19 SEPTEMBER 2019 – 5 JANUARY 2020

...AND OTHER SUCH STORIES

CHICAGOARCHITECTUREBIENNIAL.ORG
One of the disconcerting features of Ngalandia's landscape is the
pandemonium scene at the
stirring at the surrounding
the dwellings are placed
on and between sand
hills, evoking a sense
of instability.

In Ngalandia today, there
is no sign of the sandy
hills featured in Ngalandia's
carvings.

-Elio Miles
2002
LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Chicago is part of the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations. Many other tribes—such as the Meskwaki, Ho-Chiefs, and Fox—also called this area home. Located at the intersection of several great waterways, the land historically served as a site of travel and meeting for many Indians. Today, Chicago is a place that calls people from diverse backgrounds to live and gather. American Indians continue to live in the region, and Chicago is home to the country's third-largest urban American Indian community, which still practices its traditions and celebrates. Despite the numerous changes the city has experienced, its American Indian and African American communities continue to value the importance of the land and of this place, which has always been hospitable to many different backgrounds and perspectives.

~American Indian Center of Chicago
THIS IS ODAWA, OJIBWE, AND POTAWATOMI LAND

The Chicago Cultural Center, the very heart of the city in the United States, houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of Native American art in the world. This building, which was once a post office, is now a museum dedicated to preserving and displaying Native American art and history. The building was designed by the noted architect Louis Sullivan and completed in 1894.

The founding of Chicago was influenced by the presence of Native American tribes, particularly the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi. These tribes have a rich history in the region and have been integral to the development of the city.

The Chicago Cultural Center is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region and a reminder of the importance of recognizing and respecting the history and contributions of Native American peoples.
LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Chicago is part of the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi nations. Many other tribes—such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Sac, and Fox—also called this area home. Located at the intersection of several great waterways, the land naturally became a site of travel and healing for many tribes. Today, Chicago is still a place that calls people from diverse backgrounds to live and gather. American Indians continue to live in the region, and Chicago is home to the country's third-largest urban American Indian community, which still practices its heritage and traditions, including care for the land and waterways. Despite the numerous changes the city has experienced, its American Indian and architecture communities both see the importance of the land and of this place, which has always been hospitable to many different backgrounds and perspectives.

—American Indian Center of Chicago
In 1899, intentionally placing it in Chicago’s most diverse immigrant neighborhood. Determined to fight xenophobia, expose the root causes of poverty, and break down class boundaries, these visionary social reformers conducted an unprecedented neighborhood sociological study. They went door-to-door, asked residents about their daily lives, compiled information, and analyzed conditions of different ethnic groups living on the West Side. They included color-coded maps outlining the ethnicities and family income of residents. Hull-House reformers went on to use the data, maps, and essays to help pass laws in support of fair housing, to close sweatshops, to advocate for more services for the community, and to address other social inequalities.

—Jennifer Scott

Nationalities Maps from Hull-House Maps and Papers, 1895. Courtesy Cornell University—PV Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography

Lori Lightfoot, Chicago’s newly installed mayor, the first African American and openly gay woman to hold the office, declared in a post on Twitter on June 25, 2019, “Chicago will always be a welcoming city and a champion for the rights of our immigrant and refugee communities.” Just a little over a month after she became mayor, Lightfoot publicly refused to assist a federal order to seize and deport undocumented residents, bringing the city of Chicago back to its beginnings as a sanctuary for immigrants and migrants. Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr founded the Hull-House settlement.
CHAPTER 1

RIGHTS AND RECLAMATIONS

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THE RACIAL QUESTION(ING)
OF JUSTICE

DENISE
FERREIRA
DA SILVA

“This ... is called a rubber-bullet, it hurts when it hits the body,” says Cláudio dos Santos. He refers to the action of the military police (MP) of the metropolitan civil guard in Comunidade do Cimento, in the eastern zone of São Paulo (SP), which burned Saturday night. [São Paulo, 2019]

Jessica] Patrick was a member of the Lake Babine First Nation and had a young daughter ... Johansen received confirmation from a family member about Patrick’s death Saturday night, and asked the family for permission to conduct a vigil, which included a drumming ceremony, in Patrick’s honour. About 200 people gathered at Boswell Square Sunday afternoon. Many attendees wore red as a reminder of the national issue of missing and murdered indigenous women, which includes 18 murders and disappearances along the so-called Highway of Tears, the stretch of Hwy. 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert that goes through Smithers, since the 1970s. [Smithers, British Columbia, 2018]

"Yes there was taunting of the police. We were telling them to go.”

A tear gas canister was lobbed into the crowd as another school group approached and children started scattering in all directions. The policemen—mostly black—got back into their vehicles, which were stoned. “Their only way out was to drive through the crowd.”

Monobe said what struck him was that most of the policemen at the scene were black, pointing guns at their own children,” and that the commanding officer was white.

“That crowd of policemen still have something to explain,” he said. [Soweto, 1976]

Two colored men are reported to have been killed and approximately fifty whites and negroes injured, a number probably fatally, in race riots that broke out at southside beaches yesterday. The rioting spread through the black belt and by midnight had thrown the entire south side into a state of turmoil. One Negro was knocked off a raft at the Twenty-ninth street beach after he had been stoned by whites. He drowned because whites are said to have frustrated attempts of colored bathers to rescue him. A colored robber is said to have died from wounds inflicted by Policeman John O’Brien, who

In the United States the term redlining originally referred to the practice in the early twentieth century of systematically steering racial minorities into specific neighborhoods. It has since come to refer to the continued denial of resources and services to these neighborhoods’ residents. The residential maps most often associated with the practice of redlining, however, contain no red at all. Instead the maps produced by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) between 1930 and 1940 rank residential values using lush pastels: a grey-green denotes so-called first-grade properties associated largely with stable white neighborhoods; sky blue and canary yellow, respectively, indicate second- and third-grade regions; and the lowest-rated, or fourth-grade, areas appear in a navy pink. The HOLC made its maps in secret, intending these documents to circulate to a few select bureaucrats. Critics today disagree about how much the HOLC weighted race in its lending decisions, but its maps undoubtedly paved the way for more blatantly racist mapping procedures and policies carried out by both public and private lending agencies in the ensuing years. As one knows exactly how the HOLC used these maps. Their vibrant coloring suggests, however, that someone worked to make the maps appear visually pleasing even as they delivered daunting assessments about neighborhoods. Inaugurating nearly a century of discriminatory residential practices, the HOLC maps do so in a color palette thatExpertly blunts their calamitous impact.

—Adrienne Brown

Martin Luther King Jr. is usually associated with civil rights campaigns in southern cities like Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, all in Alabama. But in 1966 King moved to Chicago for six months to participate in the Chicago Freedom Movement. Centered on open housing, the Chicago Freedom Movement targeted discriminatory practices in public housing, the rental market, and private ownership as essential to securing civil rights for blacks in the North. King acknowledged the challenges of fighting segregation in the American North. Whereas in the South, we always had segregationists to help make issues clear,” King observed, the “ghetto Negro has been invisible so long.”

This photograph captures one of the movement’s efforts to make the magnitude of northern housing segregation visible: organizing demonstrations against realtors who enforced the city’s dual-market housing system. Protestors carry signs bearing the movement logo, which spells the letters MOVE into one symbol, denoting their efforts to “move slaves together.” It is likely that the mayor’s office deliberately deployed black cops to the scene for the preferable optics. But the photograph also points to the thin line separating the officers—who wield batons resembling the sticks that support the protesters’ signs and who were just as likely as those they surrounded to be disinterested agents of Chicago realtors—from the activists.

—Adrienne Brown

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CHAPTER 2

APPEARANCES AND ERASURES

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AFRICAN SPACE MAGICIANS

LESLEY LOKKO

Chicago and Johannesburg are separated by hemisphere and history. Both have long histories of migration and segregation, diaspora and displacement, protest and prosperity. With ten million and eight million inhabitants, respectively, within their greater metropolitan areas, they are simultaneously outward and inward looking, famous for—and scared by—their architecture, which plays a role that is at once literal and conceptual. Chicago is sometimes referred to as the "city of big shoulders," a reference to the many skyscrapers that line the shores of Lake Michigan. Johannesburg’s northern suburbs form the world’s largest man-made forest, trees planted by European settlers wishing to remake the landscape in an image (real or imagined) of that which they had left behind. Windy City, City of Gold, Chi-town, e-Goli affectionate nicknames abound.

Each city, in its own way, desperate to project an image of itself that in some way corresponds to the aspirations of its citizens—at least those with material and cultural capital. But the brash confidence required to transform a "place of wild garlic" into a metropolis of ten million people and an isolated, dusty farm stop a gold reef into one of the fifty largest urban areas in the world is also a foil for other, more hidden narratives, including complex and often contradictory relationships with the past and a stubborn inability to reconcile the historical geographies of race and class. For one who (although not native to either) has lived and worked in both cities for a number of years, the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial affords an unmissable opportunity to reflect on the myriad ways in which space both marks and is marked by memory, particularly in the context of oppression, resistance, and liberation. This text draws together a number of threads from seemingly disparate sources: architecture,alchemy, memory, and magic. It is rooted in South Africa’s recent history, yet it speaks to the difficult relationship between power and place that is both the impetus for and the consequence of every act of settlement.

UMQAMBI WEBINO

The Zulu term for an architect, umqambi weinson, is a haunting and beautifully complex phrase meaning alternatively and in no particular order “magician of space,” “maker of a situation,” or “maker of a sensation.” I can think of few equivalents in any language that so aptly describe the
Residents of the Mecca Flats meet to oppose the building's demolition, Chicago, 1950. Courtesy Chicago History Museum (CHI025338)

The Mecca Flats had prestige—not because of the architecture, though it was remarkable, but because of the kind of people who lived in or near the building. In the first half of the twentieth century, residents included African American bankers, professionals, businessmen—such as Anthony Chrtum and Jesse Ringo—and important musicians and artists. Together they invigorated the neighborhood and helped form the Stroll, the stretch of State Street that served as the culture and entertainment center of Bronzeville and the entire Black Belt (or the "ghetto," as others called it).

The Mecca Flats gave physical form to the history and positive aspects of the Black Belt.

The successful people who lived there were role models for members of the African American community whose families had fled the South looking for a better way to live. That was true until

after World War II, when the population of the neighborhood began to change. The second wave of the Great Migration brought to Chicago a new influx of African Americans who were socially, culturally, and economically less fortunate than those who arrived in the first phase, from roughly 1916 to 1940.

It was also in that period that the Illinois Institute of Technology began building its new campus, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, to accommodate a growing student body. The institute was able to capture almost all the space surrounding its original campus and planned to raze the buildings in that area in a process of "urban renewal." The Mecca Flats was a victim of that process. For people who lived in the building and their relatives and friends, the building was emotionally and historically very precious. They wanted the building landmarked and saved from demolition, and so they protested, unsuccessfully.

—Tamed Black
FOREST FOR THE TREES
EDUARDO KOHN

“ECOLOGIZING” ETHICS
We are living in an age of unprecedented anthropogenic climate change, and much is clear. It has also become apparent that our human-centered ethical frameworks—those that orient our conduct, dictate our norms, inform our core values, and ultimately allow us to imagine a better way of life—are inadequate to the challenges humanity faces. The task before us is to radically rethink just what it means to be human and to reimagine how to conduct our lives on a planet we share with the vast but fragile web of life of which we are a part. Grasping the magnitude and urgency of this task demands that we develop the conceptual equipment—the ideas and methods—to create a form of ethics that goes beyond the human. We need, in short, to “ecologize” ethics. Given our scholarly traditions, which continue to treat ethical questions as strictly human affairs, and our political traditions, which still equate the good with unfettered human progress, this is a daunting challenge.

Such an “ecologized” ethics would build on the “green ethics” that emerged with the environmental movement of the 1970s. That movement focused largely on the important task of finding a better way to act toward nature, but our current times require something else: that we derive an ethics from the ways nature acts on us. For we are now seeing the planetary effects of seemingly unconstrained human agency. This demands an ethics that inverts the terms of the sentient relationship. The challenge is not so much to actively apply an ethics to ecology but rather to listen patiently and learn how an ethical practice can be derived from the ecological relations that hold us.

THE WORK OF DESIGN
This challenge forces me to rethink my vocation, anthropology—the study of what it means to be human. For it asks me to consider the human not by virtue of what is distinctive to it but with a view to that which lies beyond it and sustains it. This shift in perspective has in turn led me, perhaps unexpectedly, to think about “design.” That is, it has led me to think about the centrality of configurations of regularity, form, and pattern as constraints on possibility; the ways in which such configurations inform action, human and otherwise; and how a reflection on such configurations is a key part of the central task of design thinking.
This ghost forest is an image of Chicago—past, present, future. The photograph was taken near the temporary town of Dewerd, Michigan, and later reproduced in William Cronon’s book Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (1991). It shows the sacrificial landscape left behind by the lumber magnate David Ward, whose vast timber holdings were swiftly liquidated by his heirs after his death in 1900. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, majestic stands of white pine across the Great Lakes region were cut, rolled, and transported by ship or rail to wholesale lumberyards along the Chicago River’s South Branch. The wood—in combination with a newly glazed invention, the steel-plate rail—was used to build the “balloon frame” houses of the city, but much greater volumes were sold to homesteaders across the treacherous expanses of the Great Plains. The ghost forest, sprawling market, and commercial hinterland together exemplify the role of metropolis centers in literally spreading, absorbing, transforming, and redistributing the basic components of the living world, in the process of global ecological change now called the Anthropocene. There are no more lumberyards along the South Branch; nor are there any significant white pine forests in the Great Lakes region. But the financial derivatives markets that emerged from Chicago’s commercial past still govern extractive operations across the earth.

—Brian Holmes
Signature page from the Treaty of Greenville (Enrolled Indian Treaty #22, 7 STAT 412), which ended the Indian War on the Northwest Frontier, 1795. Courtesy National Archives, Washington, DC.

At the Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794), a confederacy of Indians organized by the leaders Blue Jacket (Shawnee) and Little Turtle (Miami) was defeated near Maysville, Ohio. The following year the tribes of the Great Lakes tried to ensure peace with the United States by signing the Treaty of Greenville (1795). The final page includes the names of the Indian leaders and signatories. In that treaty much of what is now Ohio was ceded to the United States. The treaty established a temporary peace between the United States and the American Indian tribes that lived in the region but encouraged non-Native immigration to the area. Federal government officials promised the Native leaders that they would be treated fairly in future dealings. Article 5 of the treaty specifically provided that the Indians would retain the right to quietly enjoy their lands until and unless sold to the United States.

Signing on behalf of the Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, Miami, Erie River, Wea, Chippewa, Potawatomi, Kickapoos, Piankashaw, and Kickashaw nations were twenty-three leaders. These tribes would, in later years, either move north into the upper Midwest and Canada or be removed west of the Mississippi River pursuant to the 1830 Indian Removal Act, as Ohio became a great scatter zone of ethnic cleansing and dispersals. While the treaty itself is evidence of the intent of the settlers of European descent to assert the lands away from the first peoples of the region, the document also reflects the cosmopolitan nature of Indigenous life and community in the number of tribes and signatories involved and their desire for peaceful coexistence.

The treaty also provided for the establishment of several American forts, including one at the mouth of the Chicago River. This would represent the first cession of lands by Indian peoples of the Chicago area. Fort Dearborn would be built at this location and become a site of both trade and conflict. The fort was burned by the Potawatomi and other tribes in 1812, but the settlers returned shortly thereafter and by 1833, only thirty-eight years after the Treaty of Greenville, the Treaty of Chicago ceded the last of the Chicago region. In one lifetime the Indigenous peoples of what is now Chicago had been hustled out of town.

—John N. Low
CHAPTER 4

COMMONGROUND

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THE SCALE OF COMMONS AND SOLIDARITY INFRASTRUCTURES

PELIN TAN

How do we build the commons? How do we create the basis for commoning practices in architecture and design? How do displacement, migration, and contested spaces affect the notion of the commons? According to Massimo De Angelis, “Commons are a means of establishing a new political discourse that builds on and helps to articulate the many existing, often minor, struggles, and recognizes their power to overcome capitalist society.” He defines three notions in order to explain the commons not merely in terms of the resources that we share but as a way of commoning, that is, a social process of “being common.” It is the way in which resources are pooled and made available to a group of individuals, who then build or rediscover a sense of community.

Spaces where commoning practices are developed in relation to design and architecture are often related to physical spaces in the realm of social design. The ultimate role of spatial design is that the physical structure or form at any scale should serve the practice of commons. Commoning practices require a social assembly process, however, including common decision-making and noncapitalist accumulation; thus it is difficult to develop a consistent design program. The dilemma in design and architecture is rooted in the question of whether an existing act such as squatting in an abandoned building is also a practice of architecture or design. For some architects and designers, even a self-organized refugee camp that has gone through several “intifadas” can be a space of commoning that can inform us about design and architecture. The Palestine-based collective Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency (DAAR) uses the term of mashri (communal land) instead of commons: “Masha is shared land, which was recognized through practice in the Islamic world…. Masha could only exist if people decided to cultivate the land together. The moment they stop cultivating it, they lose its possession. It is possession through a common use.” DAAR uses of mashri as a practice of commoning as direct participation and common taking care of life.

In my experience, practices and discourses on commons vary according to scale and territorial specificity. Space-based solidarity practice is one part of practicing the commons; others span from the urban to the rural at different scales. Here the question of scale is not only a physical
employees and “specialists”—can run one of the best spaces for housing refugees in Greece, then the model of the “camp” becomes a question of political choice. Through the counter-example of City Plaza, we challenge the dominant narrative that “there is no alternative” to camps, within the discourse of the “emergency” and “refugee crisis.”

In conclusion, commoning practices require creating models of criticality that are connected to new forms of community through places, infrastructures, and buildings. Commoning practices enforce “collective” effort (collective action) and forms of cohabitation and collective pre-curseliness. According to J. K. Gibson-Graham, “The ‘collective’ in this context does not suggest the massing together of like subjects, nor should the term ‘action’ imply an efficacy that originates in intentional beings or that is distinct from thought. We are trying for a broad and distributed notion of collective action, in order to recognize and keep open possibilities of connection and development.” Collective action requires the ethics of a community economy. Self-organization is not a simple hierarchy based on certain labor activities and their division but, conversely, a work/labor structure that allows activists and refugees to engage in different kinds of labor and share tasks. To reiterate Stavrakis’s analysis, collaboration is not about affirmation but about negotiation. City Plaza as a space of a commoning practices among activists, citizens, and refugees presents a solidarity infrastructure based on shared vulnerabilities at a small scale, one that may serve as a model.

Dearborn Park, looking north from Washington Street, ca. 1890. Courtesy Chicago Public Library Special Collections

Dearborn Park became a park almost as an afterthought. Located on land left over from a former military encampment, the park got its name from the recently decommissioned Fort Dearborn. By the mid-nineteenth century Dearborn Park’s lakeshore location was surrounded on three sides by industry and warehouses. It became a place of organized labor rallies and political speeches; attempts to landscape the grounds were often thwarted when plants were trampled during spirited public gatherings. Following the US Civil War of the 1860s, proposals were made to dedicate Dearborn Park as a place of memory and a memorial to the war dead. A gathering place and museum were planned for the site. Instead, the entire block was covered with a monumental Beaux-Arts structure built to house the first permanent home of the Chicago Public Library, marking the final years for Dearborn Park. Completed in 1897, the building incorporated the proposed war memorial in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall and maintained its identity as a place of open public gathering, often referred to as the People’s Palace. By the 1970s the library had outgrown the building, which underwent a partial conversion into today’s Chicago Cultural Center, a public forum for cultural activities and the “living room of the city.”

—Tim Samuelson
Fight school segregation!

LET CHICAGO KNOW YOU WANT EQUAL EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILDREN! HIT BACK AT CZAR BEN WILLIS AND HIS DOORMAT SCHOOL BOARD!

This is your chance to tell the world how you feel about the discriminatory public school officials who refuse to give ALL of Chicago's children an equal chance to get a good education.

Help put an end to inferior, overcrowded schooling! Help to end the national segregation of our children! Help us Chicago! Call Ben Willis and the School Board members who have surrendered to him! Support this great protest — and get your friends to support it — RIGHT NOW!

OCT. 22 FREEDOM DAY SCHOOL BOYCOTT

Sponsored by Coordinating Council of Community Organizations

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WANTED—Thousands of Freedom Marchers

MEET at City Hall (La Salle Street Side)

MARCH to the Board of Education

SHOW CHICAGO YOU'RE SICK OF BEN WILLIS-ISM AND 2ND RATE EDUCATION—RIGHT NOW!

Freedom Day, OCTOBER 22, is the day to let Mayor Daly know that it's his job to give Chicago a School Board which will truly serve ALL the people equally. To help to about it loud and clear by coming to City Hall and marching with the thousands who demand ACTION NOW — for a better future for our children.

This is it! WILL YOU BE THERE?

Join the Freedom March on City Hall

TUES. OCT. 22 4 P.M.

You Can Help to do the job

Call your friends! Help spread the word about Freedom Day. Get the facts and flyers for all of headquarters.

Appomatox Club 3632 S. Parkway Phone: 285-1282

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On October 22, 1962, nearly 225,000 students stayed out of school for the citywide Freedom Day boycott. Downtown Chicago was filled with black students, parents, and supporters protesting racial in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Organizers from the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations argued that CPS superintendent Benjamin Wills was maintaining a segregated, separate, and unequal school system. Black children attended schools that were under-resourced and underfunded, operating on double shifts to accommodate overcrowding. The school system installed mobile classrooms—dubbed Wills Waggons—to relieve overcrowding in black schools.
The police ordered the workers to disperse in the name of the people. Someone hurled a bomb. The police opened fire, surrendering all personal qualities. Although the bomb thrower's identity was never discovered, seven workers were sentenced to death. The British Arts and Crafts theorist William Morris described their persecution as a menace to the liberal ideals of the American republic. Law cannot guarantee the common good, but it is right to want good laws. This is a quotation from Plato.

Above and opposite: Illustrations of the Haymarket Meeting and the Haymarket Riot, Chicago, from Michael J. Schassler, Anarchy and Anarchists, 1889. Courtesy Illinois History and Lincoln Collection, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library.

People and persons. Two idioms. Providing people with security and suffrage is a foundational concept of the modern republic (res publica: the public thing). It gives meaning to the idea of political accountability, but it is not the basis of responsibility. To be responsive to the ethical, political, and aesthetic demands of a moment is perhaps the defining quality of a person. Different persons respond differently, but respond we must. In May 1886 workers across Chicago demanded an eight-hour day. Only a government acting in the name of a people could guarantee such working conditions. —Shibon Banerji.