

Nothing comes between us
but a piece of latex.^[1] Empress Of, "Make Up," Track 8 on Me. Terrible Records/XL Recordings,
2015, streaming audio.

It takes courage to enjoy it
The hardcore and the gentle
Big time sensuality^[2] Björk, "Big Time Sensuality," Track 4 on Debut. One Little Indian /
Elektra Entertainment, 1993, studio album.

This issue of Paprika! explores encounters with space as mediated through embodied experience. Through disability specifically, understood as one capacious category of embodiment, we approach intimacy. Through disability, we approach a heightened sensuousness of and with the built environment.

The haptic, the erotic, and the supportive are approached through the lenses of critical disability studies and architectural theory. We ask if access always means proximity—touch—and seek out an enriched understanding of how bodies encounter architecture. Architecture isn't inanimate, but rather one side of a relation that can be erotic, assistive, and negotiated. Touch, the most basic encounter pressing persistently through this edition, is the habitual pressing of an automatic door opener, sunburned shoulder against cool tile, and/or a lover's embrace. It is always relational and mediated; in each encounter between fingertip and surface, an imperceptible buffer of electromagnetic repulsion keeps atoms apart.

Several themes guide the collection of texts in this issue. We consider intimacy with architecture: our emotional relationships with material space, drawing examples from art, architectural history, and design. A key reference is Little Frank and His Carp (2001), a six-minute video work by artist Andrea Fraser. A woman in a green dress, Fraser, stands in the foyer of the then-new Guggenheim Bilbao, listening with evident delight to the seductive voice of an audio guide. Authoritative and arch, he tells her:

As you look around, you'll see that every surface in this space curves. Only the floor is straight. These curves are gentle, but in their huge scale, powerfully sensual. You'll see people going up to the walls and stroking them. You may feel a desire to do so yourself.^[3] Fraser, Andrea. Little Frank and His Carp. 2001. Single-channel video, color, sound, 6 min. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Excerpt of audioguide transcript.

Fraser moves closer to the limestone wall, only to press and grind her body against it as her dress lifts, and strangers stare. Her touch turns architecture into desire, negotiation, and relation.

We also turn to theory, referencing the concept of "impairment phenomenology," as developed by the media scholar Jonathan Sterne in his 2021 book Diminished Faculties: experience as fragmented and incomplete, without assuming a subject in command of their own faculties. Impairment is understood here from the perspective of a subject who is not fully able to account for their own experience. This expands our understanding of intimacy beyond an instrument through which experience is reliably produced and communicated, casting impairment as dependence, uncertainty, and partial perception as conditions of embodied life. Intimacy, in this sense, can be found in the ways bodies rely on other bodies, technologies, and forms of environmental mediation to experience and make sense of the world.

A third point of reference, the mediation of access and proximity, extends this question of reliance through the devices, negotiated movement, and shared infrastructures that mediate where a building and body meet. Assistance, leverage, and negotiated balance are intimate conditions contingent on access needs, where the subject is supposedly at the mercy of the built space.

With these prompts, we invite you to trace how our bodies meet the built world, how they form attachment through use, how desire can be architectural, and how familiarity accumulates over time between person and place. Here, closeness and intimacy are not voyeurism, but repetition; a daily rehearsal through which space becomes known and knowing, and through which we learn how to embrace space.

Paprika!
Magazine

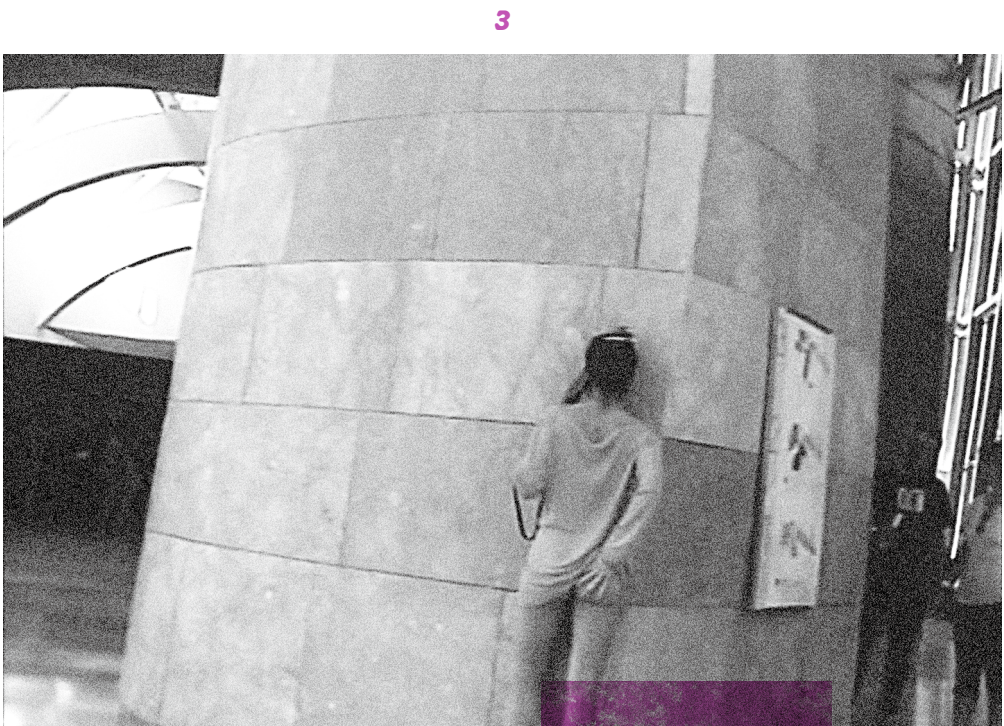
is a window into emerging discourse from the Yale School of Architecture. Every student-curated issue features diverse voices in the fields of architecture, art, and design and is uniquely designed by students from the Graphic Design program at the Yale School of Art. No two issues are alike.

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- 1 Bianca Censori, The Origin (Detail), 2025
- 2 Strat Coffman and Adam Miller, Trade Safe Chastity Box
- 3 Andrea Fraser, Little Frank and His Carp, 2001
- 4 Strat Coffman and Adam Miller, Trade Safe Chastity Box
- 5 Pope L, Tompkins Square Crawl, 1991
- 6 Strat Coffman and Adam Miller, Trade Safe Chastity Box
- 7 Jeff Markowitz/AP Photo, Capitol Crawl, 1990
- 8 Frank Greenaway, Hermit Crab in a Glass Shell, c. 2009



Design
Xing & Manni

This issue begins at the edge of the page. We think of the margin not as empty or leftover space, but as a point of contact: where the hand holds the paper, where the body first encounters the publication, and where questions of access begin.

While looking through previous issues of Paprika!, we noticed that the printing process leaves a blank area near the edge of the newsprint that cannot be printed. This is usually treated simply as a technical limitation—a space where the image or text has to stop. Instead of trying to hide or work around this restriction, we wanted to bring it into the design itself. We began to think of this unprinted area as a margin that already belongs to the physical life of the newspaper.

For the reader, this edge is not inactive. It is often the first part of the publication that the body touches. Fingers grip the paper there, pages are lifted and turned from there, and the newspaper is opened, folded, and held through its edges. What the printing process treats as a limit is, for the body, a place where reading begins. We wanted the design to respond to these gestures, to make the movement of holding, entering, and navigating the publication visible within the page.

We began thinking about this relationship through architecture. When someone enters a building, the first point of contact is often not the room itself, but a door handle. It is a small element, but it helps the body understand how to enter and what to do next. If we think of Paprika! as a kind of architecture on the page, reading can also become a process in which the hands and eyes move through a space. The margin becomes a threshold: a place where the reader first meets the publication and begins to understand how to move through it.

From this idea, we use the margins as active parts of the design rather than simply as spaces that separate content from the edge of the page. The movement of the text and the shapes around it respond to the gestures of the hand: pressing inward, holding, opening, and moving across the paper. At moments, the regular structure of the page bends or gives way, as if the reader's touch has entered the composition. The margin can also guide the eye, create pauses, mark transitions, and help establish a clear path through different kinds of information.

This way of working also shapes how we think about accessibility. Accessibility is often treated as something added after a design is already finished—an adjustment made to an existing system. We want it to be present from the beginning, in the basic decisions that shape the publication. Clear typographic hierarchy, readable text, strong contrast, generous spacing, consistent orientation, and bold color are not separate from the visual language of the issue; they are part of it.

Accessibility is also not only about making information easier to see. It is about how a publication is held, touched, opened, followed, and understood. Different bodies encounter the same object in different ways. By beginning with the margin—the place where the limits of printing meet the gestures of the reader—we want to make that encounter part of the design itself.

Through the edge, touch, assistance, and intimacy become part of the act of reading. What begins as a physical limit of the newspaper becomes a space of entry, navigation, and contact between the publication and the body.

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