

A love poem to home | A place of power and care

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

During these challenging and urgent times where spatial violence and wars have touched many of our homes and beings, we turn to our community for solidarity and support. We implore our neighbours to speak out and be allies. We ask our colleagues to be advocates. We seek our community for refuge. Our community can become our place for strength and care, empowerment and tenderness, solidarity and togetherness. Through this studio, we will imagine what places of solidarity, community, power, support, and care can look like. We will design places where the Other is given a platform to speak,¹ where we humbly meet to learn and grow, and where we impactfully advocate for change. Engaging with notions of displacement, diaspora, refuge, and hosting, this studio will work on creating a space of empathy, a place for listening, learning, making, and taking action. Looking at examples of solidarity spatialized around the world, we will engage in creating our own places of power and care.

This studio is a love poem to home. “Which home?” you may ask. My home, but also maybe yours, or perhaps someone’s who you care and stand for. “Why a poem?” you may wonder. The studio begins with poems from around the world as a driver for creativity but more so as an avenue to empathy. Poems are liberating. They are musical, fantastical, imaginative, and, most importantly, world-building creations. They help us dream of alternative futures. Poems are also emphatic, powerful, and voiceful. In times of strife, poems become voices for advocacy, witnessing, humanizing those erased, and practicing empathy.² Starting with a poem from a historically marginalized community and/or a community that has been displaced, each one of you will map the poem in its place (historically and geographically). The poem and its map will become your inspiration, your motivation, your measure.

The studio work will be divided into four milestones, which are closely linked. We will start by using poetry as a means to map and counter-map. Next, you will work in teams of three to

¹ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? *Die Philosophin* 14 (27):42-58.

² Speaking of poetry and narratives used to advocate for Palestine, Poet Hala Alyan says “It is [...] true that poetry—and art and music and film—are offshoots of bearing witness: they fortify us, sustain us, especially in times of erasure. They help us rehearse empathy, and build the necessary muscle memory to call upon it regularly. They can also remind us what we’re doing and why, becoming useful as compasses, rest stops, places to sharpen our ideas and counter dissonance, to clarify our thinking, and our hearts, and to rest in community. They are where we unlearn stories, where we cut our tongues on new ones.” See: Alyan 2023 “What a Palestinian-American Wants You To Know About Dehumanization.” https://www.teenvogue.com/story/palestinian-american-propaganda?utm_source=yahoo&utm_medium=syndication&mbid=synd_yahoo_rss. Accessed December 21, 2023.

analyze two sites at both the macro urban scale and the micro material level. Based on your analyses, each one of you will choose a specific site to work with. After that, you will spend some time researching architectural and social precedents to develop a program for your project. Finally, we will use the last seven weeks to focus on the architectural design of a small to medium-scale building. This building should be capable of accommodating communities and collectives, providing places of care and tenderness, and supporting through power and advocacy.

STUDIO SCHEDULE

Week 1

Introduction + Finding your poem

Week 2-3

Countermapping the hegemony: Mapping the poem and situating yourself

Using orthographic mapping techniques and more, create a drawing that represents your poem. It should depict its geography, history, and people while also featuring your position as a student, scholar, architect, designer, family member, community member, and human. Consider where you place yourself in this poem, this course, your desires, dreams, hopes, fears, concerns, reluctance, courage, solidarity, power, tenderness, and care. Think about why you are taking this studio, what you learned today, what questions you have, and why you care.

Week 4-5

Finding your place: choosing your site

Using your poem as your map of the land, you will select a specific site for your built space from two proposed ones. As a group of three, you will analyze the urban contexts of the two sites and then individually choose your preferred site. You will then analyze your chosen site in greater detail to lay the foundation for your project. (*The sites will be located in Surrey, so a site visit to Surrey will be required.*)

Week 6-7

Learning to care: creating your program

Inspired by your home, poem, and site, you are asked to build a program promoting solidarity, refuge, community, tenderness, and care toward your home.

Week 7- 15

A love poem to home: a place of power and care.