Floating Home: an Imagined Community

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MY SINCERE THANKS TO:

My partner Christopher S. Marshall
My best friend Palmer Marie Foley
My comrade and travel-companion Jim Czysz
My sister Liz Hahn
My father and step-mother Tom and Ann Marie Collier
& all my relations, given or chosen.

The faculty of the IDES department at VCU
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My recommenders: Professor Melanie Rae Thon & Professor Craig Dworkin at the University of Utah.

And to Ursula K. LeGuin, (wherever she may be). Her books The Dispossessed and Always Coming Home inspired and guided me throughout.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER, CASSANDRA
A bowl is an object with solidity and heft, but the empty space within it makes it useful. The bowl’s function is to hold: its structured emptiness is what we use (and use up), by filling it.

A house, which is also a container, works in a similar way. It doesn’t properly exist, until it is occupied; it’s a shell, an empty package. Its inhabitants activate it; by using it, they realize its utility; they complete the design.

Clearly, an interior designer’s primary material is empty space. We are sculptors of void: we create space—which others will fill with time.

For the sake of planetary ecology, we should seek to derive maximum practical use from a minimum of material resources. But this needn’t be an austerity measure—all we are doing is establishing a particular configuration of emptiness, by surrounding it.

Beauty is completely mysterious. It is an essential element of our experience that evades my efforts to fix it in place for more than a passing instant. I’ll leave it alone, except to affirm that it matters a great deal.
PROJECT ORIGINS

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

INTERESTS & CONCERNS

GENDER EQUITY IN DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS, I.E., WHO DOES THE DISHES?

PLACES OF REFUGE OR RETREAT—WHAT DO THESE LOOK LIKE, TODAY?
Climate experts agree that anthropogenic climate change threatens the long-term survival of the human species. Industrial production processes fueled by coal and oil have already wiped out thousands of other unique life-forms worldwide. Graphs demonstrating an exponential rise in global extinction-rates within the last three centuries are nearly identical to graphs representing global industrial development. Continuing escalation of the extinction rate, in comparison with average rates over the course of several million years, leads scientists to posit an in-progress mass extinction event (fig. 1).

We urgently need to develop resilient, adaptable, climate-neutral systems for feeding and housing a growing global population. That necessity conflicts with global aspirations to an idealized version of the American lifestyle, as represented in American entertainment media. Globally distributed films, television programs, and popular music showcase an idealized vision of lives defined by material wealth and unconstrained consumption. The single-family home figures prominently in past and present configurations of the “American dream,” broadcast worldwide. In reality, prevailing U.S. housing models are overdue for radical revision. Our homes are sites of concentrated resource consumption, waste production, and greenhouse gas emission. They are also environments where gender-based expectations continue to burden women with a majority share of uncompensated domestic labor (fig. 2).

The mass adoption of collective or communal housing arrangements would reduce per capita carbon output, while supporting the equitable re-distribution of work that defaults to women within the traditional American family home. Interior designers are well-positioned to influence the development of better housing models. We can generate designs that use resources effectively, efficiently, and without redundancy. We can also identify and replace elements in the built environment that reinforce inequitable social relations, wherever we find them.

Monastic communities—eastern and western—are instructive precedents for residential designers concerned with ecological stewardship and social parity. Monasteries and convents—theoretically, at least—bring together individuals committed to devotional practice, within communities insulated from the imperatives and restraints of lay society. In secular contexts, a religious vocation is analogous to the vocational practices of scholars, artists, and teachers (among others). Recently ascendant economic and cultural tendencies are hostile to non-remunerative activity, as a category. Fields of activity with high intrinsic value, but little-to-no market value (according to current modes of assessment) suffer from the expectation that they produce salable commodities. These are the quasi-devotional practices that seem to require insulation and protection, within spaces of refuge set apart from the marketplace and its demands.

Floating Home is an imagined residential community, centered on ecological sustainability and social equity. It is a semi-autonomous village, contained in a single building: Richmond’s Intermediate Terminal No. Three Warehouse, on the banks of the James River.

“DEAR FRIENDS, HUMANITY IS WAGING WAR ON NATURE. THIS IS SUICIDAL... NATURE ALWAYS STRIKES BACK, AND IT IS ALREADY DOING SO WITH GROWING FORCE AND FURY.”

—U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES (IN FREEDMAN, 2020)

ABSTRACT
A proposal to build a foot-bridge connecting Gillie Creek Park to nearby Libbie Hill and Chimborazo Parks offer welcome safe-passage (Gordon, 2020).

The Capitol Trail, a recent addition to the landscape, passes within Terminal #3 Warehouse’s shadow. Runners and bikers zoom past on all but the dreariest days. Fishermen chat, smoke, and eat while leaning over the metal railing that separates the building’s concrete yard—its “sugar pad”—from the river’s edge.

Over the course of its working life, the warehouse stored a wide array of cargoes. In its early years, it often held raw sugar imported from Cuba, which was used in the manufacture of tobacco products: hence “sugar pad” (Slipek, 2018).

Warehouse #3’s nearest residential neighborhoods—at least, as the crow flies—spill down the East side of Church Hill. On a map, Montrose Hill looks as if it were just next door. But the distinct character of the riverfront, and the factors that have enforced its physical and social segregation from higher-elevation areas, link the building more closely with historic Shockoe Bottom to the north, and faux-historic Rockett’s Landing (recently developed as a (highly artificial) “destination” for the city’s craft-beer enthusiasts) to the south.

In recent years developers have been generally active in Richmond’s East End, where speculative investment has gathered considerable momentum. The city and state governments welcomed Stone Brewing’s East Coast headquarters to Rockett’s Landing with millions of dollars in tax breaks and other incentives. Stone is now an anchor point for continuing gentrification in the area.

Stone’s original plans included a proposal to renovate Warehouse #3 for operation as a “Global Bistro.” (The building does seem well-suited to hospitality, if only on the basis of its riverfront location.) Stone has backed out of the plan, however, for reasons no one has yet managed to discover.

The future of Warehouse #3 is uncertain. Rapid gentrification in the East End suggests that the riverfront land it sits on is rapidly appreciating in value. For the moment, however, the warehouse sits undisturbed, except by an occasional graffiti artist, whose work helps to relieve the nearly Soviet plainness of the building’s facades.
EXISTING BUILDING—ELEVATIONS

NORTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING BUILDING—ELEVATIONS

NORTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING BUILDING—ELEVATIONS

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EXISTING BUILDING—ELEVATIONS

NORTH ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION
The property on which the Terminal #3 Warehouse is located once held several industrial buildings built during the same era. As the only structure left standing, its prominence in the otherwise empty landscape is exaggerated.

The building was constructed with flooding in mind; its stilts are meant to keep the main floor safely above water.

PHOTO CREDITS:
1) RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH. 2) VCU ARCHIVES. BOTH FOUND THROUGH A METICULOUSLY RESEARCHED 2018 DOCUMENT BY CHARLES POOL, SUBMITTED TO THE CITY IN SUPPORT OF THE BUILDING’S PRESERVATION UNDER SECTION 106. MAP AT RIGHT BY THE SANBORN INSURANCE COMPANY, 1950, COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA FROM THE SAME INTERMEDIARY SOURCE.

1) FLOODING IN 1936 (BLDG CIRCLED)
2) FLOODING IN 1979

BUILDING’S CONNECTION TO GROUND-PLANE
AMBIVALENT ENCOUNTERS. STABILITY / INSTABILITY
TETHERED
TENSION IN VERTICAL PLANE

VERTICAL DIMENSION: FREIGHT ELEVATOR, CARRYING GOODS AND PEOPLE UP AND DOWN. DROP IN GROUND-PLANE BETWEEN FRONT DOOR (AT STREET LEVEL) AND DOCK LEVEL.

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION, SIDE TO SIDE: CARS ON WHARF STREET PASSING BELOW THE BUILDING.

HORIZONTAL, BACKWARDS/FORWARDS: MOVEMENT OF GOODS UNLOADED AT MAIN STREET ENTRANCE, MOVED TO THE BACK OF THE BUILDING, DOWN, AND TO THE RIVER FOR LOADING. PROCESS REVERSED FOR GOODS UNLOADED FROM SHIPS ON THE RIVER AND TRANSPORTED FROM THE BACK OF THE BUILDING TO PICKUP POINT AT STREET LEVEL.

PARTI DIAGRAMS

3D CIRCULATION THROUGH BUILDING (DURING ITS “WORKING LIFE” AS A CARGO WAREHOUSE).
SITE STUDY

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- VIEWS
- PARKING
- NOISE
- COOLER
- WAREHOUSE #3
- PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESS
- PEDESTRIAN ROUTE

SUN PATH DIAGRAM (SUMMER SOLSTICE)

- SUNRISE
- SUNSET
- FLOATING HOME CARRIE COLLIER
Much of the history of Richmond, of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and of the Colonial United States can be tied to the riverfront landscape in which Terminal Warehouse #3 now stands. The site’s current, quasi-abandoned condition belies its centrality to the story of European settlement in North America, and to Richmond’s role in that story.

The geologic fall-line between Virginia’s Piedmont and coastal plain lends its name to the Falls of the James. These rapids prevent ocean-going vessels, with their deep keels, from sailing further inland. British colonial forces were eager to establish a foothold at this location, which promised to serve as a natural terminus for marine shipping routes. The indigenous Powhatan people valued the same river-front for its prime fishing (Otherwise Known, 2014).

Following their initial exposure to European explorers and settlers, however, the Powhatan population—like that of indigenous groups throughout the Americas—was reduced to a fraction of its former size by smallpox and other European microbes, to which they had no immunity. These microbes were often deliberately introduced into their communities by the British colonizers were characteristically dismissive of the Powhatan’s prior claim to the territory on which Richmond now stands, and the Powhatan’s efforts to prevent the westward expansion of Britain’s colonial territory, by force or by diplomacy, were ultimately ineffective.

Following failed attempts—beginning in 1609—by other Englishmen to settle near the Falls, William Byrd I encamped there in 1679, and held his position with the support of 50 British soldiers. Colonel Wm. Byrd II established the towns of Richmond and Petersburg on the same day in the year 1737, and Major Wm. Mayo drew the original grid for both cities (fig. 1, opposite page). Richmond was incorporated in 1742, with 250 residents, and in 1779 the city became Virginia’s capital (Nomination, 1982). Improvements to Richmond’s port facilities, and the creation of a canal system—devised by George Washington—that enabled tobacco-
and notes that France, Austria, Belgium, and Brazil
the tobacco manufacturing center of the Nation,”
instance, that: “by 1860, Richmond was clearly
scrupulously attentive to the historic development
H. Bryan Mitchell.
by Tucker Hill, the Executive Director of the
“1980 Summer Interns.” The nomination is signed
and A. Rebecca Harrison, who are identified as
this document is attributed to Karen Lang-Kummer
Shockoe Bottom and Tobacco Row (together) for
supplanted transportation by canal (ibid.).
Railroad
growers to transport their crops to the city by
immediately towards humor: “A pillory, whipping
accounts of Shockoe Bottom's history, the NRHP
day.
seems
It is difficult, although not impossible, to
Indeed, a computer search confirms that
Richmond served as an important regional
“In addition to its substantial tobacco interests,
than tobacco manufacturing gets short shrift in
more active and lucrative market in enslaved
Black and Indigenous people, for the benefit of the
leaders' participation in the brutal oppression of
campaign to erase white city, state, and national
absence as another move, in the post-Civil War
transatlantic and interstate slave trades was
pertaining to Shockoe Bottom's role in the
imagine that this stringent exclusion of information
variants—slavery, enslaved—appear even
once
neither the word "slave," nor any of its grammatical
human beings (Sacred Ground, et al.).
source) active and lucrative market in enslaved
foremost, or second-most (depending on the
excision of the district's status as either the nation's
Fr om Reconstruction to the present, this
Bottom should rightfully be considered a carceral
walk today.
variation on Ellis Island, to which nearly every
Bottom) calls antebellum Richmond “the epicenter
of enslaved people's experiences in Shockoe
Sacred Ground Reclamation Project (a non-profit
dedicated to the preservation and commemoration
of enslaved people's experiences in Shockoe
Bottom) calls antebellum Richmond “the epicenter
of the U.S. domestic slave trade,” and tells us that
slave bottoms included nearly 100 sites
associated with that barbaric business: 40-50
auction houses; dozens of slave trade offices, many
with holding pens; six to eight slave jails; and many
supporting businesses.”
Indeed, some sources suggest that Shockoe
Bottom should rightfully be considered a censer
variation on Ellis Island, to which nearly
Every American-American could establish some connection,
given better record-keeping (Sacred Ground).
This is a terrifying variation on the theme of the
imprisonment, which many white families in the
U.S. have found value in reconstructing.
Certainly, there were huddled masses,
yearning to breathe free; but their site of reception
was a jail, and its function was to be captured, rather
than record, hereditary images stretching back
across the Atlantic.
After Virginia outlawed the importation of
enslaved people from the African continent in
1798, Richmond slave merchants turned
wards inter-State commerce. A report by the
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Certainly, there were huddled masses,
years, concealed beneath a VCU parking lot. This municipal cemetery operated from 1799-1816, and as many as 22,000 bodies are thought to be buried there, executions occurred on-site—including the hanging, in 1800, of “General” Gabriel, a 24-year old man who led a bold, but unsuccessful, revolt against his white enslavers (Old man who led a bold, but unsuccessful, revolt against his white enslavers (Sacred Ground). As many as 22,000 bodies are thought to be buried in a municipal cemetery operated from 1799-1816, and executions occurred on-site—including the hanging, in 1800, of “General” Gabriel, a 24-year old man who led a bold, but unsuccessful, revolt against his white enslavers (Sacred Ground).

During Reconstruction, a number of Richmond’s currently posh residential neighborhoods were founded as white-only enclaves, with enforceable statutes to that effect. This was also the era in which memorials to Confederate Generals were erected along Monument Avenue—while revisionist, white-supremacist historiography creeps insidiously through the official record, recasting the history of Richmond, and the South, as an antebellum idyll (familiar to many from Margaret Mitchell’s immensely popular revisionist novel Gone With the Wind (Community Proposal, 2017). For Richmonders, topography can be something like destiny. The Northareast shore of the James River is bordered by a ribbon of low-rise, two-story townhouses. The valley where South Anna Creek (now covered) and Gille Creek run before joining the James are subject to extensive flooding in wet years. In the past, whatever economic activities tended to offend genteel sensibilities (slave-trading, for instance, in its day) were relegated to these muddy, flood-prone environs (slave-trading, for instance, in its day) were relegated to these muddy, flood-prone environs. When the floods came, neighborhoods offered shelter to those in lower lying areas. If you was raised, you must have been raised, you must have been a good community fellow, you said (Fulton native Lola) Brady. I think we had one neighborhood drunk, (2016). These developments contributed to the concentration of African-American communities in territory along the river.

Sources such as the Fulton Oral History Project suggest that—in spite of poverty and periodic flooding, and in defiance of hill—dwelling residents—the residents of majority-black neighborhoods such as Fulton and Rockett established functional, self-sufficient communities there, in which generations of Black Richmonders found ways to survive and, at times, thrive.

Without significant material wealth, neighbors relied on tightly woven networks of literal and relational affinities (with one dissenting vote) of the Fulton Urban Renewal plan in 1970. This plan authorized the relocation (with one dissenting vote) of the Fulton Urban Renewal plan in 1970. This plan authorized the relocation of 856 homes, businesses and churches were raised (in April 11, 1970 article in the Afro-American cited 133 affected households affected). A 2016 web article and radio piece on Fulton and Rockett, from Virginia Public Media, reports that, in these areas: “Children were reared by their family, extended family and their neighbors. When walking down the street, they great ed each other and had big conversations. When the floods came, neighbors offered shelter to those in lower lying areas. If you was raised, you must have been a good community fellow, you said (Fulton native Lola) Brady. I think we had one neighborhood drunk, (2016). These developments contributed to the concentration of African-American communities in territory along the river.

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row houses, with congenial porches where elders kept watchful eyes on children playing outdoors, the city has constructed scrofulous patches of ranch-style and split-level housing, whose ample garages emphasize the area’s car-reliant layout.

It is difficult to perceive the City’s actions, in regard to historic Fulton, as anything less than the cynical repossession and sequestration of land occupied by African-Americans, in anticipation of higher-income white Richmonders’ desire to recolonize the city’s Eastern neighborhoods. There may not, in fact, be any conspiratorial organization behind the city’s approach to “revitalizing” Fulton, but—based on its results—that process might as well have been carried out by a conspiracy of racist real estate profiteers; such has been its concrete effect on the area’s demographic profile, economy, and culture.

Having committed itself whole-heartedly to a financially cook-eyed sweetheart deal with Stone Brewing, the city now seems determined—its stated objectives notwithstanding—to re-engineer Fulton in the image of Scott’s Addition, Tobacco Row, et al. (Ruetter, 2014), as if any city, anywhere, needed yet another bland, beery, playground for the suburban-bred youth contingent of America’s white bourgeoisie.
On the island of Cyprus, a hermitage built into the side of a mountain (1) looks out on a forested valley below (2). Dramatic shafts of light in the dome of a Byzantine church (3) resemble sunlight pouring in through the Cypriot cave’s narrow mouth.

Cloisters—a defining feature of Christian monastic architecture—also have a subterranean quality. From within their shadow, the landscape outside looks blindingly bright. Rough-hewn stone in an early-Medieval, Romanesque style French monastery (4) reinforces the impression of a cave.

SEEKING RETREAT / FINDING REFUGE

MODES OF WITHDRAWAL

EREMITIC
(SOLITARY)

CENOBITIC
(COMMUNAL)
When I began planning my precedent studies, Le Corbusier’s Couvent La Tourette was an obvious candidate for analysis. My interest in monastic environments and in Modernism separately would have ensured my interest, but the opportunity to explore a monastic environment re-envisioned by a Modernist with Le Corbusier’s stature held special appeal. I was shocked to observe that La Tourette and the Terminal #3 Warehouse look strikingly similar to one another, down to the way each building is positioned on its sloping site. In the photos opposite, La Tourette is on the left (top and bottom) while Warehouse #3 is on the right. They are not so close that anyone familiar with these disparate projects would be in danger of mistaking one for the other, but on the basis of a passing glance, the grid of images on the facing page might be thought to contain several images representing just one structure.

As I learned more about La Tourette, I was struck by the influence that Le Corbusier and other Modern architects credited to early Medieval architecture—not only in the case of La Tourette, but in general. I turned my attention to Le Thoronet, an early 12th century Cistercian monastery adored by Le Corbusier, among others. This was very instructive; I hadn’t realized how much credit celebrated Modernists owed to early Medieval architecture (as well as a range of still-extant vernacular architectural traditions in Europe, and in many of the colonial territories held by European powers at that time).

The plan above (fig. 5) shows the ground floor of La Tourette. The narrow compartments arrayed around three sides are monk’s cells. Each one measures about 100 square feet.
UNEXPECTED KINSHIP

LE THORONET'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES INCLUDE REGULARLY-SPACED PILLARS SUPPORTING COMPLEX CEILING VAULTS (FIG. 1).

COUVENT LA TOURETTE, LE CORBUSIER'S FORAY INTO MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE, USES COLUMNS TO SUPPORT COMPLEX CEILING GEOMETRIES—BUT THE EFFECT IS VERY DIFFERENT (FIG. 2).

FINALLY, RICHMOND'S TERMINAL #3 WAREHOUSE SHARES THIS CONSTRUCTION, WHICH IN THIS INSTANCE IS COMPLETELY UTILITARIAN (FIG. 3).

PRECEDENT STUDIES

• 12TH CENTURY CISTERCIAN ABBEY
• CITED BY THE ARCHITECT HIMSELF AS AN INSPIRATION FOR LE CORBUSIER'S COUVENT LA TOURETTE
• THE ABBEY'S sublime proportions, rendered in smooth planes of close-set, pinkish stone, are unobstructed by ornament
• A PARAGON OF EARLY MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE, WHICH ILLUSTRATES EUROPEAN MODERNISM'S DEBT TO THAT PERIOD
• THE PROTECTED YARD IS SURROUNDED BY CLOISTERS ON FOUR SIDES
“In literary theory, world-building describes the evocation of whole environments; from the parlors and bedrooms of realistic fiction to the possible futures of life on planet earth to the imagined universes of science fiction and fantasy.” —Melanie Rae Thon, personal communication

“Managing climate change, experts said, will require rethinking virtually every aspect of daily life: how and where homes are built, how power grids are designed, how people live, and fantasy.” —Branch, Plummer (2019)

My orientation towards these issues is deliberately inspirational. I regard optimism as a duty, in a country that has, on the whole, ignored climate change. My guiding light is the science fiction writer Ursula K. LeGuin. Her 1974 novel The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia was an important reference-point for me in a variety of contexts. LeGuin’s father, the French anthropologist Charles LeGuin, introduced her to anthropology and archeology at a young age. The narrators of her books and stories tend to have an ethnographic orientation to their surrounding cultural environment. Her settings are the engines of her narratives. Stories arise—organically, it would seem—from the behavior of people doing whatever it makes sense for them to do, in their given contexts, as we could imagine ourselves doing, in those circumstances. I have chosen to create a project that could not exist within the socio-economic and political frameworks that currently constrain us. This has enabled me to practice thinking outside the “logical framework” that we currently take for granted—which is precisely the problem. There is a mode of thought that governs this bad spot we’ve stuck in, and it is very difficult to think in any term other than the ones we are offered by our immediate context. Our attachment to concepts that are only sensible within a total system based, at ground level, on competition, scarcity, and alienation effectively prevents us looking with clear eyes at our real, concrete circumstances. However, if those lifestyles are only practised by isolated handful of individuals, the work involved in maintaining them will be, effectively, wasted—one’s positive achievements are quantified and evaluated in relation to everything else that constitutes the major part of our species’ collective impact on the planet. Far better that anyone inclined to commit themselves to such a project, give up recycling, drive wherever they want, and use the time and energy saved to apply whatever pressure they can leverage to people and systems with power to effect meaningful change at a scale far beyond the scope of an individual’s consumption practices and waste-stream management.

So: this project is not a recipe for halting climate change. It is a vision of what our lives might look like, once climate change has been halted by massive, global, structural change that will render our daily experiences entirely unfamiliar. It is an attempt to imagine a way of life that is built on community, attunement, and self-actualization, all of which are compatible with limitations to the material and experiential extravagances we currently enjoy (which, in fact, we don’t seem to enjoy very much, according to research documenting precipitous declines in mental health during recent decades). Floating Home had to exist in a world where individual actions matter—because the individuals in question are acting in tandem with huge collectives of equally-committed, like-minded individuals, on a global scale. This will become possible: once everyone understands, on an emotional level, that the only alternative is a kind of indiscriminate, largely accidental murder-suicide at planetary scale, with the human raise as both perpetrator and victim (among others). Bleak, yes; but, better to face this than to bury our heads in whatever sands we can find.
HOW WE LIVE, NOW

Residential communities in which members share common resources and work together to achieve common goals are now the norm. Family structures have continued to diversify, and kinship groupings have become multifaceted and chosen relations take every imaginable form. These new collective structures vary in size and function, depending on the context in which they develop. All take an ecological stewardship as their primary imperative, and allow (happily) most of the social distinctions that, in the past, were allowed to separate and alienate otherwise compatible compatriots.

The process of transforming socio-economic and political systems worldwide—as climate change required us to do—opened our eyes to the subterranean relationships between structures of oppression and exploitation that, superficially, seemed to have little to do with one another. Ultimately, it was determined that no dynamic based on hierarchical division between dominant and subordinate parties could be entirely eliminated, unless all were eliminated. In other words, it was impossible to reform humanity’s relation with the natural environment, without first eliminating tendencies towards dominance and exploitation within human society. The result was the comprehensive eradication of the systemic architecture of patriarchy, white supremacy, and owning-vs-working class domination. Agricultural and industrial productive capacity has been redirected towards the provision of basic necessities to everyone, everywhere, without cost or condition. Everyone is eligible for a share in available food and medical supplies, and can access healthcare and other services freely.

Most economic activity has been drastically limited. Those limitations benefit the climate, and it is now evident that much economic activity had no positive effect in extra-economic terms—that its function was only to serve the economy, itself, in its basic project of turning money into more money. Consequently, most people do not have jobs that require them to routinely spend a set number of hours per day in an assigned space, performing assigned activities.

The residents of Floating Home may leave for a month or two at a time, to work on a critical project that they’re qualified to aid. But, in the normal course of events, they spend most of their time at home, or nearby. Within the community, they work at tasks that keep the household running smoothly, or devote time to their own projects, based on personal interests.

• RESIDENTS WORK LESS OUTSIDE THE HOME, AND MORE WITHIN IT. (THOSE WHO WERE FORMERLY RESPONSIBLE FOR A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF DOMESTIC LABOR MAY DO LESS THAN THEY WERE ACCUSTOMED TO)

• RESIDENTS GROW FOOD IN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL PLOTS, TO SUPPLEMENT AND DIVERSIFY FOOD SUPPLIES DELIVERED TO THEM WEEKLY BY THEIR REGIONAL COUNCIL

• THEY PREPARE AND EAT DINNER TOGETHER EACH EVENING

• EVERYBODY CLEANS, COOKS, WASHES DISHES, LAUNDERS, MAKES REPAIRS, AND DOES WHATEVER ELSE IS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT AND ITS INHABITANTS. WORK ASSIGNMENTS ARE ROTATED FREQUENTLY, SO THAT NO ONE IS STUCK WITH AN UNPLEASANT JOB FOR LONG, AND SO THAT EVERYONE LEARNS THE SKILLS REQUIRED TO ACCOMPLISH A RANGE OF DOMESTIC TASKS.

• RESIDENTS RARELY DRIVE—INDIVIDUAL CAR OWNERSHIP IS RARE, AND THE LAND AROUND THE BUILDING CAN BE USED FOR HORTICULTURE OR ORNAMENTAL GRADING, INSTEAD OF PARKING. THE COMMUNITY MAY SHARE A VAN OR TRUCK FOR NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION.

• HEAT IS NO LONGER COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE.

• THIS HOUSEHOLD CREATES VERY LITTLE TRASH. THEY TAKE GOOD CARE OF THE THINGS THEY HAVE. THEY MAKE REPAIRS, PATCH THINGS UP, AND GO ON USING ANYTHING THAT STILL FUNCTIONS. THINGS THAT DON’T FUNCTION ANYMORE ARE REPURPOSED, OR DISASSEMBLED SO THAT THEIR COMPONENTS AND MATERIALS CAN BE USED ELSEWHERE.

• ORGANIC WASTE IS COMPOSTED. THIS INCLUDES HUMAN WASTE, THANKS TO COMPOSTING TOILETS THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT.

FLOATING HOME IS A WORK OF FICTION

KEY DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RESIDENTS’ LIVES AND OUR OWN:

- SOLAR, WIND, AND HYDRAULIC POWER
- GREEN ROOFS
- ROOF OSTEARS THAT COLLECT RAINWATER FOR USE IN THE GARDEN
- GRAY-WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS
- GOATS—AS GARBAGE DISPOSALS, LANDSCAPERS, AND DAIRY ANIMALS

They have some or all of these:

- SOLAR, WIND, AND HYDRAULIC POWER
- GREEN ROOFS
- ROOF OSTEARS THAT COLLECT RAINWATER FOR USE IN THE GARDEN
- GRAY-WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS
- GOATS—AS GARBAGE DISPOSALS, LANDSCAPERS, AND DAIRY ANIMALS

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- GOATS—AS GARBAGE DISPOSALS, LANDSCAPERS, AND DAIRY ANIMALS
A residential community on the banks of the James River offers various dwelling configurations appropriate for a variety of non-nuclear family structures. Housework (including cleaning, cooking, maintenance and repair work, gardening, laundry, and sourcing food and other goods) is collectively-organized; all residents participate in these activities to the degree they are able, under the administration of rotating volunteer coordinators. The community cooks and eats together in the evenings, and residents undertake a variety of self-directed projects for individual or collective benefit and enjoyment. Members of the collective spend most of their time on-site or in the vicinity, as the use of motor vehicles has been drastically reduced.
Floating Home celebrates rhythm. Warehouse X3’s column grid establishes spatial order and regularity through repeating patterns — like a drum beat, setting the rhythm of a song with a pattern of alternating beats and rests.

Cyclical rhythms also come to mind: seasons and life cycles, planetary orbits and circadian rhythms. The latter regulate our 24-hour sleep-wake cycles and our energy levels throughout each day. In a residential context, rhythmic patterns of human action and interaction establish layers of syncopation within shared spaces.
CONCEPT WORK

DRAWINGS AND MODELS
CONCEPT WORK

OPPOSITE, TOP: RHYTHM MODEL
OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: VARIATIONS ON A CUBE
THIS PAGE: GRID STUDIES / RHYTHM MODEL
CONSIDERATIONS

PROBLEM: Center of structure receives little daylight; building code for residential use requires operable windows in each bedroom

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Lightwells to main level; second-floor pocket courtyards; skylights and increased exterior glazing

PARTI DRAWINGS
PROGRAMMING

PROGRAM VISUALIZATION

BACKGROUND: PROXIMITY DIAGRAM

SECOND FLOOR

- LOUNGE 800 SF
- PRINT SHOP 600 SF
- OPEN STUDIO 600 SF
- READING ROOM 400 SF

MAIN FLOOR

- WORKSHOP 800 SF
- KITCHEN 500 SF
- LAUNDRY 300 SF
- BATHS 400 SF
- HALL 1400 SF

ADJACENCY MATRIX

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KEY:
- ☐: Moderately important relationship; moderate quantity
- ☐: Not an important relationship; low quantity
- ☐: Important relationship; maximum quantity
- ☐: West
- ☐: North
- ☐: Yes
SPACE PLANNING

PROGRAMMATIC RELATIONSHIPS

ZONE A
GROW; COOK; EAT; CLEAN; COMPOST; LAUNDER; BATH

ZONE B
READ; RESEARCH; WRITE; MAKE; STUDY; RELAX; SOCIALIZE

INITIAL FLOORPLAN—MAIN LEVEL
BACKGROUND, OPPOSITE: EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

FLOATING HOME   CARRIE COLLIER
COLOR STUDIES

CONCEPT CONNECTIONS: RHYTHMIC ELEMENTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- Rain & Other Forms of Precipitation
- Tides
- Seasons (Wet / Dry; Hot / Cold)
- Waves
- Migrations (Birds; Butterflies; Cetaceans; People)
- Plant, Animal, & Human Life Cycles (Growth; Reproduction; Death; Rebirth)

PHOTO: RAIN ON THE OCEAN

“WATER” PALETTE

“LAND” PALETTE

FINAL COLOR PALETTE
Applications: carved sink, built-in drainboard

Soapstone is non-porous, stain resistant and soft enough to be carved allowing the designer of this country kitchen (above photo) to add modern farmhouse details like a sink carved from a single block of soapstone. The natural, honed soapstone countertop also features a low profile carved drainboard.

Here (photo right) a carved drain board maintains the minimalist look of this waxed soapstone kitchen with white apron sink. The designer integrated a soapstone backsplash and window sill for a continuous look. Porcelain accents on the fixtures and the black and white color scheme give this space a retro vibe.

Natural Beauty

American Clay creates surfaces reminiscent of classic interiors throughout history. Bring the natural warmth and sunshine of Provence into your kitchen...take a bath surrounded by the tranquil and earthy feel of a Japanese spa...or travel to a vibrant Tuscan Villa every time you enter your dining room. Whether you live along the coast, in an urban townhome, or on a sprawling ranch, the possibilities are endless.

Plaster: Loma™ • Color: Flint

Plaster: Forté White • Color: Base Plaster Color (Forté White)

forté White is a finish coat material only. This pre-mixed plaster is designed and formulated to be as white and bright in color as is “earthly” possible. For those desiring the classic and elegant appearance of traditional white plasters, this is the natural solution.

forté White is applied over a base coat of forté Base. It has a similar texture to American Clay’s Loma™ (suede-like) or Lomalina™ (smooth, waxy) finish — depending on application technique and preference.

• Approximately 200 square feet per bag (per coat).
FINAL DRAWINGS
PRIVATE LIVING SPACES & COMMUNAL AMENITIES

MAJOR SPACES

RESIDENCES
Residences are configured to suit a variety of family and relationship structures. All dwellings have private toilet rooms, and all but a few have small private balconies. The majority of the units are intended for one or two occupants. Several have a small bonus room with a functioning window that could serve as an office, a child’s bedroom, or a guest room. A few suites contain multiple bedrooms arranged around a shared sitting room. Modest closets are provided, but limited storage space throughout the building discourages accumulation of material goods.

CHILDREN’S DORMITORY
In the spirit of a creche, children could choose to sleep in the dorm, or in their parent or guardian’s dwelling unit. One dorm is intended for younger children, the other for adolescents.

SHOWER ROOM
A shared facility for showering. Centrally located for ease of use. Accessible shower and toilet stalls are included.

SUN PORCH
An unconditioned solarium on the southwest corner of the building.

VIEW ORIENTATION: OPPOSITE PAGE
THE COMMONS

MAJOR SPACES

KITCHEN
Available for individual use during the day; monopolized by teams working on common meal preparation in the evening.

LAUNDRY
Most laundry is done by teams assigned to that task, although the facility is also open for individual use. Contains several washing machines, but only a few dryers, as the majority of laundry is hung on lines to dry outdoors.

WORKSHOP
A workspace for craftspersons, a site for community transmission of useful skill sets; a place where the objects that the community uses and relies on can be maintained and fixed.

OPEN STUDIO
Available for individual work at all times. Also a place to host classes, regular figure drawing, or other group activities.

LIBRARY
A repository for books and other media.

READING ROOM
Quiet study area.

LOUNGES
Social spaces open at all times. Spacious enough that the community could host events or performances here, with or without public involvement.

DINING HALL
Teams of residents take turns cooking evening meals, which are served and eaten communally.

BATHS
Communal bathing area with a Scandinavian sauna, cold plunge, Japanese-style soaking tubs, and showers.

MOVEMENT STUDIO
Open space with equipment for yoga, weightlifting, and cardio workouts. Appropriate for dance and other styles of movement. Residents can organize classes here if desired.

MEDITATION ROOM
Small, quiet space for contemplation, prayer, and meditation.
SECTION—NORTH COURTYARD

PRESENTATION

SECTION

1" = 10'

N
SECOND FLOOR COURTYARD

MAIN FLOOR COURTYARD
UPON ORDERING THIS DESIGN
Specify any details needed to place order. These should be selection items on the website.

**Product**
- **Type**: Krane Large Ceiling Mount
- **Brand**: Roll & Hill

**Description**
Krane juxtaposes simple shapes that work in concert to create a versatile piece with multiple uses. Mimicking the functionality of a crane, the cord glides through the arch with ease to raise or lower the shade which is perfectly balanced by its counterweight. In repetition the wall mount creates an archway, adding an element of architecture.

**Specifications**
- **Dimensions**: L 44 in / 111 cm x W 10 in / 26 cm x H adjustable
- **Weight**: 11 lb / 5 kg
- **Materials**: Aluminum, glass, steel
- **Suspension**: Set length fabric cord. Contact sales if longer cord is needed
- **Canopy**: 3.25-inch round in matching metal finish
- **Dimmer Compatibility**: Integrated Cord Dimmer
- **Lead time**: 8 weeks
Circula Large Coffee Table

Built for the elements this sophisticatedly simple table collection is fit for patio or palace. Circula rounds out any living space in or out. Shop the entire Circula Collection

GREY GREEN OBLIVION OYSTER WHITE

Materials
Suitable for indoor or outdoor use
Powder-coated aluminum
Adjustable feet keep base level
To protect the product's finish, avoid direct exposure to salt air, snow, sleet, and heavy rain

CI1-LGCOFF-GG GREY GREEN $1,299.00
CI1-LGCOFF-OB OBLIVION $1,299.00
CI1-LGCOFF-OY OYSTER $1,299.00
CI1-LGCOFF-WH WHITE $1,299.00

BLUDOT.COM TEL 844.425.8368
service@bludot.com

For 2D & 3D drawings of all products, including CAD, Revit and IES files, please visit rbw.com

PRINT PENDANT
RICH BRILLIANT WILING

CIRCULA COFFEE TABLE
BLUDOT


1 of 5 5/20/2021, 12:16 AM

FLOATING HOME | CARRIE COLLIER
1. Modern stained-glass application by Jacques Couelle. Inspiration for a similar installation in the irregularly-shaped windows on two walls of the meditation room.

2. Eames molded plywood screen used as room-divider in dormitories.
The Chadwick seating group’s most desirable feature, in this setting, is its adaptability. It can be easily reconfigured to produce whatever seating groups prove useful over time.
REFERENCES: BUILDING AND NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIES


Otherwise Known As “Chyinek.” (n.a.) (2013, September 27). Richmond Magazine. https://richmondmagazine.com/api/content/3eca5f0b-08a5-f0bc-b308-4ec0138d8d52/


Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project. (n.d). Why endorse the community proposal? Defenders’ Sacred Ground Project.


REFERENCES: ABSTRACT, PRECEDENT STUDIES, & PROJECT ORIENTATION

ECOLOGY


GENDER & HOUSEWORK

PRECEDENT STUDIES—IMAGE
LA TOURETTE

LE THORONET
Foucault argues that regulatory control, while still expressed in forceful repression and punishment of outlawed activities, has gained a series of comple-
struction of epistemologies that incite some behaviors, while repressing others.

-Evaluates social and financial benefits of sustainable building practices for cooperative housing.
-Presents case studies of two Portuguese cooperative housing projects.
-Compares and contrasts functional benefits of sustainable design/building practices by examining distinct cooperative housing environments, only one of which integrates sustainable design.

-Offers an explanatory model for historical shifts in living arrangements, social structures, and partition/distribution of both space and time, with a particular emphasis on “urbanism” (the translator notes that this term, in French, implies something closer to “urban planning,” with its disciplinary and bureaucratic implications, than English-speaking readers might assume).

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