

C O L L E C T I V E S

Towards a User-Driven Urbanism

Instructor: Rafi Segal (rsegal@mit.edu)

TA: Giovanni Bellotti (gbellot@mit.edu)

Schedule: Wed 3:30 – 6:00 pm, Room 4-146

Credits: 3-0-6 G

Overview

Sharing economies, digital technologies and new notions of community are altering the way we live and work. Accessibility over ownership, community-based exchange and collaborative platforms are increasingly transforming both economic and social patterns, contesting notions of property and shared space. The void left by a retreating public sector, combined with the rigidity of the producer/consumer binomial, has created a demand for collective processes that reflect new forms of self-organization and action. In the domestic realm, co-housing and co-living are re-emerging as viable models that operate within the market economy and overcome the unilateral relationship between user, designer, and developer.

COLLECTIVES calls to explore and represent ways in which collaborative approaches to living can reshape architecture and the city. What kind of architecture and urban space support, facilitate, and represent collective forms of life, work and leisure? How does designing the “collective” both respond to and create demand for a more communal life-style in the contemporary city? What are the scales involved? And what are the historic models we can learn from? This seminar will investigate these questions through readings, guest lectures, discussions, and the use of drawing and diagramming as tools of analysis and representation.

Premise

The sharing economy, although not politically neutral, is creating a new economic model – an interesting middle ground between capitalism and socialism – that also appears to lend itself to fulfilling the desires and needs of people who identify with the extreme ends of both the economic and political spectrums. More importantly, it has developed as an economic model that appears to lend itself to fulfilling the desires and needs of people who identify with neither of those extremes.

Arun Sundararajan. *The Sharing Economy: The End of Employment and the Rise of Crowd-based Capitalism*: p.45

The syncretism of contemporary social movements and the growing momentum of the commons movement both illustrate the civil distrust of any form of institutional government and the rejection of deep structural categories embodied in the dualities of state/market, public/private, objective/subjective and universal/local.

Heidi Sohn et al. "Commoning as Differentiated Publicness" *Footprint, Delft Architecture Theory Journal* 16 (2015): p.1

New socio-economic modes generally referred to as the sharing economy, and the civil distrust in the government's ability to manage the public realm have put to question the traditional definitions and characteristics of the public-private dichotomy. COLLECTIVES calls to investigate the ways in which new emerging forms of "public" are transforming the relationships between individuals, groups, and institutions, and how these in turn impact the way we understand and operate within the city.

Assignment

Project: Reporting from the Field

A single assignment will be undertaken throughout the semester whereby each student (or pair) is asked to document an existing collective or develop a proposal to form a new one. A collective in this case constitutes a group of people voluntarily organized around shared values and mutual understandings for the sake of a common objective that would better an aspect of their livelihood. Joining a collective means that one can take an active role in the group, both contributing to it and benefiting from it. Students will document their experience in taking part in that collective and/or the process of joining it, and report back to the class. As a first step, each project will outline the field within which that collective exists. For example, a research or proposal for a co-housing collective will start with an overview of existing co-housing models in a specific context. Although active participation in the collective is not a requirement, an understanding of the inner hierarchies, rules, and dynamics within the proposed collective is an important part of the research.

Readings

A brief reading response (300words) is to be submitted before the beginning of the classes that include a discussion or a guest lecture (the response must be uploaded to dropbox). Readings required before guest presentations will be uploaded to dropbox a week in advance. A good response will not just provide a synthesis of the readings, but articulate an argument, drawing connections between concepts, and posing questions. The readings provide concepts, terms and ideas to help guide the individual project of documentation.

Moderating a discussion

The seminar will address five themes for discussion, based on a set of readings and presentations. Each student or pair will moderate one of the thematic discussions. This will require a brief introduction accompanied by a powerpoint presentation (5 to 10 minutes) that poses a few meaningful questions that expand the conversation and contextualize ideas in relation to previous class discussions.

Schedule

Week 1, February 7

- Course introduction

Sharing: Economies and Platforms

Week 2, February 14

- Guest lecture and conversation, with Aurore Rapin, coordinator of Les Grands Voisins.
- Individual project proposal due (300 words approximately). Text document to be uploaded on dropbox by 3.30pm

Week 3, February 21

- No class. Class moved to Thursday April 12th.

Week 4, February 28

- Guest Lecture and open discussion, with Michael Schrage, Research Fellow at MIT's Center for Digital Business and Visiting Fellow at the Imperial College, Department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Class discussion

Commoning and Public Space

Week 5, March 7

- Skype conversation with James Taylor Foster, Contemporary Curator at Ark-Des, Sweden's national center for architecture and design
- Class discussion

Week 6, March 14

- Guest lecture and open discussion, with Sarah Watson, Deputy Director of New York City Citizens Housing & Planning Council.

Design and Housing

Week 7, March 21

- Individual presentation with research updates (10 minutes powerpoint presentation)
- Class Discussion

Week 8, March 28

No class/Spring break.

Week 9, April 4

- Guest lecture followed by open discussion, with Anna Bokov, architect and historian, Adjunct Professor at The Cooper Union.

Partnership and Friendship

Week 10, April 11

- Skype conversation with Anastassia Smirnova, writer and researcher, Programming Director at the Strelka Institute.
- Class Discussion

Week 10, April 12

- Joint class with "Spaces of Solidarity", Harvard GSD seminar taught by Malkit Shoshan. Time and place to be determined.

Self Organization and Amateurism

Week 11, April 18

- Skype conversation with Ania Molenda, Architect and curator, founder of the online platform Amateur Cities (<http://amateurcities.com>)
- Class discussion

Week 12, April 25

- Final Presentations

Week 13, May 2

- Final Presentations
- Research document to be uploaded on Dropbox by 3:30pm

Course Requirements

We will devote a substantial amount of time to discussion. You are expected to engage the course material by completing readings, and participating in round-table discussions. Attendance is assumed and your participation mark will be impacted if you fail to actively participate in class.

N.B. Failure to complete any one of the course assignments will result in an overall failure of the class. All work must be turned in by the due date indicated for each assignment. Students cannot make up work or receive a grade of incomplete, except as allowed by Institute policy.

MIT's expectations and policies regarding academic integrity and honesty should be adhered to diligently: <http://integrity.mit.edu>

Grading Distribution

Class participation: 25%

Class moderation: 25%

Project: 50%

Readings

Readings may be updated during the course, changes will be communicated via email.

1) Sharing: Economies and Platforms

Sundararajan, Arun. "The Sharing Economy, Market Economies, and Gift Economies". *The Sharing Economy: The End of Employment and the Rise of Crowd-based Capitalism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016. p. 23-44.

Agyeman, Julian. "Moving Beyond the Sharing Economy: The Case for 'Sharing Cities'" www.julianagyeman.com. 10 July 2014. Web.

Gorenflo, Neal et al. "Policies for Shareable Cities: A Sharing Economy Policy Primer for Urban Leaders." *Shareable*. N.p., 9 Sept. 2013. Web

Santoyo-Orozco. "The Apparatus of Ownership." *Scapegoat Journal*. July 2014: 59-70. Print.

Altman, Irwin. *The Environment and Social Behavior: Privacy, Personal Space, Territory, Crowding*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Pub., 1975. p.1-27.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "Entering the Age of Access". *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life Is a Paid-for Experience*. New York: J.P. Tarcher/ Putnam, 2000. p. 3-16.

McLaren, Duncan, and Julian Agyeman. *Sharing Cities: A Case for Truly Smart and Sustainable Cities*. Cambridge: MIT, 2015. Print.

2) Commoning and Public Space

Sohn, Heidi et al. "Commoning as Differentiated Publicness" *Footprint, Delft Architecture Theory Journal* 16 (2015): 1-8.

Stavrides, Stavros. "Urban Commoning in Struggles to Re-appropriate Public Space" *Footprint, Delft Architecture Theory Journal* 16 (2015): 9-20.

Harvey, David. "The Right to the City" *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. New York: Verso, 2012. p. 3-27.

Robinson, Julia. "Institutional Space, Domestic Space, and Power Relations." *Proceedings . 3rd International Space Syntax Symposium* (2001)

Madanipour, Ali. "Introduction" and "Public and Private Spaces of the City". *Public and Private Spaces of the City*. London: Routledge, 2003: 1-4; 201-211.

Džokić, Ana and Marc Neelen. "Instituting Commoning " *Footprint, Delft Architecture Theory Journal* 16 (2015): 21-34.

Bollier, David. "The Quiet Realization of Ivan Illich's Ideas in the Contemporary Commons Movement" *www.bollier.org*. 08 Mar. 2013. Web.

3) Design and Housing

Chermayeff, Serge, and Christopher Alexander. *Community and Privacy; toward a New Architecture of Humanism*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963. p.31-39; 75-86; 121-151.

Boym, Svetlana. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 121-130, 139-157

Christensen, Karen, and David Levinson. *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003. Print.

Segal, Rafi. "An Architecture of Collective Living." *ARPA Journal* (2016) Web.

Ebner, Peter. *Typology : Innovative Residential Architecture*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010.

Lang, Jon T. "Privacy, Territoriality and Personal Space – Proxemic Theory”
Creating Architectural Theory: The Role of the Behavioral Sciences in Environmental Design. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987.

4) Partnership and Friendship

Schrage, Michael. *Shared Minds: The New Technologies of Collaboration*, New York, Random House, 1990, pp. 3 – 17, 151-180

Hebert, Stine, and Anne Szefer Karlsen. *Self-Organised*. Open Editions, 2013, 62-73.

Kluth, Andreas. "Primates on Facebook." *The Economist* 28 Feb. 2009. Print.

5) Self-Organization and Amatuerism

Hebert, Stine, and Anne Szefer Karlsen. *Self-Organised*. Open Editions, 2013, 17-26

Ampatzidou, Cristina and Ania Molenda. "New Media in Old Cities: The Emergence of the New Collective" *Footprint*, Delft Architecture Theory Journal 16 (2015): 109-122.

Movies

**Commune*. Dir. Jonathan Berman. Perf. Mahaj Seeger, Peter Coyote, Cedar Seeger. Five Points Media. 2005.

**The Idiocratic Life - A Documentary about Intentional Communities in America*. Dir. Kent Kessinger. 2013.

Happy. Dir. Roko Belic. Perf. Anne Bechsgaard, Gregory Berns, Roy Blanchard. Emotional Content, Iris Films, other. 2011. (Chapter on co-housing in Copenhagen)

Eight Miles High, Dir. Achim Bornhak, 2007

The Century of the Self, Dir. Adam Curtis, 2002