

ARCH 501

SPRING 2025

PURPLE CRAYON

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So what's this studio about?

The Short version is that it's about share-culture, planetary care, and material delights.

The Medium version is that this studio is about looking into the idea of the Commons¹ by considering architecture as a series of depository ponds for materials. Within Metro Vancouver, construction and demolition waste accounts for 1/3 of waste in the region, amounting to approximately 372,000 tonnes². *Purple Crayon* speculates on disrupting this entrenched patterning of waste by proposing the possibility for architecture to act as a network of material stop-overs, thereby redirecting at least a portion of building materials away from our amounting and leaching landfills. It is worth noting that in this studio, we will be drawing lots, reading some, and model-making lots, lots, lots.

The Long version is in the syllabus.

The X-Long version is taking the studio.

And how will we investigate these ideas?

We will first begin by collecting salvaged and reused materials (s,m,l) from varying sources (facebook marketplace, craigslist, salvation army, etc.). By 'collecting' I literally mean, driving out to acquire these materials, bringing them back into studio and living with them at your desk for the next 3½ months. You will then draw out the lives of these materials - past, present, and projected - as a series of 'thickened' maps that communicate not just their metrics, but their origin stories as well.

These drawings will then be compiled into a Material Catalog Commons for the whole studio to use and reference throughout the semester.

The studio will then transition into physical material explorations i.e. getting your hands dirty. Using the salvaged materials from the previous exercise, you will create a series of material experiments that will be progressively developed into a collection of threshold conditions that convey both tectonic and atmospheric intentionality. If you are having trouble imagining what this might look like, think of your Tech I course last semester. There will be both cognitive and somatic parallels.

For the final exercise, you will use your accumulated research and developments to design a Commons of Material Delights. This program will require you to consider the haptic, thermal, acoustic, and perceptual qualities of your selected materials. You will be asked to take a position on how you are conceptualizing the Commons and architecture's potentiality to act as a material depository pond (some of you may choose to foreground one over the other).

**You are free to work individually or in groups of 2 for any or all of the studio's exercises.*

Do we get to go anywhere?

In mid-february, we will take a field trip down to Seattle to visit a selection of both architecture and landscape architecture projects. Unless the trip is beyond your means (situationally, financially, or politically), you are expected to come. The tentative dates are Thursday, Feb. 6 - Saturday, Feb. 8. The cost of the trip will vary on your mode of transportation, lodging arrangements, and how much you decide to spend on food and other items while you are down there. However, to give you a rough idea, if you take the bus, room with a few others in an Airbnb for one night, and spend a modest amount on food, it will cost around \$200 USD. While you will be responsible for booking your own arrangements and coordinating amongst yourselves, we will discuss the trip as a group before finalizing any dates and plans.

1. The term Commons came into public focus when political scientist Elinor Ostrom offered an alternative reality to ecologist Garret Hardin's 1969 essay the 'Tragedy of the Commons'. In his essay, Hardin posited that a pool of resources shared by individuals would inevitably lead to overuse and depletion as a result of individuals acting out in their own self-interest. However, Ostrom's 1990 publication *Governing Commons* challenged Hardin's essay by providing a number of case studies around the world - over 800 - in which collective use in a shared, or common, resource was more than sustainable under polycentric governance.

2. Gerlach, Heidi. 2022 *Construction & Demolition Waste Composition Study*. Dillon Consulting Limited, October 5 2023, <https://metrovancover.org/services/solid-waste/Documents/construction-demolition-waste-composition-study-2022.pdf>.