MATERIAL INTIMACY

Module 01
Lydia Muthuma responding to the work and literature selections of Lilian Chee

Readings

Themes
A counter representation of Singaporean public housing, interior spaces, household objects and domestic routines
Gendered sense of self and space
Film's role in architectural discourse
Disciplinary convergence and divergence between ethnography and architecture

Questions
- The direct and intimate supply of material and spiritual sustenance to humans, at the smallest scale of society, comprises domesticity. Its raison d'être is to make people more human, more intelligent, more sensitive and emotionally accomplished than they otherwise might be. How does this play out (or could play out) in 03 Flats?
- A relationship between politics and domesticity is writ large in the article 03 Flats (and Navaro-Yashin’s work too) — Government policy determines intimate domestic living. The play between the principle of subsidiarity and solidarity is at the heart of both articles. If the aim of larger political society is to serve human persons what role does domesticity play?
- Scholars have theorized about civil and political society. They have theorized much less about the domestic configuration. Yet 03 Flats alludes to the interweaving of single women’s housing condition with the country's government policy, thus bringing together the home and the city (or country). What relationship obtains, in scholarship, between the polis (metropolis) and the domestic (home) especially regarding humanizing society? Can theories or approaches to city studies be applied to domesticity?
**Module 02**  
**Barbara Penner responding to the work and literature selections of Annapurna Garimella**

**Readings**


**Themes**

- craft, tradition, modernity, female artists, communalism, lived experience, tacit knowledge, intimacy, double discourse, obsolescence, hybridity, kitchens, grindstones, mixies

**Questions**

- In the 1990s, a shift was made away from conceptualism in Indian art towards craft in order to find more materialized, local ‘ethnic and ethical’ modes of production. How have these objects been used in contemporary art? And what does it mean to use craft and traditional objects in contemporary art, especially for female artists?
- In what ways does the use of craft empower through its evocation of intimacy and lived experience?
- In what ways does the use of craft overwhelm or obscure through these same qualities?
- Are there other ways in which we might imagine objects in these works being used—ways that more critically engage ‘humanist fantasy’ and contemporary globalized modernity, for instance? Speculate.

**Module 03**  
**Delia Wendel responding to the work and literature selections of Debashree Mukherjee**

**Readings**


**Themes**

- film industry; filmic labor
- situated experience
- desire, affect
- planned vulnerability
- struggle; hustle

**Questions**

- What do we learn about the “interior” of the film industry from this chapter?
- How do injuries and accidents figure the structures and experience of filmic labor in Bombay?
- What interfaces of desire and power do you read in this work?
Module 04
Ana Ozaki responding to the work and literature selections of Lydia Muthuma

Readings

Themes
Local and community-based scholarship
Hegemony of stylistic analysis vs lived experience
Home grown aesthetics
Fluid domesticities
Exterior vs Interior
Syntactic analysis
Ethnographic work
Female spaces
Spatial and social integration within the home
Social life in the Kenyan family
Postcolonial house and servitude

Questions
- What changes when we include lived experiences in studies of local aesthetics and space? What are the different ways we can define an academic work ethics that is invested in “furthering a more engaged homegrown aesthetic,” as Muthuma suggests?
- Both Muthuma and Kabo expand the field of art and architectural histories to argue that everyday life is key in furthering discussion about the social, political, and cultural experiences of a place and its most taken for granted actors. How can we incorporate local methods in our historical analysis of architecture and visual arts? How can we, scholars, take into account local lived experiences that are not necessarily within our reach?
- Both authors contextualize fluid understandings of domesticity within urban and historical contexts. How can we incorporate local/regional dynamics in our inquiries of domesticity?

Module 05
Annapurna Garimella responding to the work and literature selections of Ana Ozaki

Readings
Themes
Conceiving freedom
The intersections of oppression, captivity, control and agency
Mystery as productive concept for living and thinking at the intersections
Visibility and transparency
Invisibility and opacity
Planning peripheries
Migration and transformation
Ancestral to local cultures
Spatial agency in a regime of private property
The liberatory work of architectural history

Questions
• What are the materials and architectural forms which allow oppressed people to gain spatial agency?
• What does spatial agency look like at the periphery?

Module 06
Debashree Mukherjee responding to the work and literature selections of Barbara Penner

Readings

Themes
Deep historical view of questions of design thought in tandem with bodily comfort and safety
Material intimacy
Cultural practices vs hygiene practices
Claims of style, modernity and progress against claims of safety
Design and the body, as conceived of between automobiles and the bathrooms
Access and accountability

Questions
• What are the material consequences of aesthetic practices? What are the different ways in which meaning is made in the world, not just through representation and design aesthetics, but in the material conditions of making and use of designs?
• How do we inhabit the built world and how do we practice and understand belonging?
• How do we think of intimacy beyond the individual, to the collective?

Module 07
Lilian Chee responding to the work and literature selections of Delia Wendel

Readings
University Press.
Themes
Rwandan genocide heritage
Materiality of violence
Delineation and curation of evidence
Narrative forms
Materialized memory

Questions

- How does one write about the emotive within an academic frame? How does one bring the intensity of the material evidence to bear on an audience who are removed from these scenes?
- Where is the researcher placed in such a project? Where will her intimacy to the material carry the trajectory of the work? Will intimacy interfere with critical distance?

This teaching tool was prepared by the Insurgent Domesticities working group.