studio*



^ Weeksville Heritage Center | Architecture: [Caples Jefferson](#) Landscape: [Elizabeth Kennedy](#) Artwork: [Chakaia Booker](#)

## **POLICIES**

GSAPP's policies on conduct, rights, academic honesty, ownership, etc., can be found online at <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/policies-resources> and studio procedures and grading policies are here <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/studio-procedures>.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A complete references list is forthcoming.

## **CONTACT**

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## **REACH**

**Virtual Studio: Thursday, January 14th, 5 - 9 pm ET via [Zoom](#)**

### *Schedule for Virtual Studio*

5:00 Hello (name, origin(s), pronoun, interest)

5:30 Faculty and studio introduction

5:45 Syllabus review

5:55 Break (get materials and set up - can be hand drawing or digital on Miro)

6:00 In-Class Workshop

6:30 Sharing (on [Miro](#))

7:00 - 9:00 Individual Conversations (10 minutes each)

*“As the awareness of the relationship between cultural production and the local circumstance of material practice has come to the fore, attention to site has begun to frame the problem of making and interpreting architecture.”*

— CAROL BURNS, On Site: Architectural Preoccupations



^ Site of Pruitt-Igoe, a housing project in St. Louis, MO