Taking Stock of Our Belongings

Preface to *After Belonging: A Triennale In Residence, On Residence and the Ways We Stay in Transit*

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After Belonging: A Triennale In Residence, On Residence and the Ways We Stay in Transit engages with a pressing if complicated contemporary issue: how we might reconceive and reconfigure notions of belonging, or potentially move beyond such a concept today. Closely connected to traditional notions of selfhood, to questions of identity, and to structures of identification (social, cultural, sexual, religious, ethnic, racial, and political), as well as to forms of citizenship proper to the modern nation-state, belonging is a measure at once of inclusion and of exclusion. Notions of belonging have become, however, increasingly complex, if not simply rendered outdated, by the structural ambivalences now at play within conventional demarcations—inside/outside, citizen/foreigner, fixed/transitory, here/there, access/foreclosure, shelter/exposure, us/them—at work within contemporary political, informatic, and geopolitical landscapes. In place of such binaries, new topologies are increasingly visible and many observers speak, instead, of structures and processes of "differential inclusion," "inclusive exclusion," and "exclusive inclusion," convolutions perhaps most evident in the status of migrant workers and refugee communities but also, as *After Belonging* insists, impacting forms of life across a much broader spectrum.[1]

At a current moment characterized by extensive human unsettlement—sometimes voluntary, sometimes not—and by the seemingly ever-more-exacerbated if also increasingly monitored and regulated circulation not only of people but also of goods and information, the semantics and the politics of belonging thus appear today as a heterogeneous and radically unstable field. We might even read this field as a battleground upon which transforming infrastructures and epistemologies both of modernity and of capitalist processes of globalization are struggling to take command. Such fluidity, movement, and communication are often celebrated as markers of increased freedoms under liberalism—and for some this is certainly the case. Circulation within this global milieu is not, however, simply liberatory: the increasingly mobile bodies, signs, objects, aesthetics, and economic and political paradigms are quickly reterritorialized within new forms of stasis, new hierarchies, new institutional frameworks, and new economic, political, and geopolitical formations. The contemporary landscape remains evidently marked by incessant forms of violence, inequity, discrimination, exclusion, securitization, militarism, and exploitation characteristic of neoliberal capital as it touches down unevenly within national contexts and across the planet. These forces too are mobile.

1 On "inclusive exclusion" and its inverse, see Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi, eds., *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (New York: Zone Books, 2009). On "differential inclusion" see Etienne Balibar, "Strangers as Enemies: Walls All over the World, and How to Tear Them Down," *Mondi Migranti*, no. 1 (January 2012): 7–25; and Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

Moreover, it is a world in which one's differential ability to cross a border or access time-sensitive information is for some a nuisance or inconvenience, while for others a matter of life or death. The ambivalences and instabilities of this contemporary landscape thus come with attendant risks, requiring ongoing scrutiny to render them visible and hence open to critique. But such fluidity can also be read as a precondition for what Michel Foucault has theorized as the structural reversibility of power, and even as opening onto possibilities of politically progressive revalencing, refunctioning, and redirection, at least in the right hands.[2]

It is with this sort of ethos in mind, and cognizant of the distinct and at times incommensurate subject positions that appear within this battleground, that *After Belonging* turns to interrogate the semantic instabilities and the potentialities inherent to tropes of "belonging," "belongings," "residence," "resident," "residency," and "shelter," along with those immanent to contemporary modes of living "in transit." The triennale does so not in order to celebrate the resilience of such terms or their capacity to harbor humanist values in the face of contemporary forms of uprooting, temporariness, and insecurity, let alone to "solve" such "problems" as such or to forge a nostalgic return to earlier, seemingly more stable or clear-cut definitions, valences, and options. Rather, eschewing the often-nationalist and identitarian logics inhering within traditional forms of belonging and residence, *After Belonging* asks, instead, how we might think them differently, recognizing the importance of speculating upon what else they might allow us to do. That is, while recognizing the complexity of the issues at stake, and the ethical minefields to which they give rise, this triennale continues to question how we might navigate within and operate upon this ambivalent terrain and its concomitantly unstable contexts *otherwise*.

After Belonging is not, however, just a triennale addressing tensions, aporias, and hierarchies born of capitalist globalization; it is an *architecture* triennale, an event seeking to address what architecture has to do with or say about such concerns, along with the social, subjective, economic, mediatic, and geopolitical regimes informing contemporary reconfigurations of belonging and residence and the artifacts that mediate those reconfigurations. The competition, exhibitions, residencies, objects, buildings, images, research, publications, encounters, exchanges, and events affiliated with the triennale thus come with disciplinary and professional stakes. Not in the normative sense: indeed, although the triennale's foci of investigation often veer away from Architecture (with a capital A) and from strategies seeking an autonomous domain for the discipline, we are also a long way from attempts to normalize architecture's relation to capitalist forces or commercial vernaculars familiar from the generation of *Learning From Las Vegas*.[3] But buildings, spaces, objects, and images—including vernacular ones—remain central to this enterprise, as does the possibility that architects have a certain expertise in decoding and deploying them.

2 On Michel Foucault's figure of the reversibility of power, see Michel Foucault, "Le Discours ne doit pas être pris comme..." (1976), cited by Arnold I. Davidson, "Introduction" in Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975–76*, translated by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003); Maurizio Lazzarato, "From Biopower to Biopolitics," *Tailoring Biotechnologies* 2, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2006): 17. See also Felicity D. Scott, "Taking Time," in *2000+: The Urgencies of Architectural Theory*, ed. James Graham (New York: Columbia GSAPP Books on Architecture): 86–197; and Felicity D. Scott, *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity, Architectures of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Zone Books, 2016).

3 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

Architecture, we might recall, has long enjoyed a privileged relation to historical notions of belonging—establishing material, formal, and organizational protocols for, as well as visual and representational paradigms of, enclosure, protection, cultural identity, and place; it has long served to mediate between what is inside and what is outside. The residence and resident have also remained privileged figures of settlement and claims to belonging. While architecture remains important to mediating boundaries, identities, and desires, it is not just a technology to put people in their place or to cement the identity of places and populations. As I have argued in *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency,* architecture also serves as a less stable mechanism of governance and biopolitical regulation in modernity, as a vehicle of environmental and subjective conditioning, including through the circulation of bodies, information, and goods.

Such programmatic dimensions of architecture are also not necessarily fixed, but remain subject to strategic and tactical rethinking. Moreover, as I have underscored on many occasions, architecture triennales and biennales have often served as important institutional platforms for technological, aesthetic, and political experimentation, offering occasions or testing grounds for architecture to address gaps or limits within the field, in order to engage new questions in a manner not always so easily undertaken in the professional domain.[4] At once slightly removed or suspended from the realpolitik of professional life, while remaining all too central to architecture's capacity to launch other possible futures or future imaginaries, triennales—like exhibitions more generally, along with magazines and research programs—thus provide occasions both to take stock and to invent. This one is no exception and the organizers have identified five key thematics to interrogate: Technologies for a Life in Transit, Borders Elsewhere, Furnishing After Belonging, Markets and Territories of the Global Home, and Sheltering Temporariness. What, the triennale asks through each of these lenses, have architecture and design had to say about the construction of more democratic forms of residence or belonging, *after belonging,* and what else might they have to offer? How might designers and writers be called upon to reinvent tools, concepts, processes, practices, and sites in order to participate in such an undertaking?

4 This is an important claim at the heart of the program in Critical, Curatorial, and Conceptual Practices in Architecture (CCCP), that I founded within Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation in 2008 and now co-direct with Mark Wasiuta. See Felicity D. Scott, "Operating Platforms," *Log 20* (October 2010): 65–69.

After Belonging is not just any architecture triennale but the *Oslo* Architecture Triennale; it is hosted in a European city that, like many others today, is experiencing the ongoing effects of capitalist globalization, amongst which is an increased influx of migrants and refugees and with it, unfortunately, a backlash of rising nationalism and xenophobia often taking the form of anti-Islamic sentiment. This situation is certainly not unique to Norway, nor does it define Oslo; but in the face of such pressures, *After Belonging* recognizes that to ask questions from within and about Europe today, it is important to try to think from the dual perspective of local and global arenas, paying attention to distinctions and to interconnections between scales and locales. Hence, the associated residencies are located not only in Oslo and other border spaces and transnational neighborhoods in Norway, but also in equally complex

sites in North America, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and southern Europe—participants likewise deriving from multiple contexts and straddling multiple borders—all while seeking to understanding how global formations of power and governance touch down in very specific ways.

At a historical moment characterized (once again) by seemingly ever-increasing deracination, on the one hand, and by the anachronistic return of nationalisms, on the other, and with architecture ever-more integrated into the machinations of global capital driving this chiasmatic condition, it seems a particularly important time to revisit the concept of "belonging." Architecture might even contribute to another pressing question, one posed by Judith Butler in a conversation with Gayatri Spivak and one that has haunted my own work: "Are there modes of belonging that can be rigorously non-nationalist?"[5] In addition to having a privileged relation to historical notions of belonging, as suggested above, architecture has often served as a tool of nationalism, helping to cement claims to belonging, whether acting as a means of claiming an authentic relation (or rights) to a place, or as a means of conferring a particular identity. The conception of an architecture proper to a particular place or people—wherein consistency and identity arise from climatic conditions, local materials, cultural patterns, or even racial or ethnic origins—is precisely what, within traditional accounts of the field, facilitated one's ability to identify "German architecture," "French architecture," "Italian architecture," or "Norwegian architecture," along with "American architecture," "Japanese architecture," or the architecture of the Dogon, etc.[6] But in a world so thoroughly reorganized by transit and communication, such claims on behalf of specific populations are not always necessarily so desirable, even potentially acting as a form of exclusion. "[T]he great 'accomplishment,' we might say, of nationalism as a distinctly modern form of political and cultural identity," Aamir Mufti reminds us, "is not that it is a great settling of peoples—'*this* place for *this* people.' Rather its distinguishing mark historically has been precisely that it makes large numbers of people eminently unsettled."[7] Like Butler, Mufti is recalling the legacy of the brutal dispossessions of the twentieth century. Indeed, both are avowedly indebted to Hannah Arendt's seminal philosophical reading of the collapse of the "old trinity of state-people-territory, which still formed the basis of European organization and political civilization," as evident in the aftermath of the breakup of Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire after World War I but even more violently so by the denationalization and mass displacement and murder of minority populations under Nazi rule in wartime Europe.[8] Whether we think of interwar, wartime, or postwar Europe, or "state-people-territory," continues to haunt any conception of belonging and of nationalism in the present, including the unsettling that is the subject of *After Belonging*.

Architecture has, of course, questioned this nexus and its unsettling of people and boundaries on earlier occasions, not only due to war but also in relation to technological and other geopolitical transformations. For instance, in 1926, Hannes Meyer claimed mobility to be central to the "New World." "Ford and Rolls-Royce burst the confines of the city center, nullify distance, and efface the boundaries between city and countryside," he announced. "Airplanes glide through the air: 'Fokker' and 'Farman' increase our mobility

5 This is the question Judith Butler distills from Arendt's important work on totalitarianism. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Judith Butler, *Who Sings the Nation-State?: Language, Politics, Belonging* (London: Seagull Books, 2007), 49. Central here is also the work of Etienne Balibar on questions of territory and citizenship. See, for instance, *Balibar, We, The People of Europe?:Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. James Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004);and Balibar, "Europe as Borderland," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009): 190–215.

6 On such nationalist claims see Meyer Schapiro, "Race, Nationality and Art," *Art Front* (March 2, 1936): 10–12. See also Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007).

7 Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 13.

8 Hannah Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 376.

and distance us from earth." Beyond automobiles and warplanes, dwellings too, Meyer noted enthusiastically, exhibited liberating possibilities via a mobility that was "disrespectful of national borders." "Our dwellings," he explained, "become more mobile than ever: mass apartment blocks, sleeping cars, residential yachts, and the Transatlantique undermine the local concept of the homeland. The fatherland fades away. We learn Esperanto. *We become citizens of the world.*"[9] In 1955, Walter Gropius, too, acknowledged the "sweeping transformation of human life" brought about by advancements in communication—automobiles, planes, radio, film, gramophones, x-ray technology, and telephones—a transformation of the world, in his assessment, from static, "seemingly unshakable" conceptions to those of "incessant transmutation."[10] To him, however, this condition led to a "perilous atomizing effect on the social coherence of the community," nowhere more apparent than in the US with the "baffling spectacle of a nation whose citizens are, voluntarily or involuntarily, so much on the move."[11] Designers, it seemed to Gropius, were thus faced with the task of re-integrating that atomized world into an organic whole or "true synthesis" he deemed "total architecture."[12] Members of a postwar generation, Alison and Peter Smithson responded instead by embracing that atomization. "Mobility has become the characteristic of *our* period," they announced. "Social and physical mobility, the feeling of a certain sort of freedom, is one of the things that keeps our society together. ...Mobility is the key both socially and organizationally to town planning, for mobility is not only concerned with roads, but with the whole concept of a mobile, fragmented community."[13] We could go on....

In addressing technological infrastructures and geographical displacements, *After Belonging* seeks no such universalism, integration, or celebration of mobility as such, even if it hopes to transform architecture's relation to conditions of deracination. The new modes of belonging and residence this triennale interrogates also remain distinct from later twentieth century attempts to restore to architecture the markings of a "particular place" or to idealize "locally inflected culture" in the face of a universalized paradigm of civilization: attempts such as critical regionalism.[14] *After Belonging* does not—it seems to me—seek return to a more authentic or static way of living or of belonging to the land (let alone to a region or nation), but continues to ask how architecture and design objects and images might serve as technologies to dwell while adrift within a condition of territorial insecurity.[15] Here we might recall Bruce Robbins formulation from *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation,* his suggestion that forms of belonging that emerge in the wake of geographical displacements are complex and multiple. Such cosmopolitanism, however, is no longer "understood as a fundamental devotion to the interests of humanity as a whole," as transcending difference or enmity.[16] "To embrace this [complex and multiple] style of residence on earth," he argues moreover, offering us an important lesson, "means repudiating the romantic localism of a certain portion of the left, which feels it must counter capitalist globalization with a strongly rooted and exclusive sort of belonging."[17] Turning to readings of cosmopolitanism as particular rather than universal, and as located (albeit not in a simple sense) and embodied, even at times paradoxically "vernacular," Robbins writes, "instead of an ideal of

9 Hannes Meyer, "The New World," (1926) trans. Don Reneau, in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, et al., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 446. On Meyer's internationalism see Peter Galison, "Aufbau/Bauhaus: Logical Positivism and Architectural Modernism," *Critical Inquiry* 16 (1990): 709–752.

10 Walter Gropius, "Scope of Total Architecture," in *Scope of Total Architecture: A New Way of Life, World Perspectives* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), 169.

11 Ibid., 172.

12 Ibid., 181.

13 Reprinted from *Uppercase*, in Alison Smithson, ed., *Team 10 Primer* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), 51. The entire section of the *Team 10 Primer* dedicated to "Urban infra-structure" addressed this increase in mobility and its implications for contemporary architecture.

14 See Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points Towards an Architecture of Resistance," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), 16–30; and the essay from which Frampton derived the term, cited in the former as Alex Tzonis and Liliane [sic] Lefaivre, "The Grid and the Pathway: An Introduction to the Work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis," *Architecture in Greece* 15 (1981): 178. See also Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, "Critical Regionalism," in *The Critical Landscape*, ed. Michael Speaks (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1996), 126–147. For a critique of this notion see Alan Colquhoun, "The Concept of Regionalism," in *Postcolonial Space(s)*, ed. Gülsüm Badyar Nalbantonglu and Wong Chong Thai (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 13–24.

detachment, actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re) attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance."[18] Faced with a "life in transit," a life in which one would never return home, strictly speaking, a life in which architecture and design become the occasion for "sheltering temporariness" and accumulating, at least temporarily, mediating devices for new forms of life, the triennale suggests that architects might participate in forging what I call new cartographies of dwelling, even new cartographies of drift for the twentieth century.[19]

Finally, *After Belonging* is not just the Oslo Architecture Triennale: it is the *2016* Oslo Architecture Triennale, and its reception is necessarily marked by this moment. The theme was conceived prior to the moment when Western media turned their attention to the wave of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many countries in Africa, along with other places torn apart by war, conflict, and occupation, as well as by economic and environmental catastrophes, to name only part of a litany of disaster. With the refugee crisis no longer able to be regarded as a Third World "problem," but more evidently a European one, such questions are currently at the forefront of popular and architectural discussions in the West. To be clear, such precarity and the conditions driving this mass migration are hardly new, as has been all too evident to those in other parts of the world; and, as noted above, Europe itself was the site of massive human displacement caused by the two World Wars and, in turn, by the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. But this recent increase in visibility has cast a new spotlight on a long-standing discussion, an important visibility but not necessarily one always accompanied by subjecting architecture's involvement to adequate scrutiny. One is tempted, in this regard, to read *After Belonging* as an implicit critique of the rising professional status and attention paid to designers of "emergency architecture," a response to humanitarian emergencies that is typically assumed to be architecture's most appropriate role. The Pritzker prize committee has effectively institutionalized "the architecture of emergency" as a new norm, granting consecutive prizes to Shigeru Ban and Alejandro Aravena; *Foreign Policy* magazine even anointing Ban as "architecture's first responder." Such a response, however, raises the question of just how the discipline might relate to emergencies born, at least in part, of the military, territorial, and environmental consequences of the expansionist logics of capitalism.

Emergency shelters are often conceived as "solutions" to a design problem, that of providing low-cost, easily-transportable, rapidly-deployable, supposedly-temporary housing for those displaced or rendered homeless due to states of emergency. But such technologies to "shelter temporariness"—to offer shelter without residence—can be read, in turn, as imbricated within a set of economic, political, geopolitical, and policy decisions that are often understudied. Something as apparently simple as a shelter enters into the scene of humanitarian aid in a complex way, whether knowingly or not. Without adequate understanding of the political factors at play, or even sometimes assuming that such factors remain outside the purview of a specific

15 I am drawing here from my work on émigré architect Bernard Rudofsky. See Felicity D Scott, "Not at Home," in *Émigré Design Cultures*, ed. Elana Shapira (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017). In press.

16 Bruce Robbins, "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. Bruce Robbins and Pheng Cheah (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 1.

17 Ibid., 3. As Robbins insisted, "The devastation covered over by complacent talk of globalization is of course very real. But precisely because it is real, we cannot be content to set against it only the childish reassurance of belonging to "a" place. The indefinite article is insufficient. Yes, we are connected to the earth—but not to "a" place on it, simple and self-evident as the surroundings we see when we open our eyes. We are connected to all sorts of places."

18 Ibid. 3.

19 I am thinking here of my unpublished work on Bernard Rudofsky. See also Felicity D. Scott, *Disorientation: Bernard Rudofsky in the Empire of Signs* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, Critical Spatial Practice series, 2016).

field of expertise (such as architecture), such technocratic approaches remain blind to and can even obfuscate the political dimensions of a crisis.[20] Moreover, beyond remaining blind while all too proximate to extant techniques of power, in the worst cases these approaches might even perpetuate violence. I am thinking here of the important scholarship on the "humanitarian paradox," wherein forms of aid potentially serve (whether inadvertently or cynically) to exacerbate, perpetuate, or even institutionalize and normalize process of dispossession. In other words, shelter, too, can have counterproductive effects.[21] This is not to say that those rendered homeless should not be afforded shelter from the elements and a place to reside, nor that improving such technologies cannot at times be beneficial. Rather, the intention is to underscore the importance of paying attention to the larger apparatus within which such shelter operates, and also to interrogate other ways such a shelter might function, for better or worse. Some emergency shelters resonate less as successful design solutions to a crisis than as symptomatic and visible markers of misery and insecurity that, wittingly or unwittingly, inscribe the inhabitants not as citizens or individuals but as a misfortunate lot, a population reduced to being in need of humanitarian aid, mere elements of a humanitarian catastrophe. In other words, the structures can speak also of exposure to a radical insecurity and the ways in which subjects circulate differentially within a larger apparatus of power.

After Belonging actively invokes the language of crisis, precarity, intervention, and asylum, and, in so doing, recognizes the sense of urgency or even the emergencies at hand to which architects should respond, and to which architecture might indeed have something important to contribute. Yet this triennale enters into such a playing field not with a ready prescription for design of shelters but—following in the footsteps of other architectural activists, researchers, and scholars—with a productive uncertainty and a critical mode of questioning just how, when, where, or through what tools and expertise architecture should act.[22] Architecture, that is, can offer something beyond more or better "first responders" and designs for emergency shelters, especially when functional directives are expanded to unsettle political, semiotic, and regulatory domains. Architecture's priorities might even include the construction of platforms through which to think less reactively and more critically or extensively about this nexus of architecture and emergency. The answer, to reiterate, may not always lie in more affordable, efficient, or even pleasing or "humane" forms of minimal shelter. In some situations, the most miserable looking camp is the least permanent one, while in others a more desirable environment is precisely what is needed to bring political questions to the foreground. So we are not offered a simple utopianism, nor a classical reformist attitude or claims to radicalism. Rather, the ambition is to advance a strategic hope, suggesting that architecture might intervene not *only* by offering design "solutions"—although it might, of course, continue to do that, the question being who decides and what effects such decisions might have—but through forging new concepts, tools, and practices for rendering the contours of emergent techniques of power visible and contestable.

20 For important scholarship on the politics of humanitarian aid in architecture, see Manuel Herz, ed. *From Camp to City: The Refugee Camps of the Western Sahara* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2012); and Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (London and New York: Verso, 2011).

21 In addition to Herz and Weizman noted above, see, for instance: David Rieff, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002); Rony Brauman, "Learning from Dilemmas (Interview with Rony Brauman)," in Michel Feher, ed. *Nongovernmental Politics* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 131–147; and Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, eds., *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

22 See, for instance, the work of Eyal Weizman, Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petit, Laura Kurgan, and Keller Easterling.

Having suggested that conventional notions of belonging might be obsolescent, *After Belonging* does not attend only to those individuals and populations most evidently cast as not-belonging or other—such as migrants and refugees. Rather, it reads these quintessential figures of displacement as contemporaneous with, if distinct from, other mobile or precarious subjects—tourists, transient workers, students, strangers, foreigners, even citizens. More specifically, *After Belonging* takes the knowing risk of asking if and how we might think about these populations together, as all subjected to an interconnected global phenomenon, albeit in different ways. This is not to overlook historical and political specificities or the differential abilities of migrants and refugees to cross borders or find a place to reside and to work. (Residence and labor often go hand in hand).[23] At stake is recognizing how and when particularities and identifications surface to make political claims or how they are created to otherwise interrupt capitalist abstractions or render its machinations visible. The wager, that is, is that the more evidently violent forms of dispossession might be productively thought about alongside other types of insecurity impacting contemporary forms of residence "in transit."

An important objective, then, is to be able to recognize forces informing the new subjectivities emerging, as Paolo Virno suggests, within a condition of "belonging to unstable contexts."[24] In "The Ambivalence of Disenchantment" Virno offers us one of the most forceful readings of the persistence of divergent senses of belonging within a contemporary post-Fordist condition dominated by information technologies and the forms of life it attempts to sponsor. He recognizes a tactical shift at play in the desire for "belonging as such," even in a paradoxical condition of "belonging to uprooting."

> What kind of belonging could I mean, after having unrelentingly insisted upon the unexpected absence of particular and credible "roots"? True, one no longer "belongs" to a particular role, tradition, or political party. Calls for "participation" and for a "project" have faded. And yet alienation, far from eliminating the feeling of belonging, empowers it. The impossibility of securing ourselves within any durable context disproportionately increases our adherence to the most fragile instances of the "here and now." What is dazzlingly clear is finally *belonging as such*, no longer qualified by a determinate belonging "to something." Rather, the feeling of belonging has become directly proportional to the lack of a privileged and protective "to which" to belong.[25]

Virno is not simply lamenting this turn but recognizes in its degree zero, or refusal of nostalgia for a "rooted" identity, a type of dissident potential that insists on forging forms of life *after belonging*.

After Belonging asks, from a different perspective, what forms our belongings now take in the social, material, and geopolitical sense, inviting architects and designers to think differently about belonging and belongings while insisting that architectural expertise can be productively brought to bear on examining and designing objects, places, images, trajectories, processes, and protocols, as well as in understanding subjective and territorial formations that pertain to them. To this end, the exhibition and this publication offer an important catalog or contemporary archive of the ways artifacts and environments "shelter" or

23 With this type of mobility we find ourselves at questions of the distribution of labor and shifting geographies and modalities of work, reminding us, as Etienne Balibar and Sandro Mezzadra have argued, that borders are rarely simply open or closed but operate as mechanisms of regulation and of differential distribution. See Balibar, "Strangers as Enemies," 20.

24 Paulo Virno, "The Ambivalence of Disenchantment," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paulo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 21.

25 Ibid. 32.

otherwise mediate conditions of mobility and new forms of belonging "after belonging" within a contemporary "regime of circulation," whether for worse or, potentially, for better.

When *After Belonging* interrogates how architecture might respond to a historical condition *after belonging* (in the conventional sense, for belongings evidently persist), a condition in which we are increasingly called upon, as the curators put it, to "manage our belongings" in the social, material, technical, legal, proprietary, economic, and psychological domains, they point to an important fact. Architecture—as a discourse, a discipline, and a profession—is already and always imbricated within the multifaceted apparatus of capital driving the new patterns of migration, travel, and stasis with which I began. Beyond conceiving of architecture as the provision of buildings, spaces, or shelter as such, that is, the discipline has been and remains proximate to, and at times informs, technologies, markets, laws, policies, information, goods, media, and other forms of regulation and governance. It is from such an expanded conception of the discipline, one that I share, that After Belonging Agency invited participants to collaborate on this project of thinking belonging otherwise, manifesting the desire for identifying and forging practices that remain tactically out of sync with the violence born of neoliberal capital. Inviting collaborators to participate in this venture, *After Belonging* understands that such dissidence is not always spontaneous but has to be continuously sponsored, even at times actively constructed, both in relation to architecture as a discipline and in relation to the world. This catalog, like the exhibition and events it accompanies and the research it documents, is testament to the importance of *After Belonging*'s critical and curatorial project in this regard, providing evidence of the many insights and openings that such invitations and provocations can elicit.