

To

Stream

is

to

Touch

at

a

Distance

Paprika!  
Issue 1

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*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.

When we want nothing more than to hold you close, we'll stream until the day we meet again.

When our schedules keep us from loved ones, when our relationship to the land we call home grows estranged, when it feels like "real life" is somewhere else—how may we love at a distance? Our answer is subtle: maybe *To Stream is to Touch at a Distance*.

Given the intimacy of the theme, we expected tender love stories and lighthearted anecdotes. Those did arrive. Yet the submissions surprised us by reaching far beyond romance: from the playful act of following an ex on Spotify to the sobering reality of media blackouts in Iran, contributors mapped the undercurrents between people,

examined the environmental toll of our streaming habits, and exchanged letters across distant cities. This breadth of perspectives shows that streaming—and the yearning for connection—reaches every facet of our lives. Streaming is a tool as well as a metaphor for understanding that we, as architects, are nodes connected to a larger system of people and places—sometimes close, sometimes far. As Keller Easterling writes, "the most consequential forms today are not singular objects, but active forms that organize relationships, flows, and exchanges."

To our writers, thank you for your vulnerability. Aside from loving at a distance, we hope that in knowing each other more, we can all care better—and love harder.

To our YSoA community, we love, and see you,

Ambika, Ahenne, & Stone

Dispatch

Maggie Holm

When I ask my friend Ginny to describe an ICE kidnapping she witnessed, she sends me a New York Times Instagram reel with 11.1 million views, “I was at this one.”

As ICE has escalated its presence in the Twin Cities, my cyber window back to Minneapolis has widened from texts and calls, to international news and viral documentary clips. Aware of the dynamic city beyond

the 9:16 video frames, I asked my friends in MN to share their firsthand accounts of the ICE-occupied state that may not reach national streaming.

What wasn't shown in Ginny's NYT video were the swarms of people gathering to record and stop traffic, who were struck by pepper ball projectiles simply for witnessing what they had seen. Also not captured was the brevity of the attack: ICE agents made two arrests within ten minutes of arriving and leaving the scene. That it was documented at all can only be attributed to the immediate action of passersby. Feeling shocked and useless in the aftermath, Ginny started to walk home, noticing that within a block radius of the site, city life seemed to continue on with its regular program.

Julia is a student at the University of Minnesota, and reports that the university switched to a short-term hybrid model with established checkpoints at major building entrances. The university presi-

dent, Rebecca Cuningham, sent a word-salad email encouraging students to stay “calm” and “peaceful,” all while ICE agents boarded at the Graduate Hotel, central to UMN's East Bank campus.

Justine shared that living in a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis feels alienating—though most local residents rely on the same news as national audiences and do not actually bear witness to firsthand violence, there is an all-encompassing miasma of hopelessness and intimidation hovering over the area. As a K-12 teacher, Justine is acutely aware that she has her students' lives in her hands. Attendance has dropped by 30% at metro schools, classes are hybrid, teachers must attend

preparatory training for ICE raids, and all staff members wait at the bus pick-up to ensure every student boards lest they be abducted.

Despite the dark cloud, the neighborly camaraderie and lasting community systems built in Minneapolis during the 2020 BLM protests prepared the city for organized resistance. Mutual aid groups deliver food to families in hiding. Healthcare workers volunteer as street medics. Thousands of people coordinate in nested Signal group chats. ICE Watch is a coalition of

volunteers that alert neighborhoods of ICE activity and act as security guards, while Rapid Response arrives at ICE sightings to prevent or document arrests and collect victim identities. Patrollers bike around town wearing neon vests that read, “LEGAL OBSERVER DON'T SHOOT.”

While evidentiary documentation and international news sharing are a crucial baseline, it has never been more clear that simply revealing information and doing to death the

same recycled outrage is fruitless. What Minneapolis reveals is that organization, in physical space, with the people nearby, works. Minnesotans have repeatedly (2016, 2020, 2023, now 2026) shown up in massive numbers for event-based protests—impressive and inspiring, but the periodic nature of large-scale resistance efforts ultimately aligns with an ‘out of sight, out of mind’ mentality where momentum dies as news coverage wanes. What's missing is any meaningful collective call-to-action in response to the question: How do we kill the forces at bay in those interim periods that may not reach virality, before they coalesce into singular, increasingly horrific events?

To Stream is a Privilege:  
Infrastructures of Resistance

Saba Salekfard

To stream is to touch at a distance—but to stream is also a privilege.

In Iran, that distance has been forcibly widened. Since January 8, the regime has severed access to the internet, cutting millions off from social media, messaging platforms, and even basic communication with loved ones. Streaming—often framed as frictionless and ubiquitous—becomes a withheld right. The absence of the stream is not neutral; it is a political tool.

This internet blackout came as a direct crackdown by the Islamic Republic in response to widespread, nationwide protests. What began in the Grand Bazaar of Tehran as demonstrations against rising

costs of living rapidly ignited a nationwide movement spanning more than 177 cities—the largest popular uprising in decades. The regime responded with violence in an attempt to silence dissent, yet the people persisted.

As access was withdrawn within Iran, a parallel infrastructure emerged. Members of the Iranian diaspora and allies abroad began operating what came to be known as Conduit Stations—points of passage in a distributed network that allowed fragments of internet access to flow back into the country. Through circumvention tools like

Psiphon, individuals outside Iran shared their own bandwidth, converting private, domestic internet connections into collective lifelines. In this configuration, data was no longer immaterial or infinite; it became finite, carried, rationed, and sustained through care and collective effort. Each connection depended on someone leaving a device on, donating time, electricity, and risk. These acts were small in scale but cumulative in effect. Connection was maintained by individuals, often anonymously, who transformed domestic space into infrastructure, turning kitchens, bedrooms, and routers into sites of quiet, sustained refusal. Packets of information crossed borders where bodies could not, forming fragile but persistent bridges between inside and outside.

What is typically invisible—the labor of infrastructure, the politics of access, the physical cost of connectivity—was now rendered tangible. Data operated as a bridge, the point of connection that lessened physical distance. In the absence of a stream, the conduit revealed itself not as a

neutral system but as a site of solidarity: access as resistance.

This moment revealed a reversal of power. The blackout transformed global spectatorship into global action. When people inside Iran could no longer broadcast their resistance, voices abroad stepped into the gap. The inability to stream did not end the movement; it multiplied it. Streets in cities across the world are filled with bodies, chants, and images. Those outside Iran reached

those inside through data and accessibility. Data became physical—an infrastructure of care and a shared refusal to let silence win. The hope was that when these protests circled back—when news of global uprisings filtered through censorship—it sustained the courage of those at the center of the struggle. Distance did not produce isolation but resonance and, soon enough, the protests became a revolution.

Ultimately, it is the bravery and sacrifice of the Iranian people that will dismantle this regime. The stream may be interrupted, but the movement continues. As one of the most widely echoed slogans of the revolution declares, “This is the final battle—Pahlavi will return!” Long live Iran, and may it soon be free.

## Vehicular Vision: Awakening the Virtual Window

Ange Long

The screen follows the individual and the landscape, promising to wrap both in a soft film wherever it goes. As New York embraces the vertical annexation of architectural screens—crawling up skyscrapers to create Times Square’s curtain walls and advertisements—so does Los Angeles embrace the screen’s propensity for infinity, dispersing them horizontally across sprawling highways of smart cars. Across these urban conditions, the screen no longer functions as a discrete surface but as spatial medium that reorganizes perception. Vision shifts from a framed perspective toward a displaced, operational mode calibrated for speed and anticipation, slowly rendering the car’s window obsolete.

This transformation emerges from mid-twentieth-century projects in multiscreen environments that fractured the singular viewpoint. Experiments such as the films of the Eames brothers, IBM pavilion, and NASA’s control room displaced the stable observer by presenting layered, simultaneous images across multiple surfaces. Vision collapses into prediction, monitoring, and response at speeds beyond human perception, rendering automation a necessity. When these systems migrate from static interiors into domestic architectures of mobility, the car becomes their most consequential site.

Contemporary infotainment systems extend this logic of threat anticipation through aerial GPS views and abstracted renderings of surrounding vehicles, translating space into an operational field of potential threats. As digital screens replace windows—and, just as importantly, mirrors—the car’s architecture starts to resemble infrastructures designed for signal transmission instead of human perception. The very act of looking is displaced: human attention shifts from interpreting space in real time towards receiving

processed output. Vision becomes a negotiation among sensors, processors, and interfaces, while glass becomes an aesthetic remnant. The driver, therefore, becomes both an active participant and an absent spectator in the real-time production of images. This displacement of embodied perception translates to broader architectural tendencies, where space is apprehended less through direct sight than data and machine vision.

The evolution of the automobile charts a broader trajectory of technological mediation. It first liberated us from our legs, allowing speed and distance unimaginable on foot. Later, operational interfaces relieved us from our eyes, translating perception into processed, actionable information. And as autonomous systems emerge, even our hands are increasingly redundant as instruments of interaction and decision-making.

Across car, city, and architecture, vision is no longer simply a human faculty but an operational system that precedes and structures experience. Landscape becomes interface, movement becomes calculation, and the human eye inherits a vision it no longer fully inhabits.

## Everything is a Rumor

Stone Stewart

Why is everything at YSoA a rumor? Instructions for homework, printer outages, even critical deliverables drift through loose lips and WhatsApp messages. In our dense concrete monolith, information travels by whisper. Is an email too much to ask?

With our endless entanglements, deadlines, and poor time management, maybe hearsay is our love language—the digital grapevine that holds us close. As Mindy Seu said: “We should gossip more. Gossip builds trust... one man’s shit talk is another woman’s safety net.”

Our little rumor network is a stream of its own. Our intimacy, our trust, persist without physical touch.

## You May Have Felt It

Ethan Lamping

you may have felt it—  
i hope you have.

i know you have.  
invisible gestures,  
wordless speech

breathand  
sweatand  
dust---  
electrons.

this is  
youyou  
are blurry

utopia is extinction in practice  
what did the stream say to the  
river when they met in the night?  
“sorry i’m running late”

The moon is physical. It governs tides, calendars, and sleep. But it is also intimate. It slips through blinds, rests on drafting tables, and follows us home. Without wires or screens, it synchronizes emotion across space.

Still, the Moon Arrives

Ciel Fu

We used to believe that intimacy required closeness—that love needed shared rooms, air, and touch. Yet for as long as humans have looked up, we’ve known another truth: connection can exist across distance.

I’m usually in studio: the concrete floor cold through my shoes, the desk lamp humming, and drawings half-finished. The city is quiet in that suspended hour between deadlines and sleep. Somewhere above the roofline, the moon rises, indifferent to my exhaustion. I’m not alone with it, even when it feels that way.

The moon has always been our first network.

No matter where we stand—on different sides of a city, country, or the world—we look up and see the same moon. Its luminance silently travels across distance, touching windowsills, rivers, faces, and open hands alike. It does not ask us to gather; it simply reminds us that we are already connected.

Chinese poet Su Shi wrote from exile: 千里共婵娟—though separated by a thousand miles, we share the same moon. This isn’t a consolation, but a refusal. We are apart, yes, but not detached: the moon holds a common presence that distance cannot undo.

Although we now stream faces and voices to stay connected, this desire predates technology. Perhaps what we are truly yearning for is the condition the moon has always offered: to feel present in someone else’s night without closing the miles between us.

Before streaming, there was moonlight.

And somehow, it still arrives first.

Still Listening

Nina Criswell

In the long hours at Rudolph Hall, when the temptation to distract takes over, I cave to scouring the depths of Spotify for the recently

played artists of someone I left behind when I moved here—someone I made a no-contact agreement with. Although I’m not technically breaking the rules, I know I’m cheating the code.

While I have been mostly successful in rationing my attention away from social media in recent years, Spotify has proved the stubborn straggler. I can’t help but reserve a portion of that attention for people from my past, with whom I have otherwise lost all physical and digital touch.

The digital sphere’s promise of a safe distance from which to surveil acquaintances, crushes, exes, or parasocial idols is perhaps a universal weakness. We’re aware of this mutual surveillance, but still willingly participate for the sake of sentimental attachment, knowing Mr. Foucault would probably hang his head in shame. Spotify’s grasp on my attention feels particularly insidious because it promises access to the emotional states of others through what they listen to—a far more intimate tether than other social media platforms.

In these moments, Spotify exploits my most predictable vulnerabilities, and that’s why I can’t quit. Not yet. Someday, I will be ready to break away, to accept that this form of touch is only spectral. But for now, I linger in the auditory soundscapes of someone half the world away, and I accept defeat.

To Stream is to Touch Relentlessly

Kate Joss

Beneath a pile of cotton and quilts, you stream. The glow is fluorescent, a parade of color wheels spinning across your pale bedroom wall. The heat of a silver tablet seeps through blankets and onto your thighs. High-pitched voices reverberate through this plate of mirrors; a specter of life pouring out of a disembodied screen.

In 2010, Wired founding editor Kevin Kelly posited that “Our present economic migration from a material-based industry to a knowledge economy of intangible goods ... is just the latest in a steady move toward the immaterial.” Our devices reinforce this sense of weightlessness; to “stream” suggests the unencumbered flow of frictionless vapor.

But the armature of this stream is anything but ephemeral. Your laptop is compressed geology: an amalgamation of sand hauled from beaches; quartz melted and purified into glass. Steel and aluminum form its chassis. Indium and tin foil around the tablet’s surface—enabling light to respond to touch. Beneath it, circuits braid copper and gold, shuttling signals under keys. The battery is a vault of chemicals: lithium drawn from evaporated salt flats and cobalt mined deep underground, where laborers descend into unstable shafts, breathing mineral dust, trading bodily risk for global interconnectivity.

To Stream is to Touch at a Distance

These materials travel. Ore moves by truck, by ship, by rail, across borders and oceans, to refineries and factories, where components are etched, soldered, assembled under bright lights and buzzing machines. Chemical solvents wash silicon wafers clean. Heavy metals circulate through industrial water systems. Waste accumulates downstream: lead pooling in ponds, mercury trickling into oceans. Sealed in sleek finality, the device travels again, swaddled in plastic and cardboard, shipped to warehouses, delivered to a store near you. You drive it home, break the seal, and reveal a surface that shows no trace of its making.

From the cocoon of your house, burrowed in bed, you press play. Electricity flows from distant plants—gas, coal, hydro—into your outlet, into the transformer on your street, into the grid beneath your feet. Data fractures into packets and slips into fiber-optic cables: threads of ultra-pure glass buried beneath sidewalks, strung along poles, sunk beneath oceans. Light pulses through them in a mycelial network spanning continents, through trenches dug by the night shift.

Mere miles from your bedroom, a data center exhales. Racks of servers whimper and grumble, powered by coal and gas and cooled by fans and water drawn from local supplies—all to maintain a

continuous stream of power. Land that was once forest is now asphalt and concrete. Nearby residents learn the tune of its constant hum. Outdated servers are shipped to distant countries, joining hills of electronic waste leaking slowly back into the earth.

Despite claims that we’ve shifted from an industrial society to an immaterial information economy, we have only intensified our reliance on the physical environment. Data centers account for roughly 2% of global electricity consumption—a carbon footprint that rivals the entire aviation industry. If the Cloud were a country, it would rank as the fifth largest global electricity consumer. As artificial intelligence scales, so do the demands on energy, land, and water. One peer-reviewed study estimates that AI-related data center operations could consume up to 764 billion liters globally by 2025—more than the annual global consumption of bottled water.

The material reality of our devices is obscured by design. Interfaces and marketing tactics render extraction invisible and infrastructure distant. Technology’s ethereal lexicon—*wireless*, *cloud*, *virtual*—masks its deeply material reality. Yet our devices are merely the polished edge of a vast system sustained by resource extraction, labor appropriation, industrial manufacturing, chemical processing, energy consumption, and waste accumulation—systems that persist long after the show has ended and your screen goes dark.

TOUCHING (ARCHITECTURAL)  
CORRESPONDENCES // LETTER  
TO A BUILDING

Diana and Gustav

Dear R.H.,

We've lost touch. A few thousand miles between us, with months turning into years, things get in the way. "Let's stay in touch," we've said over and over again. And somehow we do, through screens, cables, hauntings, bush-hammered concrete walls, but not in the way we thought we would. Fingers reach, voices sink. Things excite you, they frighten me. By staying *in* touch, we've lost staying with it. And as days fill the space in between, as worlds move and hostility prevails, through absence you say, "we're at a loss when we stay."

Yours,

Diana and Gustav

P.S. In the 1950s and 1960s Ray Johnson started exchanging small art pieces by mail with a group of colleagues, in rejection of the elite art scene and its venues—they called it the New York Correspondance [sic] School. In 2020 and 2021, the Queer Correspondence project sought to connect and nurture indeterminate spaces of possibility created by subcultural lives in East London and beyond. During the summer of 2025, we mailed former classmates and colleagues with whom we had been out of touch<sup>1</sup>. Together, we're exploring what the creative correspondence might bring to our lives, including the way we think of, practice and talk about architecture. By corresponding creatively, with the smudging of ink, to mail never being received, we practice staying with the touching, the fumbling, the nonsensical, and the getting lost together.

P.P.S. We're attending to touch. Rehearsing touching (the) practicing (of) theorizing with touching-practicing-theorizing. Feminist physicist philosopher Karen Barad suggests that reality is towards phenomena rather than things—and proposes a boundary-making cutting-together-apart instead of binary-making Cartesian cuts<sup>2</sup>. In their agential realist ontology<sup>3</sup>, space is not a container and time is not a backdrop, rather space and time is iteratively reconfigured with matter

as space-time-mattering<sup>2</sup>. Touch is no longer an inter-action between distinct entities (Self and Other), but a radically intimate intra-active "self-touching"<sup>4</sup>. Staying with the reaching and longing of touch/ing is staying with alterities and aporia<sup>5</sup>. By attending to touch/ing with Barad, how might we explore ways of being with and knowing the world differently from an out-of-touch late modernity?

P.P.P.S. Touching with/as correspondence is also a doing-thinking of architecture differently. An embodied exploration of relationality beyond objects and representationalism, and a haptic encounter with plural worlds and ontological designing<sup>6</sup>. Søren\* speculates that Thoravej 29 in Copenhagen operationalizes an agential realist ontology. A careful curation of found materials with a brutalist finish is no doubt a cut that creates a specific phenomenon of adaptive building reuse. Bringing up Halberstam's writings on Anarchitecture<sup>7</sup> feels pertinent, but is this it? In the architectural knolling of discrete elements, through "surgical"<sup>8</sup> discovery and repair, Thoravej 29 seems, epistemically, to disentangle the world in a Cartesian cutting that follows modernity's Western logics. That is, we can read it as an agential cut, but one that makes matter ontologies of separation, fixity and control. Sitting there/here, between those concrete walls, who are enacting agencies and made to matter? What difference does it make if you were draw(in)n(g) by pencil on paper or nurbs in pixels? How can we take seriously and contribute to architectures of moving matter?

B2B

Konstantin and Rizek

Finals week stretches time. The building stays full late into the night. Screens glow. Hands keep moving. People sit close to one another, but each inside their own sound. Headphones on. Music everywhere, but separated. The same playlists repeat, with no time to look for something else.

The radio started there not as a plan, but as a pause, a way to listen together. Back 2 Back happened for an hour at a time: one track, then another. No theme. No genre to hold onto. Only the hour, and the order in which things appeared. The music passed back and forth without much explanation. One track answered another, sometimes closely, sometimes not at all. The sequence unfolded without being unplanned. Listening became the program. Not choosing, not curating, but staying present. Sound filled the room without asking for attention. People kept working—drawing, building, waiting for files to load. The radio did not interrupt the studio; it moved alongside it.

Later, others joined. Each night, a different person took over the hour, playing what they listen to. Nothing was explained. There was excitement in how quickly friends stepped in, ready to share. Music carries private weight. In these hours, small parts of different lives passed through the studio and became audible in the form of rhythm, repetition, and silence. It was a quiet closeness, social in a quiet way, exciting without noise, to know that the sound was shared, that others were listening too, tired, staring at their screens. The tiredness stayed, but it changed; it felt less singular.

People outside the building do not always understand finals week, how intense it is, how close we become, how easily stress and excitement move between us. Through the radio, that closeness could be heard. For those hours, this building listened together. Thank you to everyone who tuned in. We'll be back again soon.

## ON THE GROUND

Ticket to the Career Fair

Anonymous

It's career fair season again, and I want to go back to the year I had mine.

I was running late: I'd had a class at MoMA that day and had to hurry to catch the Metro-North so I could make it to the reception on time. Back in New Haven, I took a quick shower at home and ran to school. I put on an outfit meant to look casual yet elegant, confident yet obedient, but my feelings were closer to embarrassment and insecurity. Worse, my hair was still damp from the shower, which made me look weird.

It was my first time at a career fair, and the scene on the second floor could not feel more esoteric. From a glance I could make out three types of people: partners of nearby firms who seemed to enjoy the attention from students eager to get an interview the day after; senior practitioners working for a company who clearly wished they were elsewhere; and junior employees—usually alumni—who also looked to be in a state of quiet anxiety, pretending to have a hierarchical position that was difficult to sustain for a whole evening with free drinks. My target for the evening was that third type of person. I only needed a summer job in New Haven to pay bills. Having this job would make the difference between enjoying a financially comfortable summer and having to question every single expense. I had exchanged a few emails with an employee at a local firm, and although we weren't meeting until a week later, I had promised myself I'd say hi and make sure he remembered me.

I had two glasses of wine, then started orbiting near the group of students around him for about ten minutes, trying to figure out how to get his attention. Luckily, he didn't know me in person, so even if he noticed the random guy stalking him, he wouldn't recognize me. Or would he? I grew more and more nervous because I didn't know how to act. I finally found the courage and walked directly toward him, as if I was about to attack him. He finally looked at me, more scared than curious.

"Hi, my name is... We exchanged emails in the past few days... I only wanted to say hello before we meet in person next week."

## ON THE GROUND

His face finally relaxed. He was probably relieved I wasn't the serial killer he expected. But still, I could tell he wasn't enjoying that evening either.

"Ah, nice to meet you," he responded, "Yes, I look forward to our meeting."

The career fair is a social experiment for those who aren't familiar with Ivy League social etiquette. For a few hours, your chances of getting a job depend less on your talent as an architect than on your ability to find the right person, say the right things, and make sure they can remember you the day after. One could say that your classmates are your competitors, but, paradoxically, they are the ones to support you, when you are extremely nervous and in dire need to exchange a few words just to avoid having a panic attack.

I don't have good memories of that evening, and I still feel embarrassed when I think about it. Nonetheless, I also remember it as an effective learning process: better to have a weird networking encounter than to avoid it completely. In the end, I got that summer job.

Third Places #1: MakeHaven

Jessica Kong

Can loneliness kill you?

At times, I feel that it absolutely can. During those quiet and numbing moments,

I am violently reminded that we are not meant to navigate this complicated world alone.

What does it mean to belong?

What does it mean to feel tethered to the people and places around you?

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In March 2020, just after hitting their goal of 400 members, MakeHaven, like many other organizations, was forced to curtail its services, limiting access to individuals whose professional work necessitated use of the space. Needless to say, the pandemic was an extremely difficult and isolating time for everyone. Forced to quarantine,

## ON THE GROUND

forced to stay indoors, and forced to physically isolate. It was a lonely and scary time.

However, for many, it was also a time of opportunity to pursue passion projects, pick up a new hobby, or finally do that "thing" we always said we were going to do but never got around to.

As MakeHaven began to resume regular operations, it became more apparent than ever how important this makerspace was to the New Haven community. It served as a pillar for creation, bringing together like-minded individuals with niche interests, while offering a space of escape where people could find solace and comfort as the outside world felt deeply uncertain. In an interview with Kate Cebik, the operations manager at MakeHaven, she recounted how members of the community gathered to fabricate and deliver thousands of masks. Despite social distancing, MakeHaven became a place that drew people closer together, offering a renewed perspective on the value of human connection.

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One of the first things I did after moving to New Haven was search for a makerspace where I could work on my various crafts. Its sliding-scale membership fee made the space accessible to me. It has since become an integral part of my weekly routine, and is often the first place I think of when I need to step away from school or home.

I don't know if loneliness can kill you—not for certain, anyway. But I do know that spaces like this can keep us feeling alive. Belonging is not something that appears all at once; it is built slowly, practiced through shared resources, mutual care, and the simple act of being present with each other. At MakeHaven, belonging exists beneath the quiet hum of machines and the low murmur of questions and conversations over workbenches. In these small, ordinary moments, the weight of loneliness is lifted. Connection doesn't always announce itself loudly; sometimes, it's simply a place that allows you to return.

*Third Places is a recurring column documenting, analyzing, and understanding third places in New Haven. It aims to question how these spaces are essential to the health of our souls.*

## ON THE GROUND

Triple Exposure

Response to Momoyo Kajima, Izzy Kornblatt, & Joan Ockman:

"The Architect as Photographer: Observation, Research, and Pedagogy"

Tony Salem Musleh

What is the role of photography in architecture? This was the fundamental question we were left with after the opening lecture for the new exhibition on the photographic practice of Denise Scott Brown, the main author of *Learning from Las Vegas* and one of the school's most influential critics.

Izzy Kornblatt, the curator, opened with a thoughtful account of how the exhibition came together and what it set out to do. Momoyo Kajima followed, speaking as a practicing architect and researcher and situating photography within her own work. Joan Ockman then framed Scott Brown's practice historically, expanding the scope of discussion with more existential questions about the architect's role and its long entanglement with photography.

The exhibition itself is a clear success, and Izzy deserves congratulations for introducing us to Scott Brown's photographic work. Her photographs, often composed in a total shot, give us context without sacrificing details—something that a panel discussion similarly aims for. However, time constraints left each speaker rushing through ideas rather than guiding the audience through them, flattening what could have been a more layered conversation.

In Las Vegas, more is more. Here, less might have been. Reducing density and allowing a single argument to unfold would have benefited the evening, especially given Ockman's timely questions about architectural photography in a visual era. These questions feel too urgent—and too current—not to linger on.

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## ON THE GROUND

Criticized a Maltzan Building Lately?

Response to Michael Maltzan:  
"Scales of the City"

Julia Edwards

From cityscapes to hero shots to residential vignettes, Michael Maltzan's lecture covered a lot of ground. So, what did he leave out? Maltzan offered a precise commentary on his ambitious and varied body of work. He expertly delivered insights into building in Los Angeles—his career-defining city, where his shiny white buildings stand out in the messy cityscape—while characterizing his other projects as canonically "not in Los Angeles". My row in Hastings was hypnotized by the neat package of his oeuvre. Seemingly perfected, airtight statements are perhaps a necessary skill for successfully building affordable housing.

The glare of Maltzan's white buildings against the gritty city left burns on our retinas, and with it, questions about material culture. In response, he framed the bright stucco façade of the Skid Row housing project as a canvas for the neighborhood, albeit no one tags it with graffiti—insinuating a collective reverence. The same city, he shared, rioted in the streets after the Rodney King verdict in 1992, an event that changed his practice. These complicated stories situated the idealized object within its messy reality. And the images were the strongest precisely when people entered the frame: residents loitering amid the pinks and greens of 26 Point 2 Apartments, or a wedding proposal on the Sixth Street Viaduct.

Ironically, from Google Street View, the façade of the Skid Row housing has actually been tagged and painted over several times. If it truly is a canvas, maybe they should keep the graffiti.

Less Is Enough

Response to Anne Lacaton:  
"Principles of Optimism"

Yanbo Li

No dreams of mass timber cities, no studies of mycelium bricks, no statistics of energy-recovery ventilators could ever come close to the vision of sustainability that Anne Lacaton gave us on a mid-January Friday.

That is precisely because she does not frame the work of Lacaton & Vassal in terms of sustainability, a word so ubiquitous it often rings hollow. Instead, she presented four decades of projects with startling unity, bound as they were by a few timeless ecological principles: economy as a tool of freedom; the generosity of unprogrammed space; seeing values before seeing problems; and improving lives above improving buildings. The result was the distillation of a radically simple architecture based on understanding as much as possible to act as little as necessary. In so many ways, what we already have is enough, and the best thing an architect can do is help us see that.

The clarity of her lecture and of her career earned Lacaton the license to conclude with a sentiment so sappy it should have been cringe, but delivered with such earnest force that I replayed the recording several times to transcribe the words verbatim:

"When you have counted the trees, when you have named the trees, when you have visited the houses—you love them. And then you work very differently."

The Active Lives of Classicism  
(and Architecture Critics)

*Response to David Sadighian:  
"Crisis Classicism"*

Layna Chen

David Sadighian presented the final lecture of 2025 to a full house. The fact that the first three rows of the hall were filled with Yale's faculty is a testament to Sadighian's popularity as both a teacher and a scholar. He presented material plucked freshly from recent trips to Yale's Beaux-Arts archive and the bathroom tweets of President Trump.

After a semester of lectures devoted to appreciating great buildings and building theory, the lecture—cryptically titled "Crisis Classicism," with no description of its contents on the YSoA website—turned to a subject all architects were aware of, but few had engaged with seriously: a certain orange-faced man's renovations of the White House. Over the hour, Sadighian deftly wove together disparate strands of the roles classicism has played in political imagery, contrasting Yale's engagement with the Beaux-Arts revival to its present mutation in the hands of the White House.

Entertaining and prescient, his lecture made me reflect on our own responsibility as critics: Why is it that Trump's architectural tastes have not been a bigger topic of conversation in architecture schools? Why haven't Yale studio talks treated it as a seri-

ous historical moment? Was it too tasteless for us to even acknowledge? Too easy to explain away? Too far outside the scope of legitimate architectural discourse?

Like *Learning from Las Vegas*, Sadighian chose to look where architects are not trained to look. His lecture insisted that even the unseemliest architectures deserve rigorous attention, if only so that we can understand the power and cultural machinery that they set in motion.

\*Note: This review was written a month ago. As of now, others, like Kate Wagner at NYRA, have discussed the ideological underpinnings of Trump's Ballroom demolition.

### COHORT UPDATES

Two Screens

Tony Salem Musleh  
M.Arch I '26

"Two screens are too much distraction," Tim said to us last semester.

Yet both are already full in the current one.

Drawings for studio;

Drawings for career fair

Deadlines for studio;

Deadline for career fair

Procrastination on one screen;

Procrastination on the other.

Indeed, two screens are too much distraction.

Untitled

Susan Sontag  
M.Arch I '27

*Professional Practice* teaching team is stunned to learn all their students are of age. Regrettably, they had already bought child harnesses in bulk and made laminated hall passes. After realizing this, they thought it was still good measure to keep a strict sign-up sheet and rigorous seating assignments. As dogs need a strong hand, students also need discipline.

Untitled

Maggie Holm  
M.Arch I '28

After the enthusiastic reception of Anne Lacaton's "Principles of Optimism" lecture, Building Project teams are making every effort to incorporate winter gardens and generous free space into their housing schemes.

Brand New Deadline

Marusya Bakhrameeva  
M.Arch II '26

February, 2. 7th floor.

"50 days till freedom," says a writing on a whiteboard. Freedom is circled in a

different color and has a clarifying leader:

"May." Verified source states that Bimal

added the latter correction. Students are

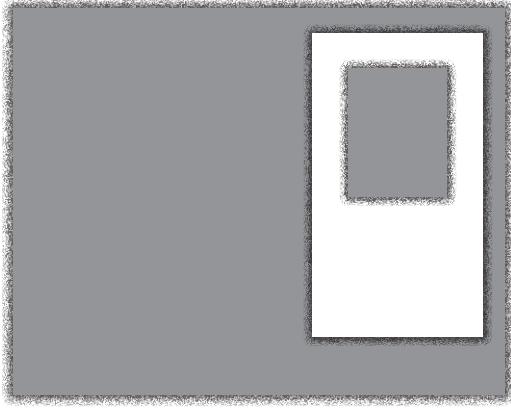
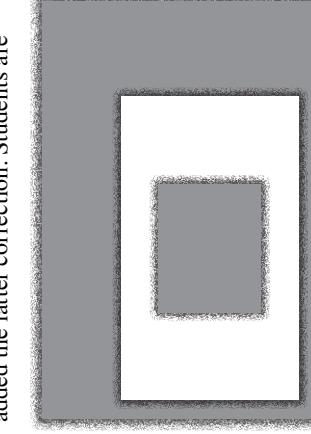
counting down to a brand-new deadline in the spring calendar: Final Presentations of M.Arch IIs on March 24 & 25. The faculty tries to remind them that there is life after the red-letter day, and students are required to work even after the final presentation. However, the 50-day countdown is the only thing on our minds; everything after seems light and cheerful until we need to secure future jobs.

Site, in Transit

Shreshtha Goyal  
M.Arch II '27

"I saw Johnson give a lecture at school," Surry said. "Sounds like history," Rachaporn exclaimed, as we found ourselves talking about modernism as something both distant and unfinished. Three weeks into the second semester, it already feels like we're two years in, time compressed by deadlines, readings, and questions that refuse to settle. What is a site? Is it your body or intuition, your memory or theory? Is it your home, your walk to school? Or is it a site a period in time, something you enter briefly, knowing it will never look the same again? We debated this in research, circling definitions, resisting certainty. The site begins before arrival and lingers after departure, shaped as much by who we are as by where we stand. So far, it feels like the discovery of coexisting contradictions has emerged as a subtle undercurrent this semester.

1/25  
WINTER STORM BENJAMIN blankets New Haven under a foot of snow. Some students go sledding while others walk three miles in the snow uphill both ways to get to school, since, as Provost SCOTT STROBEL writes, Yale never fully closes.



Building Project 2026 kicked off with a visit to the hilly site where students are asked to design the keystone co-housing residence that will bring four years of BP at the Friends Center Howard St campus to a close.

1/22  
SURREY SCHLABS praises FAH

KEERASUNTONPONG's assignment: "It smells like modern art."

1/19

*The New York Times* exposes Snøhetta as aggressively anti-union, devastating pro-labor lovers of huge, sloping, landscaped roofs.

2/02

As Rudolph Hall cracks down on smoking,

YSoA turns toward BYU for guidance

as they toy with implementing a chastity

policy.

1/30

The work sample deadline for the Career

Fair confirms one of YSoA students' key

competencies: the ability to criticize and

perpetuate a toxic culture in the same

breath.

1/15  
LIAM NOLAN opens "DESIGN-A-THON: Experiments in Participatory Television" in the North Gallery, featuring a guest appearance from Centerbrook founder CHAD FLOYD, who from 1977 to 1980 teamed up with former dean CHARLES MOORE to use television as a tool for participatory design.

1/15  
HEADLINES

1/8  
ANGE LONG publicly reminds everyone of the value of having an airport project in one's portfolio, turning the Advanced Studio lottery completely upside down at the last minute. Despite long being considered the least popular studio, AMINA BLACKSHER's Ibiza airport studio starts the semester with a full slate of students who ranked it first choice.

1/8  
As co-critic with ELIZABETH GRAZIANO, GEORGE KNIGHT assures us that, despite being the classical studio, they will be "designing for our grandchildren, not our grandparents."

1/8  
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On Hold

Layna Chen

M.E.D

The M.E.D. Working Group has been putting together their annual lecture. Last semester's ambitions to have relaxing weekly dinners have been put on hold due to time constraints.

Back to Work

Alberto Martínez García

Ph.D

Izzy Kornblat (Ph.D '28) opened an amazing exhibition at the main gallery of our school about Denise Scott Brown's photography archive. The opening event in Hastings also allowed us to hear a lecture from our former program director, Joan Ockman. Furthermore, the Canadian Centre for Architecture event, which the school hosted in January, gave us a better understanding of the work of students and recent scholars from other Ph.D programs in architecture on the East Coast.

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Diana and Gustav.

#### Notes

1. We would like to thank our dear friends and correspondents for their time, care, and commitment to our ongoing creative exchanges across vast distances in troubling times. In a forthcoming article we unfold further unexpected findings as a continuation of our correspondence. See Smiljkovic, D., Nielsen, G. K. V. (in press), "RETURN TO SENDER, NO MAIL RECEIPTACLE, UNABLE TO FORWARD, RETURN TO SENDER, FLOW TO MANUAL PROCESSING." *Serrope: Cambridge Architecture Journal*, 34.

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7. Halberstam, J. (2018, October 15). "Unbuilding gender: Trans\* anarchitectures in and beyond the work of Gordon Matta-Clark." *Places Journal*.
8. Søren Nørkjær Bang, one of our correspondents, theorizes a 'surgical turn' in contemporary architecture.