

Curatorial Design

CURATORIAL DESIGN: A PLACE BETWEEN

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FROM HEALING THE DIVIDE TO TAKING A SIDE
Steve Lyons for Not An Alternative

In their search to define the root cause of the climate crisis, many on the environmentalist left are zeroing in on a peculiar target: not the economic division between haves and have-nots, nor the geopolitical division between the nation and the world, but the conceptual division between society and nature—as though dissolving this conceptual division provides a kind of miracle cure to the ecological ills of fossil capitalism.¹ For this camp, the most urgent political task of our era is to heal the divide between humans and nonhumans, to make kin with nonhuman others, to imagine and create a kind of multispecies unity that, as the logic goes, should bring about a more harmonious, and thus more sustainable system of relations between people, animals, and the land.

This common sense has underwritten curatorial initiatives across the fields of contemporary art and architecture, from the Venice Biennale’s 2021 architecture exhibition *How will we live together?* to the Curatorial Design workshop on “Designing for Cohabitation” at the Canadian Center for Architecture, where I presented the first draft of this text. The workshop proposed to investigate “the issue of architectural design for humans and non-humans,” with a focus on the Montréal Insectarium, a brand-new institution co-designed by Wilfried Kuehn, a core member of the Curatorial Design team. The Insectarium is an architectural experiment in “biophilic design,” based on the hypothesis that humans have a primitive desire to connect with other living organisms, which can be reawakened with the assistance of immersive design.² Underlying this principle of “biophilia” is the idea that by rekindling affections between humans and nonhumans, a new ethical paradigm will come into being, and from this new ethical paradigm, a more livable future for all. From this vantage, museums and science centers are understood as apparatuses that can not only help visitors break free from their dualist habits of thought, but also promote a multispecies consciousness from which a radically new environmental politics can begin to take root. The question is whether this new environmental politics is the politics we need.

For Not An Alternative, the answer is no. To put it very briefly, we argue that this project of “healing the divide” does not rearrange human-nonhuman relations, but more accurately, reframes them. In the process, it also frames out, or obscures, the fundamental antagonisms that structure relations between and among humans, animals, and lands. When we start with the question of how to design for cohabitation, or how to mend the gap between humans and nonhumans, we take a shortcut. Instead of grappling with the material and economic structures that are dealing death to so many for the benefit of a few, we incorporate them, naturalize them, or otherwise take them for granted.

¹ Donna Haraway, for example, argues that dissolving boundaries between human and nonhuman, nature and society, “cracks the matrices of domination.” See Donna Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 53. For a longer critique of this “dissolutionist” tendency in ecological thought, see Andreas Malm’s chapter “On the Use of Opposites,” in *The Progress of This Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World* (London: Verso, 2016), 177-196.

² Biophilia and biophilic design were outlined as core design criteria in the Space for Life’s call for architectural proposals, which prompted Keuhn Malvezzi’s winning proposal. See “Montréal Space for Life Architecture Competition” (Bureau du design Montréal, 2014): 16-17, https://designmontreal.com/sites/designmontreal.com/files/ftp-uploads/planches/espvie/PDF/Programme_et_annexes_EN.pdf

We can see the effects of this framework at Montréal’s science museum complex Space for Life, which, in addition to the Insectarium, includes the Montréal Biodome, the Montréal Botanical Gardens, and the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. The complex hosts a whole range of microclimates and ecosystems designed to inspire visitors to “rethink and cultivate a new way of living.”³ But this “rethinking” takes place within a complex that is sponsored by Rio Tinto, the world’s second-largest mining corporation. Space for Life’s constructed lifeworlds survive off the surplus capital produced out of Rio Tinto’s world-destroying practices, while Rio Tinto, in desperate need for what Mel Evans calls a “social license to operate,” survives off the positive public relations provided by eco-conscious institutions like Space for Life.⁴ With the unrestricted call to “cohabit,” we’re invited to figure out how to live together in plural harmony, without figuring out what we cannot live with.

What is the principle of unity implicit in this frame—a frame that invites us to heal the divide between humans and nonhumans without naming, let alone doing away with, the forces that are set up to extract life and deal death in the short and long term? What if our first question is not “How do we design for cohabitation?” but “Who are *we*, and what, if we are to live together, needs to be done?” What would it mean to build a Space for Life premised on the elimination of Rio Tinto and its world?⁵ To pursue this line of thought, I will outline three different principles of unity that have structured museum practice, and our interpretation of it, at various times and in various places, and which have reinforced specific relations between humans and nonhumans, civilization and its Other. We can provisionally name these principles fascist unity, liberal unity, and communist unity.

- 3 Karine Jalbert, quoted in “Space for Life: New Way to View Nature,” *National Post*, May 7, 2012, <https://nationalpost.com/uncategorized/space-for-life-new-way-to-view-nature>.
- 4 Mel Evans, *Artwash: Big Oil and the Arts* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 70. Understanding this reciprocity, it’s easier to understand why in 2020, Space for Life did not join in publicly denouncing Rio Tinto’s role in destroying a 46,000-year old Aboriginal sacred site in Western Australia that “provided a 4,000-year-old genetic link to present-day traditional owners.” See Calla Wahlquist, “Rio Tinto blasts 46,000-year-old Aboriginal site to expand iron ore mine,” *The Guardian*, May 26, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/26/rio-tinto-blasts-46000-year-old-aboriginal-site-to-expand-iron-ore-mine>.
- 5 This turn of phrase is indebted to Jay Jordan and Isabelle Fremeux, who describe the historic struggle against “the airport and its world” at the ZAD in Notre-Dames-des-Landes, where a regional airport was slated for development. See Jordan and Fremeux, *We Are ‘Nature’ Defending Itself: Entangling Art, Activism, and Autonomous Zones* (London: Pluto Press, 2021), 56.

FASCIST UNITY

We can begin with fascist unity. Fascist unity is the unity of the nation or “master race,” conceived as one bounded collective against all others. The unifying horizon of fascism is premised on the eradication of everything beyond its self-imposed and rigorously guarded borders. As Nazi Germany made crystal clear, fascism’s dream of unity is realized by means of extermination and eugenics. It’s no wonder that the large natural history museums of London, Paris, and New York, among others, were major supporters of the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century.⁶

As outgrowths of the imperialist campaigns of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such museums were put to use in the building of fascist unity. They served this function by collecting and displaying as “natural history” everything that was deemed to be outside the domain of civilization. We can see how this underlying logic naturalized weird combinations—making human zoos, prehistoric megafauna, rocks, exotic animals, insects, and Indigenous cultures appear at home under a single roof. By putting human and nonhuman others on display, the large natural history museums of the major imperial powers helped to produce the unity of their nations, training their visitors to develop a distinct racial consciousness—a sense of collectivity based on the difference between viewer and viewed. This sense of collectivity cut across classes, working for capitalism precisely by obscuring antagonisms between workers and bosses who were of the same nation and/or race. Museums of this kind trained citizens to distinguish themselves from nonhuman others, cultivating the fetishization, hatred, and subordination of the nonhuman—including oppressed groups (from slaves to dispossessed Indigenous Nations) whose asserted inhumanity was a precondition for capital accumulation in the colonies.

- 6 Rob DeSalle, “The Eugenics Movement in Retrospect,” *Natural History*, December, 2021, <https://www.naturalhistorymag.com/features/093896/the-eugenics-movement-in-retrospect>.

Fig. 1. Not An Alternative, *Exhibiting the Gaze*, 2014. Light box photograph exhibited at the Grand Opening of The Natural History Museum at the Queens Museum, NY, from a series of sixteen images documenting current exhibitions at natural history museums in the US.



LIBERAL UNITY

If fascist unity is the unity of one nation against the rest, liberal unity is the unity of the whole world holding hands, where there are no divisions, where “all lives matter.” By integrating all things within a conceptual unity, liberalism obfuscates essential differences and undermines the basis for political struggle. Liberal unity is liberal because it rests on a notion of equality founded on universal inclusion—all positions can be harmonized and managed within the social whole. It is the project of mending divisions between “us” (inferred as white and middle-class people) and historical Others (from Black people to animals and mushrooms) by assimilating, including, or recognizing them within an already-existing social structure that presupposes that all

relations are relations between self-possessed individuals. In this assimilative process, collective modes of relating to life and land are outlawed or pushed underground.⁷ Where fascism fights class struggle by fostering a patriotism that cuts across class lines, liberal unity undermines the basis for class struggle by denying the fundamental antagonisms that distinguish *us* from *them*.⁸

Where fascist unity is most clearly invoked and produced by the great natural history museums of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the museums that continue to be subject to the most sustained protest and anticolonial critique—liberal unity finds form in the Montréal Insectarium’s “biophilic design,” which itself builds upon a tradition of ecological design developed during the mid-to-late twentieth century. Consider the famous Penguin Pool at the London Zoo, designed by Berthold Lubetkin and the Tecton Group in 1934. As Peder Anker among others has shown, the Penguin Pool stood as a revolutionary innovation in environmental design because it broke from the long-standing “naturalistic” method of zoo design—the attempt to “reproduce the natural habitat” of the animal—in favor of what he calls a “geometric” method, which attempts to present animals in unnatural settings, more closely resembling the built environment.⁹ As Anker argues, this method of design was an effort to model a principle of “healthy coexistence,” which presupposed that “[a]ll species could prosper if they were given the opportunity to live in a healthy and peaceful environment.”¹⁰ Again, the injunction to “coexist” shifts our attention away from the structures and forces that threaten existence, leading to the kinds of ideological distortions that enable us to imagine an ethical way of designing animal cages for human entertainment.

If the Penguin Pool offers a model of hybridizing human and nonhuman environments, gesturing toward a unity that transcends the assumed difference between humans and nonhuman others (we can all thrive in reinforced concrete environments!), the Paris Museum of Mankind, renovated in 2015, underscores how liberal unity is established through the incorporation and assimilation of sites, species, and cultures that point to a world beyond the capitalist world. Here, visitors are confronted with a massive collection of cultural objects from around the world, where Nike sneakers are positioned next to Indigenous moccasins, peacefully coexisting within the same display cases. Radically upending the drama of the traditional natural history museum, where the fundamental antagonism between civilization and its Others is cast in the harsh light of day, this antagonism is swallowed up at the Museum of Mankind, incorporated but left unresolved.

7 See Steve Lyons and Jason Jones for Not An Alternative, “Towards a Theory of Red Natural History,” *Society & Space*, May 11, 2022, <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/towards-a-theory-of-red-natural-history>.

8 Alberto Toscano theorizes this “logic of pacification” in “Powers of Pacification: State and Empire in Gabriel Tarde,” *Economy and Society* 36, no. 4 (November 2007): 601.

9 Peder Anker, *From Bauhaus to Ecohouse: A History of Ecological Design* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 19.

10 Anker, *Bauhaus to Ecohouse*, 22.

Here, capitalist culture is subjected to the same ethnographic gaze as the “primitive cultures” whose objects were collected and preserved as spoils of imperial conquest, training us to see a sameness that transcends the fundamental differences that made so-called primitive noncapitalist societies Other to modern capitalist civilization in the first place. We leave the museum less equipped to understand why some cultures, ways of life, and economic systems have been targeted for extinction, less equipped to recognize the noncapitalist world these cultures represent, and less equipped to see the threat they pose to the capitalist state.

COMMUNIST UNITY

So, what of the third principle of unity, what I’m calling communist unity? To start, I should clarify that what I want to develop is not a definition of the unity produced by the Communist Internationals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but a principle of unity that precedes communism’s organized form, which late nineteenth-century elites like Gustav Le Bon and Andrew Carnegie derided as “primitive communism.”¹¹ Primitive communism does not name the organized form of communism, but the abject other to capitalist civilization. As a name, it holds together the communists, anarchists, agitators, Indigenous peoples, heretics, witches, and their nonhuman comrades, all those who have, throughout history, threatened and exceeded the perspective of the capitalist state, which places at its center the white, male, propertied individual. Unlike both fascist unity and liberal unity, communist unity is not premised on the annihilation of the Other, but on fidelity to it. It is a project of building the outside as a world apart—a world in common that capitalism cannot accommodate or enclose. Communist unity, thus, can be defined as the open, unbounded unity of a collective that comes together in the struggle to make a world according to principles of non-exploitation and non-domination. The “we” it calls into being is not fully formed. It is spectral, existing in the nightmares of the capitalists, and it is embodied, at different times and places, in the world-building practices of the oppressed.

It may be clear by now what the museum of natural history that is aligned with this principle of unity ought to do. In short, it ought to train us to take the perspective of the Other. This natural history museum does not presuppose civilized visitors who define themselves against the objects it contains. Rather, it invites its visitors to take the side of the Other, a side occupied by every being—human and other-than-human—whose subordination has been necessary for the making of the capitalist world. The museum of natural history that is built

11 From Gustav Le Bon to Andrew Carnegie, conservative elites at the end of the nineteenth century routinely described the desire for commonality simmering under the fabric of capitalist society as “primitive communism.” See Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (New York: The Century Co., 1900), 6. See also Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, second edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897), xvi.

on communist unity does not seek to heal the divide between humans and nonhumans or between “us” and “them.” Instead, it fosters the consciousness of the Other that fascism is determined to destroy. Communist unity is, in other words, fascist unity’s combative antithesis.

Producing a unity of the oppressed and excluded—this is the historical project of communism, and, as Geo Maher makes clear in his recent book *Anticolonial Eruptions*, it is the project of revolutionary decolonization as well.¹² Massimiliano Tomba theorizes the “insurgent universality” that has guided the emancipatory struggles of proletarians, enslaved people, women, and Indigenous peoples, who asserted themselves as “the excess of the term ‘man’ with respect to the law and to every essentialist definition of the human.”¹³ This insurgent universality does not necessarily exclude nonhuman beings. As Oxana Timofeeva argues in “Communism with a Nonhuman Face,” communist unity necessarily extends beyond the realm of the “human” into the animal realm. Quoting from a poem by Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, she underscores the relation between humans and nonhumans that her expansive idea of communism invokes: “You send sailors / To the sinking cruiser / there / where a forgotten kitten was mewing.”¹⁴ As Timofeeva explains:

“There is something absurd and irrational in the excessive generosity of the revolutionary gesture depicted by Mayakovsky—imagine how crazy an army commander would have to be to send a battalion of sailors, adult armed men, to risk their lives for the sake of some forgotten, tiny, politically insignificant creature. And yet, that’s precisely how the drama of revolutionary desire should be performed.”¹⁵

This drama is not set into motion by the communist’s empathy for the plight of the kitten, but a full identification with it. It is not a struggle for dignity, inclusion, or recognition, but a struggle of and for the undignified and unrecognized. The communist and the kitten are on the same side.

12 Geo Maher, *Anticolonial Eruptions* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022).

13 Massimiliano Tomba, *Insurgent Universality: An Alternative Legacy of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 14–15.

14 Vladimir Mayakovsky, “Ode to Revolution,” quoted in Oxana Timofeeva, “Communism with a Nonhuman Face,” *e-flux journal*, no. 48 (October 2013), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/48/60030/communism-with-a-nonhuman-face/>.

15 Timofeeva, “Communism”

The natural history museum that is aligned with this project supports the development of a unity between comrades, whether they are living or dead, human or nonhuman. It asserts that those who enter it are entering the domain of the other and invites them to cross over to the other world.

THE MUSEUM OF THE OTHER WORLD

Since 2014, Not An Alternative has been running *The Natural History Museum* (NHM)—an experiment in modeling this kind of museum—a museum that contributes to the production of collectivity between and among oppressed groups in their common struggle against fossil capitalism and the extractive industries. A “museum for the movement,” NHM works with scientists, museum workers, Indigenous water protectors and land defenders, and community-led environmental justice organizations to build infrastructure for environmental struggle. After spending our first few years campaigning to get fossil fuel oligarchs and climate deniers like David H. Koch removed from the boards of some of natural history museums in the US, we have spent the past seven years developing campaigns, exhibitions, and public programs with communities that have been cast as civilization’s Other, including Indigenous Nations struggling to protect sacred places from fossil fuel extraction and transport, as well as other communities on the frontlines of environmental injustice, whose lives are treated as disposable by corporations and the state.¹⁶

Much of our recent work has been developed in close collaboration with the House of Tears Carvers, a group of carvers and community leaders from the Lummi Nation, an Indigenous Nations in the Pacific Northwest. For more than a decade, the House of Tears Carvers has been carving totem poles, putting them on flatbed trailers, and bringing them to communities across North America to build alliances in the struggle to protect the land and water. The “totem pole journeys” visit Indigenous communities, farmers and ranchers, scientists, and faith-based communities, engaging groups in ceremonies led by Lummi elders. Connecting communities on the frontlines of environmental struggle, these journeys seek to build, through ceremony, a collective that did not previously exist. Our most recent collaboration with the House of Tears Carvers, the *Red Road to DC* (2021), was a cross-country totem pole journey that aimed to support local communities’ efforts to protect sacred places threatened by dams, mining, and oil and gas extraction. Stopping for ceremony at ten key sacred sites, including Bears Ears National Monument and Standing Rock, before arriving at the national capital in Washington DC for a cross-community gathering, the project was designed to both symbolize and strengthen bonds of solidarity between

16 Laura Pulido emphasizes the role of the state in reinforcing environmental racism in “Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence,” *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 4 (August 2017): 524–533.

Fig. 2. Not An Alternative, *Exhibiting the Gaze*, 2014. Light box photograph exhibited at the Grand Opening of The Natural History Museum at the Queens Museum, NY, from a series of sixteen images documenting current exhibitions at natural history museums in the U.S.



communities whose local campaigns to protect sacred places combined into one collective force. The *Red Road* also elaborated our vision for a museum that does not seek to protect the most treasured cultural objects from external threats but to mobilize them as threats to extractive capitalism.

For our latest project, *We Refuse to Die* (2023), we are working with fence-line environmental justice communities across the US to advance a visual language that represents and holds together a coalition of the dispossessed and excluded as a powerful threat to capital.¹⁷ From coastal Texas to Louisiana, rural Appalachia, and where I grew up near Sarnia, Ontario, communities living in close proximity to refineries, pipelines, fracking sites, and other polluting infrastructure are forced to breathe toxic concoctions of benzene, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, formaldehyde, and other harmful pollutants, which even at low levels, produce deadly impacts for those who ingest them.¹⁸ In Port Arthur and Freeport, Texas, St. James Parish, Louisiana, and Clairton, Pennsylvania, among other places, communities living near petrochemical refineries, fracking pads, and coal processing plants are experiencing horrifying rates of cancers, leukemia, birth defects, reproductive disorders, asthma, and heart disease, among other diseases. Forced to live in unlivable conditions, they are cast as the living dead—written off as “externalities” on an economic ledger. Responding to this situation, we are working with communities in Appalachia, the Gulf South, and the Pacific Northwest to reclaim the “living dead”—and the numerous popular incarnations of this figure—as protagonists and partners in our shared struggle for a world beyond extraction.

At the center of this initiative is a series of sculptures we call *Externalities*, representing various figures of the living dead—both humans and other animals. Hand-carved from trees killed in Pacific Northwest wildfires near where some of Not An Alternative’s members live (and where recent wildfire smoke caused the worst air quality in the world), the *Externalities*

¹⁷ For more on this project, visit werrefusetodie.org.

¹⁸ Dayna Nadine Scott, “Confronting Chronic Pollution: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Risk and Precaution,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 293-343.

Fig. 3. Not An Alternative/The Natural History Museum, Native Organizers Alliance, and the House of Tears Carvers (Lummi), *The Red Road to DC: A Totem Pole Journey for the Protection of Sacred Places*, 2021. Members of the Lummi Nation lead a ceremony outside the Capitol Building in Washington, DC, 2021.



Fig. 4. Not An Alternative, *The Externalities* (Clairton, PA), 2023. One of a series of sculptures, hand carved from logs salvaged from wildfires in the Pacific Northwest, installed facing US Steel’s Clairton Coke Works in Clairton, Pennsylvania. Environmental justice activist Melanie Mead stands opposite the sculpture, wearing a handmade silicone mask.



are being planted in the yards of Appalachia and Gulf South residents during community rituals, facing the petrochemical and fossil fuel infrastructures that contaminate local water supplies and pollute the air. As components within a multi-year, multi-city initiative, which includes the staging of public events, “toxic tours,” and community gatherings, these carvings bring together people from dispersed sites and struggles to perform a common ritual dedicated to metabolizing grief into collective strength and community power.

This project marks the beginning of the latest phase of our work, which is focused on seeding a visual language that can communicate, from a position of collective power, a relation between all those who have been cast as surplus—humans and nonhumans, living and dead. It does not seek to awaken fellow feelings between humans and nonhumans but to awaken the desire for a communist world that the capitalist class has spent centuries pushing underground. It thus advances the project beneath the NHM: to model a museum that does not heal the divide but takes a side, the side of the oppressed, excluded, and unhuman, who refuse to die but who refuse to live in the capitalist world.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Ross Exo Adams is Assistant Professor and Co-Director of Architecture at Bard College. He is the author of the book *Circulation and Urbanization* (Sage, 2018). His research works at the intersections of architectural and urban histories with political geography and environmental humanities, posing questions about how practices of design produce and reproduce systems of power in space. His current project charts the legacies of settler colonial modes of spatial production in modern and contemporary urbanization.

Thomas Auer is a partner and managing director of Transsolar. He is an expert in energy performance and user comfort. He worked with world-known architecture firms on award-winning buildings around the world. Thomas taught at Yale University and was a visiting professor at numerous Universities. Since 2014, he has been a full Professor at the Technical University of Munich. His research focuses on the interdependency between environmental quality, low-tech, and design strategies striving for simplicity.

Giovanna Borasi has been, since 2020, the Director and Chief Curator of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. She studied architecture at the Politecnico di Milano (1996) and has held editorial positions at Lotus International, Lotus Navigator, and Abitare. Joining the CCA in 2005 as Associate Director of Programs, Borasi has led major exhibitions, documentary films, and books. Her work explores architectural

processes that push the boundaries of practice.

Susana Caló is a researcher in philosophy, postwar histories of psychiatry, and the politics of madness. Her work focuses on recovering neglected alternative histories of psychiatry in their intersections with social-political and urban struggles. She is currently writing a book with Godofredo Pereira on the overlooked legacy of the research cooperative CERFI (1967-1987) founded by Félix Guattari. She is a visiting research fellow at the Centre for Humanities and Health at King's College London and a member of the collective *Chaosmosemedia*.

Brendon Carlin holds a post-doc position at the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Vienna University of Technology. He also teaches at the Architectural Association and the University College London's Bartlett School of Architecture. His research practice, Non-Typological Architecture, researches the historical emergence and disappearance of typology and ritual and formalized cultural practices and explores how architecture might open up imaginations and practices. He dedicates part of his year to research and case study architectural projects in the Canary Islands alongside María Páez González as part of their initiative Archipelagos Institute.

Peggy Deamer is Professor Emerita of Yale University's School of Architecture. She is a founding member of the Architecture Lobby, a group advocating for the value of architectural design and labor. She is the editor of *Architecture and Capitalism: 1845 to the Present* (Routledge, 2014) and *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design* (Bloomsbury, 2016) and the author of *Architecture and Labor* (Routledge, 2020).

Clémentine Deliss works across the borders of contemporary art, curatorial practice, and critical anthropology. She is Global Humanities Professor in History of Art at the University of Cambridge and Associate Curator at KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin, where she runs the “Metabolic Museum-University” (<https://mm-u.online>). Between 2010–2015, she was Director of the Welkulturen Museum in Frankfurt/Main, where she instituted a transdisciplinary lab to remediate collections within a post-ethnological context. She is the author of *The Metabolic Museum* (Hatje Cantz, 2020) and *Skin in the Game. Conversations on Risk and Contention* (Hatje Cantz, 2023).

FICTILIS is a curatorial collective and design studio whose projects share ongoing interests in language and taxonomy, materialisms, and waste flows, monuments and public memory, and political ecology. In 2015 FICTILIS founded the Museum of Capitalism, an institution dedicated to educating this and future generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of capitalism through exhibitions, research, publications, and a variety of public programming.

Francesco Garutti has been curator, writer, and Associate Director of Programs at the CCA since 2017. From 2011–2013 he worked as Art and Architecture Editor at *Abitare* magazine. Using art, architecture, and moving image projects to activate critical and cross-disciplinary forms of research, Garutti has been investigating topics such as the rise of emotional capitalism, the relationship between technology and politics, and the role of institutions today. For the CCA Montréal, Garutti has recently curated *The Things Around Us: 51N4E and Rural Urban Framework* (2020–2021) and the research, documentary and exhibition project *Groundwork* (2024).

Laure Giletti and Gregory Dapra have been working together since 2012. They operate within the fields of graphic design and web development. They design on paper, screen and space upon long-standing collaborations.

Maria Shéhérazade Giudici is the editor of *AA Files* and the founder of the research platform Black Square. She leads the History and Theory course at the School of Architecture of the Royal College of Art and the PhD program at the Architectural Association, London, besides teaching design at the École d’Architecture de la Ville et des Territoires Paris-Est. Stuart Smith is a structural engineer and Director at Arup Group. He has broad experience, including work on high-profile building and infrastructure projects as well as on urban design master plans across the world. He is experienced in both traditional and specialist projects, working with a variety of materials, and holds specialist knowledge of concrete structures and sustainability.

Joyce Hwang is an architect and educator. For nearly two decades, she has been developing projects that incorporate wildlife habitats into constructed environments. Hwang is a recipient of the Exhibit Columbus University Research Design Fellowship, the Architectural League Emerging Voices Award, the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and the MacDowell Fellowship. Her work has been featured by MoMA, and exhibited at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Matadero Madrid, and other venues. She is an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University at Buffalo SUNY, Director of Ants of the Prairie, and core organizer for Dark Matter U.

Matthew Leander Kalil is Research Assistant, Office of the Director at the CCA since 2021. In addition to supporting

curatorial activities, he has worked as an archival researcher and editor for two forthcoming volumes—on Blanche Lemco van Ginkel and Raymond Tait Affleck—in the *Building Arguments* series (CCA and Concordia University Press) and has been a curatorial researcher for the CCA exhibition and film series *Groundwork* (2024). Prior to coming to the CCA, Matthew worked as a designer and filmmaker at Office of Adrian Phiffer. He maintains an interdisciplinary artistic practice for which architecture is a binding element.

Anousheh Kehar is an architectural designer/researcher dedicated to liberation and world-making practices. She holds a B.A. in Art and Architectural History and Master of Architecture (M.Arch) and is currently a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at TU Wien. Her ongoing dissertation examines the shifting role of fire in settler-colonial California since the 20th century.

Bettina Köhler, Prof. Dr. Phil. Freelance author since 2019. The topics in architecture and fashion that I researched during my teaching career at ETH Zurich and FHNW Basel still underpin the perspective of my writing today as an arc from past to present, from theory to practice. As a freelance author, I want to leave the canon of academic writing. If I follow the idea of empathic conversation as a model for texts, then something emerges that I would like to call fictional non-fiction.

Elke Krasny is a Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Krasny focuses on concerns of care, reproductive labor, social and environmental justice, commemorative practices and transnational feminisms in art, architecture, infrastructures and urbanism. Together with Angelika Fitz she edited *Critical Care. Architecture and*

Urbanism for a Broken Planet (MIT Press, 2019). Together with Lara Perry, she edited *Curating as Feminist Organizing* (Routledge, 2023) and *Curating with Care* (Routledge, 2023). She is the author of *Living with an Infected Planet. Covid-19 Feminism and the Global Frontline of Care* (transcript, 2023).

Wilfried Kuehn founded the architectural practice Kuehn Malvezzi in Berlin in 2001 together with Simona Malvezzi and Johannes Kuehn. He is a curator of transdisciplinary exhibitions and editor of publications on architecture and curatorial spaces. From 2006 to 2012, he was a professor of exhibition design and curatorial practice at the HfG Karlsruhe, and since 2018, he has been a professor of architectural design at the TU Vienna. From 2017 to 2022 he led the FWF-PEEK research project Curatorial Design at the TU Graz.

Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli is an architect and curator whose work encompasses technology, politics, and the environment. Formerly a partner at OMA/AMO, he founded 2050+, an interdisciplinary studio focusing on curatorial practices, exhibition design, scenography and architecture. In 2018 Pestellini co-curated Manifesta 12 *The Planetary Garden. Cultivating Coexistence in Palermo*. He has taught at the Royal College of Arts in London. He was the President of the Jury of the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale.

Maxim Larrivée has been passionate about entomology and nature from an early age and holds a PhD in entomology. Using various monitoring methods, he specializes in the study of insect biodiversity and the causes of its collapse, notably climate change. Larrivée is an enthusiast of citizen science as a source of information for his research and as a participant in numerous projects.

He conceived projects such as eButterfly, Mission Monarque, the Quebec Moth Atlas and the Nunavik Sentinels. Director of the Insectarium since 2019, he successfully led the museum's metamorphosis project.

Mark Lee is the founding partner of Johnston Marklee. Mark served as Chair of the Department of Architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and the Artistic Director of the 2017 Chicago Architecture Biennial together with partner, Sharon Johnston. He has previously taught at Princeton, TU Berlin, and ETH Zurich. A book on the firm's work, *House Is a House Is a House Is a House Is a House*, was published by Birkhauser, monographs include: *2G N.67*, *El Croquis N.198*, and *A+U N.614*.

Armin Linke is an artist working with photography and film by setting up processes that question the medium, its technologies, narrative structures, and complicities within wider socio-political structures. In a collective approach with other creatives, researchers and scientists, the narratives of his works expand on the level of multiple discourses, centering the questions of installation and display. Linke's works have been exhibited internationally and he is currently a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Munich (AdBK).

Steve Lyons is a core member of Not An Alternative, an art collective with a mission to affect popular understandings of events, symbols, institutions, and history. The collective's ongoing project *The Natural History Museum* (2014-) began as a performative intervention in the museum sector. It has evolved into an infrastructure for place-based environmental justice struggles, with a focus on building and strengthening solidarity across geographies and between generations past, present, and future.

Ana Miljački is a historian, critic, curator, and Professor of Architecture at MIT, where she directs the SMArchS program. In 2018 Miljački launched the Critical Broadcasting Lab (criticalbroadcast.net) at MIT, engaged in critical curatorial and broadcasting work. She was one of three curators of the US Pavilion for the 14th Venice Biennale in 2014, with a project OfficeUS. She recently coedited LOG 54: *Coauthoring* with Ann Lui, and an issue of JAE titled *Pedagogies for a Broken World*, with Igor Marjanović and Jay Cephas. Critical Broadcasting Lab's project The Pilgrimage | Pionirsko hodočašće was on view at Palazzo Mora in Venice in 2023.

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes is an architect, urban designer, and Assistant Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology—EPFL, where she leads the laboratory RIOT. Most recently Assistant Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Malterre-Barthes conducts research on contemporary urbanization, material extraction, climate emergency, and ecological/social justice. She holds a PhD from ETH Zurich on the political economy of commodities in the built environment and is currently working on a publication calling for *Moratorium for New Construction* (forthcoming, Sternberg/MIT Press).

Erica Petrillo is a curator with a background in political philosophy and social sciences. She has contributed to various public programs and exhibitions, including the series of monthly R&D Salons at MoMA, New York, and *Broken Nature*, the 22nd Triennale di Milano. She is part of interdisciplinary studio 2050+, having worked on *Open*, the Russian Pavilion at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, *Synthetic Cultures*, the 10th Architecture Biennale of Rotterdam, and *Notes on Air* at Salt Beyoğlu, Istanbul.

Christian Raabe is the Professor of Historic Preservation at RWTH Aachen, an architect, and a founding partner at Abri + Raabe Architekten. He is the author of the project and the book *Eine Ecke der Bauakademie: Zur Rekonstruktion der "Allgemeinen Bauschule" Karl Friedrich Schinkels* (2011), and a restoration expert with a focus on Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

Albert L Refiti is an architectural anthropologist and associate professor of Pacific material culture at Auckland University of Technology. He is a research leader in Pacific spatial and architectural environment with extensive research and publication in the area. Albert has co-authored with Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul and Lana Lopesi of *Pacific Spaces: Transformations and Transmutations* (Berghahn, 2022) and *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture* (Springer, 2018) with Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop and Daniel Glenn. Albert is the convenor of the Vā Moana Research Cluster.

Damon Rich is a partner at urban design practice HECTOR, whose recent projects have included a community land trust development with the GES Coalition in Denver, Colorado and youth-centric neighborhood design with the Cody Rouge Youth Council and city government in Detroit, Michigan. He was formerly the planning director and chief urban designer for the City of Newark, New Jersey, and executive director of the popular education organization the Center For Urban Pedagogy (CUP).

Christiane Salge is Professor for Architecture and Art History at TU Darmstadt. Previously, she served as Junior Professor at Freie Universität Berlin and Project Manager for the DFG Project "Baukunst und Wissenschaft. Architektenausbildung um 1800 am

Beispiel der Berliner Bauakademie." Her research focus lies in the areas of architectural history and theory from the early modern age to the beginnings of modern architecture.

Ivonne Santoyo-Orozco is an architect, historian, and educator. She is an assistant professor of architecture and co-director of the architecture program at Bard College. Her research has been published widely and attends to histories of housing rights and spatial resistance against the privatization of collective welfare and common lands. She received a PhD in architectural history from the Architectural Association, an M.Arch from the Berlage Institute, and a B.Arch degree from the Universidad de las Américas.

Dr. Anna Schäffler is an art historian and curator. Her research on the contemporary preservation of art and cultural assets includes theory and practice at the intersection of art history, conservation, and curating. She advises artists and private and public institutions on long-term preservation strategies for collections and archives. In addition to artistic estates, another focus of Anna's interests is on public welfare and commons in the context of art, activism, and urban development. She initiated the urban praxis lab CoCooN and is the curator of Anna Oppermann's retrospective at Bundeskunsthalle Bonn in 2023.

Dr. Bernd Scherer has been Director of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, from 2006 to 2022 and has held an honorary professorship at the Institute for European Ethnology at the Humboldt University of Berlin since 2011. Since 2012, Scherer has headed "The Anthropocene Project" and, since 2014, the project "100 Years of Now," both at HKW. In his tenure at HKW, Scherer has guided its conceptual development from an institution

that presented non-European cultures into one dedicated to the “curating of ideas in the making,” in a world that is changing not only globally but also in planetary terms.

Laila Seewang is an architectural historian and a licensed architect. Her research uses infrastructural networks as lenses through which to study architectures of “place,” in particular the friction between how architectural production utilizes environmental resources and how architectural history writes narratives about this. She is currently working on a book manuscript about Berlin’s first municipal water supply and wastewater systems and previously coedited a double issue of *Architectural Theory Review*, *Timber Constructed: Towards an Alternative Material History* (2021). She is Assistant Professor of Architecture at the Catholic University of Louvain.

Dubravka Sekulić is an educator and theorist focusing on spatial literacy, solidarity, and knowledges from below. She is a Programme Lead for MA City Design at the Royal College of Art, London. She was an Assistant Professor at the IZK – Institute for Contemporary Art, Graz University of Technology, when she joined Curatorial Design project. With Milica Tomić and Philipp Sattler, she is working on a *Life of Crops: Towards Investigative Memorialization*. She is an author and editor of several books.

Asli Serbest and Mona Mahall work across spatial, image, sound, and text practices, at the intersection of art and architecture. All their projects follow a feminist methodology. As such, they constitute less fixed spaces and objects than non-linear physical or digital versions and speculations. These play and replay architectural histories and rethink the re-production of space and implied power

relations. Serbest/Mahall exhibit and publish internationally and edit the magazine *Junk Jet*. They serve as professors at the University of the Arts Bremen and Bauhaus-University Weimar.

Stuart Smith is Global Circular Economy Skills Leader for Arup who contributes to the themes of circular economy in the built environment, regenerative design, and the development of low carbon buildings. He is a member of the Board of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction and an Academic Chair at the Norman Foster Institute for Sustainable Cities. He is currently collaborating with Norman Foster Foundation on a masterplan for the reconstruction of Kharkiv in Ukraine and with David Chipperfield Architects on the new Nobel Center in Stockholm, Sweden.

Laurent Stalder has been Professor for Architectural Theory at the gta Institute since 2006, from 2017 to 2021 its head. In 2009, he was a visiting scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; in the fall semester of 2019, he was a guest professor for “Architectural Behaviorology” at the Department of Architecture and Building Engineering, School of Environment and Society at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. The main focus of his research and publications is the history and theory of architecture from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries where each intersects with the history of technology.

Milica Tomić, born in Yugoslavia, is a conceptual artist whose politically and socially focused work spans site-specific installations, moving images, audio, performance, and educational art. She co-founded “Grupa Spomenik” in 2002 and initiated Four Faces of Omarska in 2010. In 2020, she opened “Annenstrasse 53,” an experimental space in Graz based

on unlearning. Featured in global exhibitions (Sao Paulo, Venice, Sydney, Istanbul, Berlin, Prague, Gumry, Belgrade), she leads the Contemporary Art Institute at Graz University of Technology, Austria.

Julia Wieger is an artist, researcher, and teacher. Her work is concerned with queer feminist decolonizing productions of space, archive politics, and history writing, as well as collective approaches to research, knowledge production, and design. Her research on reproductive labor in collective housing projects has been published in anthologies by Routledge and Sternberg Press. Together with Nina Hoechtl, she realizes projects in the working group Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps (www.skgal.org).

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