

Senior Seminar: “What-Ifs”: Histories of Environments in Architecture

Spring 2023
 Th 4:10 pm - 6 pm
 Ana Gisele Ozaki

What-Ifs

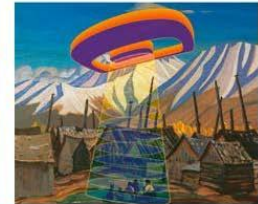


Architect Craig Hodgett created this rendering in 1978 for a never-completed film version of *Ecofoma*, the classic novel by Ernest Callenbach. Hodgett's rendering includes balloon generators over San Francisco Bay. Illustration by Craig Hodgett, [facebook.com/hph4/](https://www.facebook.com/hph4/).



Don Davis, 1970s. Image Credit: NASA's Ames Research Center

Sorany Assu, 'They're Coming! Quick! I have a better hiding place for you, Dorvan V, you'll love it.' Digital Intervention on an AY Jackson Painting (Eispayaks Village, 1927) 2015



Stanley Von Medvey, 2013.



"Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room," 2021 - The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: Anna-Marie Kellen.



Olalekan, Jeyloun, and Wade Lawal, *Maa Horse City*, 2017.



“What-Ifs”: Histories of Environments in Architecture” explores the intersections between environmental imaginaries and architectural designs (built or not) throughout history to investigate how storytelling has informed architectural notions of the environment, climate, and nature. By way of addressing the writer Amitav Ghosh's generative provocation that “the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination” (2016), this seminar asks: What if we could read and write environmental histories based on buildings? How could we situate architectural histories within the contested grounds of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene/Chthulucene/Plantationocene?

The course encourages students to reckon with normative conceptions of the built environment -- such as continuations of empire and colonialism, fossil capital, geoengineering, and other mitigation strategies regarding climate change -- and read “climate” and environments through agencies of infrastructure, technology, and grassroots movements. Through methods of architectural history in research and visual analysis, along with writing genres and exercises, the class will weekly assess a combination of primary and secondary sources to contend with themes from political and architectural movements, postcolonial and decolonial critiques, and other theoretical frameworks from marginalized geographies and methods. Primary sources will include land treaties, architectural manifestoes, professional statements, speculative designs, scientific reports, artistic genres, and speculative fiction, among others.