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Urban Design Pedagogies for Staying with a Broken Planet

We aim to position the Masters in Urban Design programme of University of Sheffield School of Architecture, within the broken world pedagogies and reflect on the thematic framework that nurtures common tools and methods to endure, encounter, and/or co-exist with emerging uncertainties facing urban environments on a broken planet. We use 'Ecologies of Care' as a reflexive framework that critically repositions urban design pedagogies within three theoretical registers – the planetary as an image of interdependent worlds and source of disruption for the image of the globe as a colonial artefact; radical unknowability as a process-oriented approach to knowledge co-production that embraces incompleteness of urban life with gaps, margins, and interstices as central to knowledge resources; and cosmopolitical localism that reimagines urban ecologies as real-life laboratories for prefiguring just urban transitions that pays attention to shared vulnerabilities through mutual care amongst urban actors.

1. The City and the Planetary

The field of urban design, as a form of projective inquiry about cities, was/is/will always splinter, branch, and bifurcate depending on the forces shaping the urban environment. The contemporary city is often reduced to one of the following models: the ever expanding suburbia and the model of the garden cities that emerged as an antithesis of 'the city', taken as the high density, welfare-state urban centre with social housing blocks and support infrastructures linking them; the destitution of the rural territories by extractive processes triggering waves of migration towards the metropolises and resulting in informal cities; deindustrialisation and gentrification processes vacating labour subjectivities from its communal neighbourhoods in the name of branded cities; cities mirroring technocratic, autocratic, or democratic power and order; contested cities; post-socialist cities; smart cities; eco cities; post-colonial cities. Urban design as we understand it cuts across these models through entrusting a generative relationship with the city and multiplicities that is embodied in its making. The bifurcations and inherent multiplicity of urban design is what provides resilience to the ever-emerging field.¹ We do not suggest, as Cuthbert, that the lack of a singular theory of urban design as a unified field is a weakness.² On the contrary, cities are

¹Kim Dovey, "Urban Design as a Contested Field," *Journal of Urban Design* 25, no. 1 (2 January 2020): 14–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2019.1706896>.

²Alexander Cuthbert, "Whose Urban Design?," *Journal of Urban Design* 15, no. 3 (August 2010): 443–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2010.487816>.

multiplicities and the question ‘what a city can do?’ is an evolving inquiry that is malleable, fluid, never singular or disciplinary, but rather an open field of responsibilities and interdependencies.³ Urban design is part of an expanding field to which it contributes with designerly agencies, speculative tools and resources of shared knowledges that support the frame of responsibilities that emerge from this common mode of inquiry.

Urban design finds itself at yet another critical moment – another bifurcation. It can no longer evade its responsibilities for attending to the conflicted relation between the “global” – the colonial image of extractive territories – and the “planetary” – pluriversal image of multiple worlds and Earthly forces beyond human agency – and the city as the battlefield where this tension is manifested.⁴ A myriad of propositions challenge the modernist and universalist foundation of urban design as a global project, from the non-sexist, the anti-racial, the post-anthropocentric and the post-capitalist.⁵ The notion of the city as a global project, and its foundations in Eurocentric epistemology, will not cease to exist overnight but there is an urgent need to transition to a planetary, decolonial, and feminist approach to urban design. The endeavour, as we understand it, goes beyond morphological and deterministic large-scale planning and its pseudo-scientific narratives of densities, ratios and massing codified in regulations, restrictions, and policies streamlined for economic growth and accumulation of capital. It proposes a different pathway, which is embedded within the

³ H  l  ne Frichot, Catharina Gabri  lsson, and Jonathan Metzger, “Introduction: What a City Can Do,” in *Deleuze and the City*, ed. H  l  ne Frichot, Catharina Gabri  lsson, and Jonathan Metzger (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 241–45.

⁴ For the conflicted relation between the globe and the planetary through geohistorical analysis by Chakrabarty see: Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), and Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Planet: An Emergent Humanist Category,” *Critical Inquiry* 46, no. 1 (September 2019): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.1086/705298>, and Bruno Latour and Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Conflicts of Planetary Proportion – A Conversation,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 14, no. 3 (19 November 2020): 419–54, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18722636-12341450>.

⁵ For gendered-based objections to the global project of urbanism see: Dolores Hayden, “What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work,” *Signs* 5, no. 3 (1980): S170–87., Leslie Kern, *Feminist City: A Field Guide (Between the Lines)*, 2019) and *Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-Made World* (Verso Books, 2021). Antiracial: (Simone 2016, Tayob and Richard 2020). Post-anthropocentric: Renata Tyszczyk, *Provisional Cities: Cautionary Tales for the Anthropocene* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), Postcapitalist: J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, ‘Commoning as a Postcapitalist Politics’, in *Releasing the Commons: Rethinking the Futures of the Commons*, ed. Ash Amin and Philip Howell (Routledge, 2016), 192–212.

broken world pedagogies as an emergent teaching practice that is both affective – learning how to be affected by Earthly forces– and projective – learning how to speculate with collective vulnerabilities in mind.⁶

The Master of Arts in Urban Design (MAUD) at the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, aims to reposition itself within the liminal space between the global and the planetary. Set up in 2008 and situated in a global and UK higher education context, the programme positions itself at the crossroads of planetary decolonial and feminist discourses of urban design, which are critical of the way that Europe and old colonial territories are entangled in project of globalisation while still being shaped by patriarchal and neoliberal forces. The programme has been set up from the very beginning with a strong take on participation and public engagement. During the last couple of years, the programme introduced the reflexive framework of ‘Ecologies of Care’ as a mode of inquiry that is meant to stay with our troubling present.⁷ We are interested in the way that care is connected to the scale of the planetary, and the way that notions of cosmopolitan localism enable a footing in the everydayness of urban localities. Care as a multispecies activity that makes a livable future on Earth possible is also understood as a form of mutualised ethics for framing interdependencies of urban actors.⁸ Thinking through Ecologies of Care opens an inherently incomplete, multifaceted and multiscalar understanding of cities, which goes beyond the usual political economic registers of analysis to open up the imaginaries of what urban design can do. It values partial and situated knowledges that are co-produced within social and environmental ecologies and, in doing so, urban design pedagogies emerge that encourage an engagement with interdependencies — learning to act, design, imagine and care with others in a given locality, while nurturing a common strategy to endure, survive, encounter or co-exist with the planetary in all its emerging uncertainty.

⁶ For broken world thinking see:

In architectural pedagogies: Jay Cephas, Igor Marjanović, and Ana Miljački, “Pedagogies for a Broken World,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 76, no. 2 (3 July 2022): 2–4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10464883.2022.2097491>.

Angelika Fitz et al., eds., *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* (Vienna : Cambridge, Massachusetts: Architekturzentrum Wien ; MIT Press, 2019), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2147388>.

In urban geography: Tatiana A Thieme, ‘Beyond Repair: Staying with Breakdown at the Interstices’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39, no. 6 (1 December 2021): 1092–1110, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211013034>.

In science and technology studies (STS): Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 2016).

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et al., *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (U of Minnesota Press, 2017).

⁷ Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016).

⁸ Joan C. Tronto and Berenice Fisher, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring,” in *Circles of Care*, ed. E. Abel and M. Nelson (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 36–54.

2. Radical Unknowability and the Broken Planet

The climate crisis has brought forth the notion of the ‘planetary’ – the geological, bodily being of the Earth — against the notion of the ‘global’ that emerged with the imperial/colonial/neoliberal ideology.⁹ Stengers and Chakrabarty remind us that the planet was not made with humans in view and it does not lend itself to be viewed by humans. There has never been, or ever will be, a coherent understanding of the planet that could match the globe as an universal model - only incomplete and localised knowledges.¹⁰ What this means for urban design is to accept a partial epistemology as its operating site, to stay with the trouble of the uncertainty of the planet, which negates the notion of endless growth and forces us to discard the role of urbanisation as one of the main vehicles of that profit-driven transformation. Accepting the planetary brokenness does not lend itself to smuggling in the ‘urban as the solution’.¹¹ The planetary, with its uncertainty, decentres the human ‘knower’ and subsequently forces a subjectification of reverence of any urban designer operating within it.

Simone and Castan Broto calls us to recognize “the radical unknowability of urban life”, which they posit as a pluriversal, transitory, shifting, incalculable, unchartable multiplicity which, all the same, operates within specificities, tendencies and productivities.¹² Beyond simply a web of relations, there are gaps, faultlines and detachments that negate the possibility of the “holistic”, the “comprehensive”, and the “whole” – concepts used to describe a design and planning agenda that depoliticizes and hides the partiality of our knowledge and ability to know the constitution of urban life. However, this is not a call to stasis, nor to not know, but rather, to generate an architecture of paying attention to the local at hand.¹³ Urban life in its entirety may be shifting, illusory and unknowable, but “in this temporality of transitory functioning, with no guarantees of eventual outcomes, what matters is *this* time, *this* instance, what can be done with the tools we have now.”¹⁴ Rather than urban design

⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Planet: An Emergent Humanist Category,” *Critical Inquiry* 46, no. 1 (September 2019): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.1086/705298>.

¹⁰ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (University of Chicago Press, 2021).203 and Isabelle Stengers, “The Earth Won’t Let Itself Be Watched,” in *Critical Zones — The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (MIT Press, 2020), 228–35.

¹¹ (Brand 2009)

¹² AbdouMaliq Simone and Vanesa Castán Broto, “Radical Unknowability: An Essay on Solidarities and Multiform Urban Life,” *City*, 26.5–6 (2022), 771–90 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2022.2124693>>. 788

¹³ Renata Tyszczyk, ‘Collective Scenarios: Speculative Improvisations for the Anthropocene’, *Futures* 134 (December 2021): 102854, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102854>.

¹⁴ AbdouMaliq Simone and Vanesa Castán Broto, “Radical Unknowability: An Essay on Solidarities and Multiform Urban Life,” *City*, 26.5–6 (2022), 771–90

being an act of transformative events, of masterplans and masterstrokes, we imagine it as small manoeuvres that move laterally and can provide a cumulative large impact from minor urban becomings. Perhaps then the task of the urban designer becomes that of curating, facilitating, engaging, producing, carving, placing, enabling, learning and juxtaposing “forms of mutual care”.¹⁵

3. Cosmopolitical Localism

Urban design is rich in forms of praxis, ranging from concrete spatial action to new ways of seeing and documenting. In our pedagogical approach, action takes place at the tactical scale of the local, providing critical perspectives, lenses, and tools to see, listen and stay with a myriad fault lines: gentrification, increasing levels of urban inequality, homelessness, lack of access to healthcare, food, energy scarcity and the loss of biodiversity. Core to this exploration is the understanding of how notions of the *cosmopolitical* and the *local* inform the conditions of our immediate environments, and the patterns that repeat and differ across geographies.

As Mignolo reminds us, the notion of cosmopolis developed in parallel to the European imperial project and, more recently, to the expansion of the neoliberal order.¹⁶ When it emerged in the seventeenth century, cosmopolitanism suggested that society was governed by the same invisible forces that ordered the universe. Aided by emerging scientific and mathematical models, cosmopolitanism contributed in naturalising, and making invisible, an arbitrary political ordering. In this vein, cosmopolitanism assumes a natural ordering where the modern European imperial powers, Germany, England, France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, become the centre and model. The genealogy of cosmopolitanism is complicated when we consider the way it acquired a different meaning in the twentieth century, when it was used to articulate a discourse against nationalism and that favoured migration and multiculturalism. The notion of the cosmopolitan needs to be contextualised, recognising the racist, imperialist legacies from which it emerged and, one strategy to do so, is to repurpose it. The recent coinage of ‘cosmopolitan localism’ in sustainable studies points towards a rhetorical reverse of globalism, which aims to homogenise the planet, to a cosmopolitanism that recognises interconnectedness and the importance of action in local communities.¹⁷

¹⁵AbdouMaliq Simone and Vanesa Castán Broto, “Radical Unknowability: An Essay on Solidarities and Multiform Urban Life,” *City*, 26.5–6 (2022), 771–90, pg. 776.

¹⁶ Walter Mignolo, “Cosmopolitan Localism,” *Localities* 1 (2011): 11–45, <https://doi.org/10.15299/local.2011.11.1.11>.

¹⁷ Gideon Kossoff, “Cosmopolitan Localism: The Planetary Networking of Everyday Life in Place,” *Cuadernos Del Centro de Estudios En Diseño y Comunicación. Ensayos*, no. 73 (2019): 50–65.; Jose Ramos, “Cosmo-Localization and Leadership for the Future,” *Journal of Futures Studies* 21, no. 4 (2017): 65–83; Ezio Manzini, “17. SLOC: The Emerging Scenario of Small, Open, Local,

Stengers and Mignolo acknowledge the troubled etymology of cosmopolitan, locating its contemporary use to the concept coined in ancient antiquity, and later revived by Kant to suggest a political project of perpetual peace.¹⁸ To be cosmopolitan is to feel at home everywhere and, as a consequence, to strive for a planet in which everyone is a citizen. In suggesting a cosmopolitics, Stengers's cosmopolitical proposal is a 'political ecology', an ecological as well as ethical injunction. It is a practice of questioning discourse by slowing down and resisting consensus. The sense of the cosmopolitical in this context is given by the need to connect *ethos* and *oikos*, making sure that every decision is taken in the presence of those likely to suffer the consequences, an ethic that refuses to abstract situations away in the name of grand narratives of progress and necessity. The composition of this common world is not a human project but one that crosses species boundaries and requires attunement with nonhumans, it "implies a politics of the cosmos, a politics of exploring and provisionally settling what does and does not belong to our common (urbanised) worlds".¹⁹

Our notion of *cosmopolitical localism* takes from the works of Mignolo and Stengers in their drive to define localities as interdependent and plural worlds. Instead of a sense of the cosmological as a given order of hierarchies, we aim to develop methods of speaking nearby, to borrow a phrase from Trinh T. Minh-ha.²⁰ Cosmopolitical localism aims at developing new tools to listen to the murmurs of the urban actors, understanding how they are enmeshed, often in resistance, with human projects. The overall theme of the masters programme, 'ecologies of care', is meant to create a common language, or an emergent lexicon, to figure out what it means to act when in close contact with radical unknowability of the cosmos. Pedagogically, we understand cosmopolitical localism as a way of listening to stakeholders and community organisations, who are an integral part of the collective learning processes, and speculating together with them, for a more sustainable and just future while collectively embracing the vulnerability of the unknown. Pedagogies of cosmopolitical localism addresses the gap between the masterplan and the citizen. If the masterplan is the contract resulting from an agreement of cosmopolitan and neoliberal agents, the pedagogies of cosmopolitics disrupts the apparent agreement to invite imaginaries that otherwise

Connected," *Grow Small, Think Beautiful: Ideas for a Sustainable World* from Schumacher College, 2012.

¹⁸ Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," in *Making Things Public*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (MIT Press, 2005), 994--1003.

Mignolo, Walter, "Cosmopolitan Localism: A Decolonial Shifting of the Kantian's Legacies," *Localities*, 1 (2011), 11--45 <<https://doi.org/10.15299/local.2011.11.1.11>>

¹⁹ Anders Blok and Ignacio Farias, *Urban Cosmopolitics: Agencements, Assemblies, Atmospheres* (London: Routledge, 2016). 10

²⁰ Nancy N. Chen, "'Speaking Nearby: A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-Ha'," *Visual Anthropology Review* 8, no. 1 (1992): 82--91, <https://doi.org/10.1525/var.1992.8.1.82>.

Our interest in notions of cosmopolitical localism is, in part, rooted in the history of Sheffield. The city is entangled with industrialisation, colonisation, extraction, de-industrialisation, financialisation and gentrification. Through its historical entanglement with the global, the city provides a backdrop for other stories illustrating how things could be/could have been different. Sheffield is also a place of resistance and unlikely solidarities amongst trees, hidden urban rivers, refugees, anti-racists, makers, workers, and social enterprises, and it is these alliances which the urban design pedagogies align with. The culture of resistance emerged from the working communities of Sheffield and survived Thatcherism, a broad term used to describe a set of political and economic measures in the United Kingdom starting in the 1980s.²¹

Although the history of Sheffield provides a frame of reference for us to reinterpret, challenge and speculate on the articulation of a cosmopolitical localism as an alternative to urban environments driven by profitability, it would be a mistake to mythologise the political history of Sheffield. Our student body is predominantly from an international, diverse background and we, as pedagogues, hail from equally disparate backgrounds and geographies including Central America, Eastern Mediterranean, South East Asia, Southern Europe among a growing list of distant places. Reflecting on our strengths as a community, we aim not to prescribe tool sets, which our students can take and apply directly, but instead an intellectual framework to approach the design of the urban environment differently, sensitive to local environments and to build cosmopolitical networks of solidarity.

4. Re-enchanting Urban Design Pedagogies Through Ecologies of Care

Cosmopolitical localism manifests as situated learning, allowing us to see the gaps and cracks in our “relation with nature, with others, and with our bodies”, while recognising that these are enchanted with possibilities.²² Federici’s proposition for the “re-enchantment of the

²¹ The project of ‘local socialism’ was often organised by local governments as a response. Although the most visible case study is the Greater London Council, the Sheffield City Council implemented a series of measures that capitalised on the historically rich, progressive politics of the region. The Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire, as this historical period is often referred to, experimented with initiatives to speculate on an egalitarian model of the city, embodied in projects to develop a free, public transport network, municipal heating and social housing. This impetus led to bold architectural experimentation of vertical cities and ‘streets in the sky’ in a bid to create strong, working class communities, of which Park Hill and Hyde Park Flats are good examples. For further reading see: Daisy Payling, “‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’: Grassroots Activism and Left-Wing Solidarity in 1980s Sheffield,” *Twentieth Century British History*, 25.4 (2014), 602–27 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwu001>>.

²² Silvia Federici, *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2019),: 189.

earth” resonates with “Three Ecologies” by Felix Guattari, as both positions declare a rupture in the relational fabric of the social, environmental, and mental ecologies.²³ While these relational ecologies are inherently connected to the planetary, our engagement with such issues emerge as situated gestures embedded into the margins of urban localities’ everydayness.²⁴ Our approach to pedagogy builds upon the legacies of our colleagues who have shaped MAUD since 2008 as a framework of relational and agential ecologies. This heritage we build upon acknowledges and maintains the uncertainty that comes with socially engaged design.²⁵ The reproductive work that maintains radical unknowability at the core of urban design pedagogies sustains the temporal gaps where mutual care amongst diverse urban actors, affected communities, students, and practitioners takes root. Broader coalitions are shaped around practices of witnessing, noticing, affecting, and being affected by each other.

Ecology, when investigated from the lens of care, reveals the fundamental incompleteness of our understanding that design strategies must inevitably address. They also assume that ecologies of care are not about solutions, but rather about inhabiting and acknowledging *brokenness* in situated ways.²⁶ Through this framework, we learn that brokenness does not necessitate ‘fixing’ at a grand scale, but a transmodern collectivization of healing targeting the *meso* layer.²⁷ By embracing local contexts, we use studio projects to co-imagine more resilient and just transformations for urban communities. The sites of brokenness, be them marginalised or gentrifying neighbourhoods, post-industrial brownfields, or (un)productive urban landscapes, become sites for learning how to care.

MAUD programme’s intertwined modules act as a collective infrastructure of learning, open to being affected by unsettling contemporary symptoms, in a way that future visions, resilient structures and social organisations contribute to trajectories of just and sustainable urban transitions. Four major strands — methods, theories, participation and practice — operate in our approach.

[Figure 2]

²³ Silvia Federici and Peter Linebaugh, ‘Re-Enchanting the World’, n.d.,: 195.

²⁴ Silvia Federici, *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2019).

²⁵ Florian Kossak et al., “Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures,” in *Agency: Working With Uncertain Architectures*, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009), 1–18.

²⁶ Tatiana A Thieme, “Beyond Repair: Staying with Breakdown at the Interstices,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39, no. 6 (1 December 2021): 1092–1110, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211013034>. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211013034>>

²⁷ Isabelle Stengers, Brian Massumi, and Erin Manning, “History through the Middle: Between Macro and Mesopolitics - Interview with Isabelle Stengers,” *INFLExions* 3, no. Micropolitics: Exploring Ethico-Aesthetics (2008), https://www.inflexions.org/n3_stengershtml.html.

Engaging with *methods* is the first step of this approach. It aims to provide students with the opportunity to produce prototypical research tools of situated inquiry that can be modified and adapted in dialogue with urban encounters at different scales and geo-histories.²⁸ In this way, students are encouraged to leave the comfort of being distant experts and become navigators of spatial processes, narratives, and stories that are often invisible. They learn how to hesitate and slow down, while keeping grounded. Our seven key urban design methods — situating, gathering, surveying, mapping, proposing, communicating and reflecting — provide a guide to investigate particular gaps within the relational fabric of ecologies of care.

[Figure 3]

The *theories* strand is a depository of themes – infrastructure, agency, ecology, care – used as entry points into the discursive field of urban design and as frameworks for students to curate their situatedness. It aims to curate their thinking-tools to stay with planetary brokenness, highlighting the inherent incompleteness of urbanisation and its effects on human and non-human actors. Student-led seminars contribute to a collective ‘lexicon of urban design for a broken planet’, which expands the imaginaries of urban design and makes students response-able for the multiple localities and geo-political contexts they come from, and often return to, after the course. Students populate the discursive field with visual stories and case studies where they learn to investigate key theoretical positions through urban design projects. The distribution and dispersion of references into diverse territories is a project in the making — a middle ground between critical urbanism entangled with the global and the pluriverse of local encounters with the planetary.

An important part of the theories strand is the *Histories and Theories of Urban Design* module, which opens with a series of propositions, conceptualisations of urbanity and urban design leading. The module provides a backdrop of how urbanism is theorised through critical analysis, stressing the notion of the *planetary*.

[Figure 4]

The *participation* strand introduces students to theories and methods of community engagement. Direct engagement with local sites and communities takes place through the

²⁸ Walter D. Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova, “Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 2 (May 2006): 205–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006063333>.

year, translated into triggers and ethical negotiators for urban alternatives. Visual and discursive ethnographies, volunteering, collective design processes, participation in policy making, engaged discussions and workshops with communities are among the methods employed. Students experiment with participatory action research in designing their participatory events, which also feed into their design-research projects and enables a dialogical understanding of futures and interventions.

[Figure 5a, b, c, d]

The *practice* strand is envisioned as pedagogies in action that engage with localities, while weaving in technologies, resources, and agencies of communities with pedagogical tools gathered in the formative modules of methods and theories strands. In doing so, neighbourhoods and/or cities become paradigmatic localities that present themselves as medium through which questions of urban ecology and the environment are experienced as fertile grounds for imagining otherwise. Studios are embedded into temporal localities that act as “laboratories in real-scale” to test and experiment collective modes of inquiry.²⁹ In engaging with these localities, students are entrusted with thematic concerns such as resilience, migration, marginality, post-oil futures, urban commons, decolonial city-making, citizen-led urbanism, and infrastructure as infrastructuring. Thematic concerns act as a common ground between affective communities, students, tutors, and other stakeholders driving processes of mutual care.

Urban actors are crucial in our approach to practise. Affected communities are engaged in co-designing briefs, attending reviews, curating city walks, neighbourhood tours, or excursions to farms and allotments. This mutual care is developed gradually, making sure resources are allocated to communities and the values they bring are acknowledged in the design-research process. The communities see themselves in the stories told, they are at the centre of tales of urban transitions that aim for more just and sustainable futures.

[Figure 6a, b, c]

The final touch to the pedagogical framework, *trajectories*, allows students to explore pathways of their future practices by positioning critically within a particular context of their choosing. They are asked to choose a margin, an interstice, a potential gap that exists in

²⁹ Florian Kossak, “Temporary Urbanism: Its Relevance and Impact on Teaching Urban Design,” *Urban Design*, no. 122 (2012): 32–33.

present tense and in the setting they would act in the future. One of the tasks is to design, curate and imagine a practice that is shaped through speculative fiction. Students tell tales of possible futures that they are practising in, for example by imagining the tools they will take to that particular imagined context. In another assignment, students are asked to retell stories of urban design practices, aligning the stories with key urban transition agendas such as decolonisation, collectivisation, decarbonisation or other critical transformative agendas. The result is a broad coalition of urban design practices contributing to stories of urban design transitions.

5. Conclusion

In an age when the planetary is expressing its discontent fiercely, learning to listen to the murmurs of the earth and reading the signs of social, environmental, and mental disjunctions should become central to pedagogies of the urban. However, beyond critical analysis through active listening, it should be generative of new actions, and design pedagogies have a central role to play in patterning these actions — the multifarious ‘ecologies of care’. The link between here and now, the planetary discontent, and a pathway out of extractive economies is closely linked to ensuring just urban transitions. We have argued that just as there is clear evidence of urbanisation's contribution to the great acceleration — increasing rate of ocean acidification, carbon emissions, loss of biodiversity — the entanglement and responsibility supposed by this processes also mean urbanism could have an impact on the creation of alternative trajectories, in Latourian terms, to land back on earth. Whether cities and citizens as modernisers can learn new ways of living together on earth depends on how we open temporal and spatial gaps to allow murmurs to seep from and into our local environments, spaces we teach, learn, cook, produce, dwell, and care for each other.

The reflexive pedagogical framework of MAUD programme acts as a scaffold that supports the maintenance work for the temporal, social, and spatial productive margins through which the connection with radical unknowability is sustained. It is through this gap that the unknowns of urbanisation floods the design field making it a fertile place for collective imagination and storytelling. Through such narratives, alternative structures of living together in neighbourhoods/cities/planet are tested and examined – localised food systems, productive urban landscapes, circular economies, diverse knowledge institutions, public-commons partnerships, confederation of co-housing projects, self-managed infrastructures of care, women-led public spaces, community ownership and more. These urban stories, as opposed to urban “master plans”, allow us to move beyond the usual product-driven pedagogy, and explore how to co-produce alternative desires. By allowing the unknowability back into the urban, we ensure a move away from the standard solution-ist

ethos for wicked problems, but nonetheless use the available tools in our repertoire to respond to the local context with a broad sense of solidarity. No longer our urban design is about how we can save the world, but what acts of care can we imagine to re-think and re-shape the many worlds we inhabit.

Ecologies of care, therefore, perhaps can be thought of as an minoritarian pedagogy that is humble to acknowledge its limitations of its own articulation, does not promise a grand master plan of the future, but rather works with the margins to re-shape what futures are desired in everyday life. A key part of this pedagogy lies not in the analysis of past arrangements through critical lenses, but in availing the recent turn towards the speculative dimension of design to reimagine various permutations and combinations of future arrangements as an exploratory device. Alternative future scenarios become pedagogical devices in their own right that allow rearrangements of the urban form, rhythm and politics.

Such theoretical movements bridging criticality and creativity into a matrix of care for alternative urban futures for humans and non-humans are not an end in themselves but rather the political stance of the programme itself. A new urban design that listens to the earth, cares for its citizens and reimagines the capitalist, colonialist and extractivist forms of engagement with the field can only begin to emerge when designing a collective urban life is not an abstract, lifeless practice in itself, but as we have stressed throughout this essay, rather is actively constituted through the reciprocal engagement of situated struggles of real communities. Placing these struggles within a caring multiplicity of learners, facilitators, concepts, technicities, devices, frameworks, analytics and fabulations to actively co-construct urban design knowledge from the ground up remains our key strategy for learning to stay with a broken planet.

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