

Workshop Brief & Resources

I.

THESIS STATEMENT

My thesis is an exercise in investigating and designing in partnership with local systems of repair, improvisation, and material recirculation within R.I. and southern M.A., rethinking current economic models oriented toward never-ending growth.

- Revalues architectural and construction industrial waste based on availability and cooperation amidst the indeterminacy inherent in non-standardized materials
- Builds alongside or sisters with existing efforts of reuse exchange and salvage networks
- Organizes on the basis of knowledge sharing and skill building
- Forefronts labor and performativity in design processes

RESEARCH + PROPOSAL

Through a series of workshops, my project curates an exhibition of experimental models/prototypes that demonstrate the outcome of community organization to remove architectural scrap from local waste networks while playfully imagining (de)construction methods that embrace a future destined for disassembly.



II.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

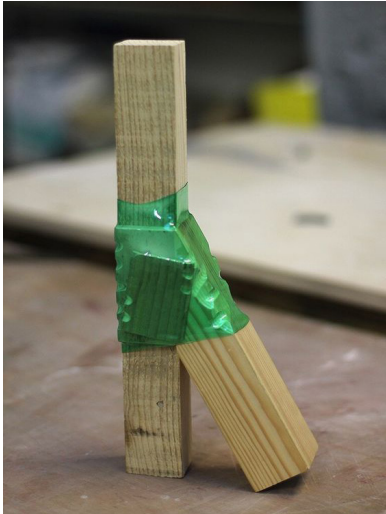


Online Workshop Guide



WAYS TO THINK ABOUT BINDING

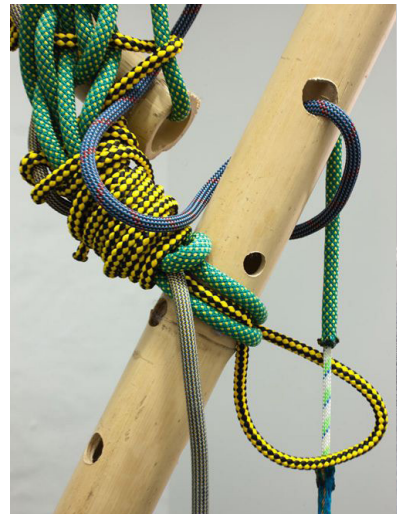
To fit



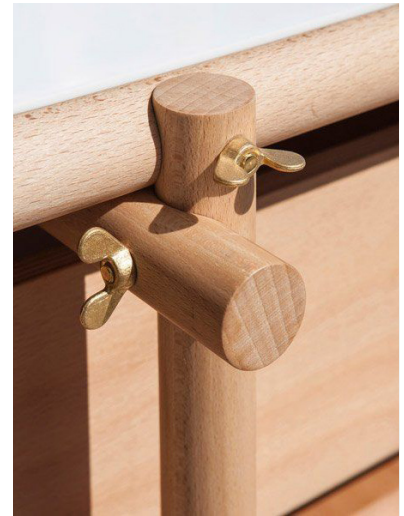
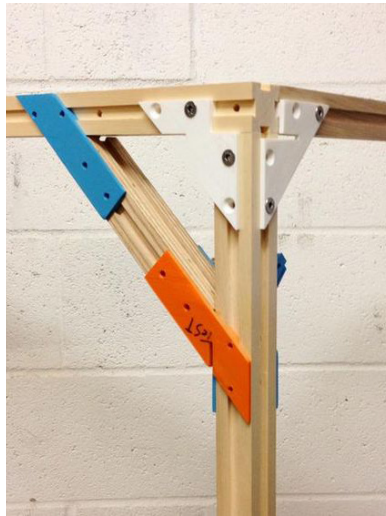
To wrap



To thread



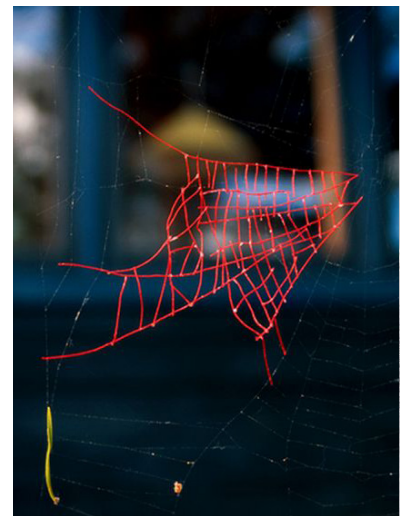
To embrace



To link



To mend



III.

WARM UP ACTIVITY

Time: 10 min

Select two different materials and “bind” them using string.



iv.

EXERCISE 1

Time: 30 min

Form groups of 2-3. Then, choose a combination of materials (i.e. wood and fabric) and a type of connection method (i.e. hooks). Work together to experiment with different “binding” techniques.

As a team, present your prototypes/models and provide a short reflection on the creative process (challenges, accomplishments, etc.)

HINT: Plan and document your assemblies through sketching!



v.

DOCUMENT

Time: 5 min

Photograph your work! Any photos taken on personal devices can be uploaded to the shared Google Drive Folder named “Photos_041124.”



Upload Here!

DRAW YOUR PROTOTYPES

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed black border, intended for drawing prototypes. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the space below the title.

REFLECTION

Respond to any of the following questions:

1. How was the workshop? Did anything about the experience surprise, frustrate, or challenge you?

2. What did you set out to do? What were the outcomes?

3. Did you utilize or share any personal strengths during the workshop? Did you learn something new?

4. What are some thoughts or hopes you have for waste, the construction industry, and for architects and designers?

5. What are some lingering questions you have? How can you seek answers?

Other notes:

Sistered beams and other sisterings: a partial ongoing glossary

Cynthia Deng, Elif Erez
 Transient Solidarity
 Volume 8, Issue 03
 December 2, 2022

1. Sistered beams

A term used in construction, and specifically in the repair and adaptation of existing structures, 'sistering' refers to the addition of extra material to reinforce an existing, damaged structural member.¹ The added material is referred to as the 'sister' of the original member, as in "sister stud" or "sister beam". Sistering involves two or more 'sistered' parts being in intimate relation, and is contingent upon their interdependence—they are stronger with one another.

Sistering is structural interdependence with what already exists—it opens up sites for new relationships in place, without wholesale replacing or starting anew.

2. Sistered telephone poles



3. The Three Sisters

In much of Turtle Island, planting the Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash—together is a common Indigenous agricultural practice. Their relationships with each other are a perfect case of mutual support and interdependence: corn becomes the scaffold that the beans use to grow and climb vertically; beans become the subterranean negotiators as nitrogen fixers and nutrient converters within the soil, and squash becomes the sprawling guard as their leaves' shade retains soil moisture and prevents weed growth.

Sistering is close partnership wherein individuals' unique traits build off of each other to create something greater for an entire ecological community—it imagines abundance through deep collaboration.

4. "I Am Your Sister"

Audre Lorde wrote an action-oriented pamphlet entitled *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities*², directed at non-lesbian Black women to address heterosexism and homophobia, to collectively build towards mutual survival. Her directives resonate for relationship-building: "we have many different faces, and we do not have to become each other in order to work together."³ The mutual stretching across differences (of identity, of opinion) implies that all parties commit to internal and interpersonal work.

Sistering acts on core connections between individuals in spite of differences, and recognizes those very differences as a key source of strength—it posits the gaps between us as wellsprings of future power.

5. To sister

Toni Cade Bambara wrote "... Sisters of the yam Sisters of the rice Sisters of the corn Sisters of the plantain... And we're all on the line. Now that we've begun to break the silence and begun to break through the diabolically erected barriers and can hear each other and see each other, we can sit down with trust and break bread together. Rise up and break our chains as well."⁴

As Bambara taught, "sister is a verb."⁵

6. Sister cities

"Sister cities" are cities that are geographically distinct, yet form an intentional social and commercial partnership. Sister cities hold the potential to be more if they began to share other responsibilities that cities carry, like education, housing, healthcare, infrastructure.

Sistering creates place-to-place bonds of mutual aid—it holds the possibility of transcending borders and political boundaries.

7. Excerpt from "Notes on Sistering" by Lily Song⁶

"Sistering is an anti-supremacist, reparative design epistemology and methodology... Sistering proceeds by inviting, showing up, sharing and listening out. It is a series of call and response, pushing each other further and further with mutual challenges and affirmations..."

Sistering is a process and method of relationship-building and ongoing solidarity work, complete with the generative tensions and conflicts that come with creative interdependence.

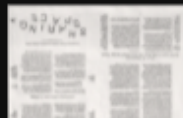
Outro

Sistering is characterized by difference (in age, in material make-up, or otherwise) yet also by relational continuity, constant give and take, and shared loads to collectively hold up a whole. Might these and other cases of sistering be a blueprint for solidarities and intentional interdependencies moving forward? These instances begin to open portals into possible futures.

Sistering is far from new. Worlds are being built from seeds, possibilities, experiments in sistering. This incomplete and ongoing glossary holds fragments of sisterings we're continuing to gather along our journey as designers, and we share it here as an invitation to recognize and lift up sistering in architecture.

1. Wiktionary contributors, "sister," Wiktionary, The Free Dictionary, <https://en.wiktionary.org/w/index.php?title=sister&oldid=66452912> (accessed May 2, 2022). ↵
2. Lorde, Audre. "I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities". Latham, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1985. part of the Freedom Organizing Series. ↵
3. Ibid, p. 5, 3 ↵
4. Moraga, Cherrie, Gloria Anzaldua, eds and Toni Cade Bambara. "Foreword." Essay. In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 2nd ed., xxx. Latham, NY: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1983. ↵
5. Bambara, Toni Cade. quote "Sister Is a Verb" (<https://brokenbeautiful.wordpress.com/2013/09/20/sister-is-a-verb-clarifications-from-the-sistorians/>). "Or as Toni Cade Bambara teaches us, via Aishah Shahidah Simmons "sister is a verb." (<https://www.alexispauline.com/now/2020/4/6/the-red-line>) ↵
6. Song, Lily. "Notes on Sistering". Essay. In *CoDesign Field Lab: Black Belt Study for the Green New Deal*. Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Destination Design School of Agricultural Estates. Accessed May 2, 2022. ↵

Transient Solidarity
Volume 8, Issue 03
December 2, 2022



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