

Log 48: Expanding Modes of Practice

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The field of architecture is paying long-overdue attention to issues of equity and inclusion. This moment of reckoning is producing not only gestures of tokenism but also profound challenges to the means and ends of the field. As the turn toward intersectionality fosters convergences between feminist, queer, antiracist, and environmental justice work, new amalgamations of theoretical frameworks and hands-on techniques are proliferating in architecture. An associative cloud of words appears in office mission statements, conference presentations, and architectural criticism – *situated, specific, locatable, embodied, tentacular, sticky* – signaling alternative ways of both thinking and practicing. The competing materialisms that have ruled architectural discourse for the last decade, with neo-Marxists tracing entanglements of matter and capital while object-oriented ontologists are inspecting inscrutable forms, are now colliding with radical politics of identity, producing works that locate material and formal experiments in expanding webs of past and present social relations.

The results of all of this are not only important new theoretical and historical projects but also a proliferation of methods for restructuring architectural practice. To begin with the sticky messes of complex found conditions, local material cultures, and layered social histories rather than seek transcendent abstraction requires reorienting every established tool of the profession – from techniques of site analysis and visual representation to internal office organization and financing. And while socially driven architectures are often dismissed as economically unviable and/or aesthetically drab, the current approaches to embedded practice – to working through the tangles of material, economic, and social realities – are undermining all of those assumptions.

Log 48 examines how these new ways of thinking are driving experiments in social agency and transforming the technical and logistical methods of architectural practice. The issue probes the theoretical and historical lineages of recent projects, tracing connections between feminist, queer, and antiracist practices of the 1960s–90s and contemporary work. In addition, it investigates how the latest iterations of collective, nonprofit, and activist practices are producing alternative business models, funding sources, labor practices, and systems of internal office organization. While there is a deep history of such experiments in architecture, the current moment is prompting a sudden realization of their potential. The field of architecture has cyclically reckoned with its own political agency in roughly 20-year increments, but the recent alignment of socio-environmental urgency and economic necessity is opening up possibilities for restructuring the field from top to bottom.