

Will people in the future look back and think we did a good job?

Last week, during our seminar, we had a debate about the topic of whether or not people in the future, *will thank us for the decisions we are making today*. I believe, the future holds a mirror to the decisions we make today, particularly in the realms of environmental stewardship and technological innovation. Whether or not people in the future will thank us relies on the paths we choose now.



Fig 1 :Polluted, Destroyed London, source: londontopia.net

On the environmental front, our decisions regarding sustainability, conservation, and climate change mitigation will undoubtedly shape the world our descendants inherit. If we prioritize renewable energy, adopt eco-friendly practices, and implement policies that safeguard the planet, future generations may express gratitude for our foresight. At the same time, a failure to address environmental challenges could elicit reproach, as they grapple with the consequences of our inaction. Amongst the plethora of technological inventions such as solar panels, electric cars, wind mills, we have also been greedy and we have exploited our planet's resources for our own good, without considering the long-term highly and irreversible detrimental effects.

It goes without saying that the vast majority is interested in

finding ways in which we can help the Planet. There are multiple projects around the Globe aimed at fighting climate change and preserving the flora and fauna. One particular example that stands out to me in this regard is the Great Green Wall, which is a massive initiative aimed at combating desertification, land degradation, and climate change in the Sahel region of Africa. The Sahel is a semi-arid region stretching across the continent, just south of the Sahara Desert. The initiative involves the planting of a wall of trees and the implementation of sustainable land management practices to restore degraded land, promote biodiversity, and improve the livelihoods of local communities. Whilst projects like these are incredibly helpful, they tend to be enclosed in terms of popularity or influence. Although change can start from the smallest initiative, I find it that our current biggest issue is the fact that most governments are not willing to make the radical changes that are so desperately needed. There are constant talks about these matters amongst officials, such as the COP26 in Glasgow, where brilliant ideas were presented, yet little improvement or actual tangible, practical, not just theoretical, change has been done in the mean time.

Above all, the gratitude we receive from future generations depends on our ability to balance progress with responsibility. If we act with wisdom, empathy, and a long-term perspective, there's a higher likelihood that people in the future will thank us for the decisions we make today. It is a call to embrace a legacy of mindful choices that consider the well-being of both the planet and its inhabitants. Just as presented in the photos, the outcome of our future can be abominable or flourishing and bountiful.

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Fig 2 : Vibrant, Nature Focused London , source: propertyupdate.com.au



Anthropocene- in the context of architecture

I have heard the term "**Anthropocene**" on various occasions before, but I have never really took the time to understand its ramifications, especially when it comes to the field of architecture , which I am familiar with. Upon my research, I have discovered how essential it is to be mindful of the Anthropocene at all times, in regards to all projects, no matter how ambitious.

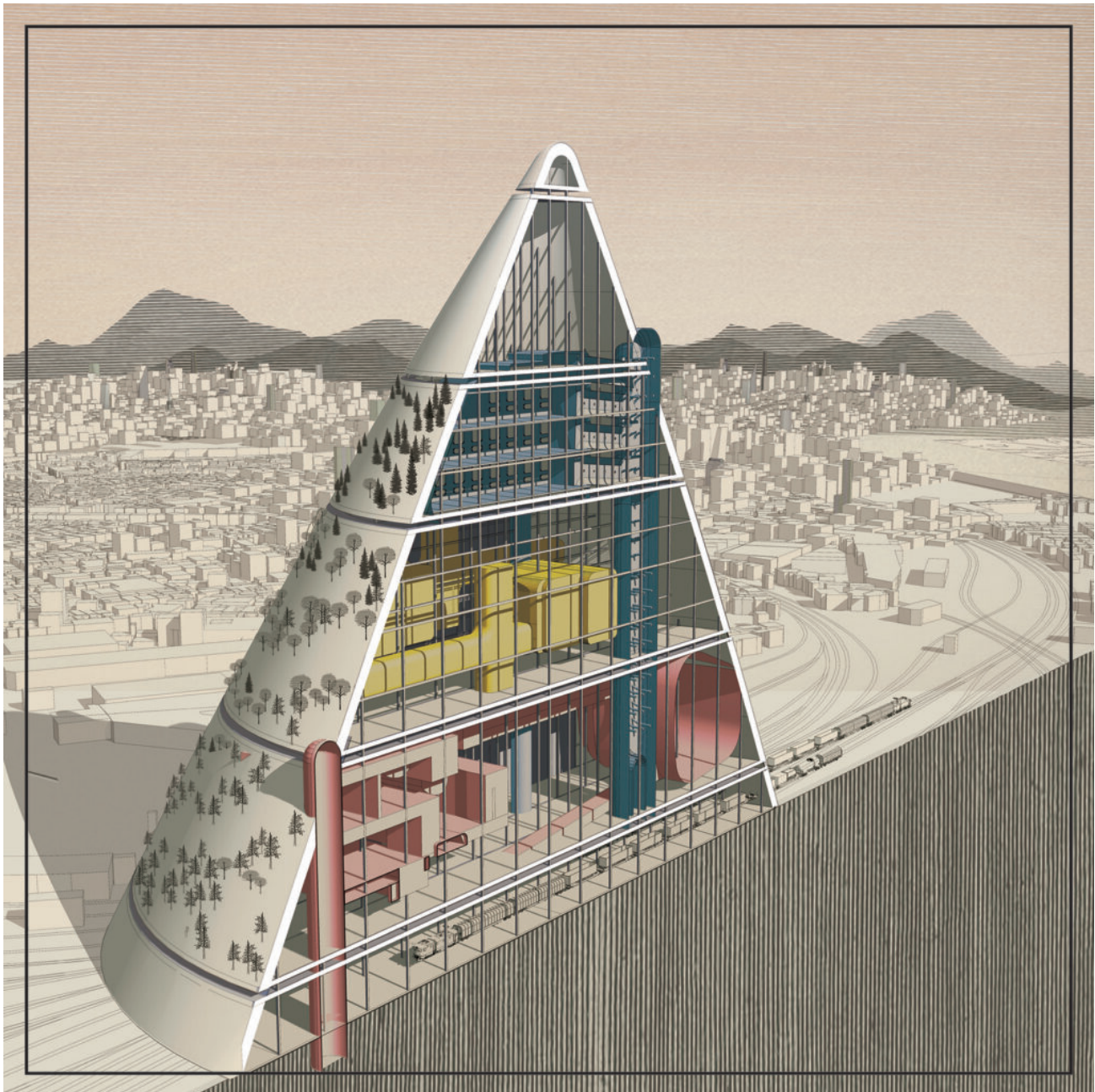


Fig 1. (averyreview.com) – architecture blending in with the environment

First of all, the Anthropocene is a geological era characterized by the significant and lasting impact of human activities on Earth's geology and ecosystems. In the context of architecture, the Anthropocene creates both challenges and opportunities.

Architects and urban planners are increasingly recognizing the need to design and construct in ways that are more sustainable and resilient, considering the environmental consequences of human activities. This involves rethinking traditional design practices, materials, and construction methods to minimize the ecological footprint of buildings and infrastructure.

Additionally, the Anthropocene has prompted architects to address issues such as climate change, resources and biodiversity loss in their designs. Concepts like green architecture, sustainable design, and the integration of renewable energy sources have gained prominence as ways to diminish the negative impacts of human development on the planet.

Furthermore, architects and designers are exploring ways to adapt existing structures to changing environmental conditions and to design buildings that can withstand the challenges posed by climate change. This might include considerations for rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other consequences of human-induced environmental changes.

To conclude, the Anthropocene has influenced architecture by emphasizing the importance of sustainability and environmental responsibility in the design and construction of buildings and urban spaces. Architects and designers play a crucial role in shaping a built environment that not only meets human needs but also contributes to the health and well-being of the planet.

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Falling in love with plastic all over again?

Plastic. One of the most used materials of all time. The widespread use of plastic began in the early *20th century*, marking a revolutionary shift in material culture. .Plastics gained popularity due to their versatility, durability, and cost-effectiveness. The production of plastics escalated quickly during World War two as a result of production of military equipment and scarcity of traditional materials.

Initially celebrated for its convenience and adaptability, the unintended environmental consequences of plastic have since emerged as a significant global concern. Globally, the popular opinion went from adoration to hatred regarding



plastic, in a matter of a few decades. We have come to the realisation that as efficient as this material is for humans , it is incredibly detrimental for the planet. Thus, we collectively came up with ways of combating the damage we have done. Nowadays, there are a plethora of alternatives for plastic, that we can incorporate into our daily lives. Yet, it

still does not seem to be enough. Perhaps we need to reanalyse the problem instead of ignoring it. Perhaps we need to start being ecstatic about plastic again. I know, that sounds rather contradictory to all the downsides plastic is known for, but maybe, if we were to find ways of reutilising the already existing plastic, there would be no need for getting rid of it. Some ways in which we could make plastic resonate with the environmental movement would be choosing durable products, using recycled plastics, or the easiest method in my opinion, upcycling and repurposing. I remember seeing a really ingenious idea a few weeks ago, which implied turning bottles into pots for a vertical , hanging garden.

To conclude, I find it that since we have such a long and tumultuous relationship with plastic, we should keep striving to find ways of efficiently, wisely and non-wastefully encapsulating it into our daily habits.

Sources:

Fig1: www.trendhunter.com- Sustainable Skincare Bottles

Fig2: www.packageintegrity.com

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Materialism

I found this week's topic really interesting as it was something I wasn't entirely familiar with or ever properly understood. The lecture and the seminar truly opened my eyes to this rather complex concept. **Jane Bennett** explains it best in the book "**Vibrant Matter**", which encapsulates a deep dive into the idea of vital materialism. Basically, the point of

the book is to prove that inanimate things around us, such as objects all have a life of their own, even a kind of will. When we develop an emotional attachment to a certain object, we give it life and charge it with memories. For example, when we look at the way little kids treat their toys, it is almost as if the toys are alive and have moods and personalities. Another great example that I remember from the seminar, are organs. Technically we do not perceive them as alive beings, but together they help humans be alive. Therefore, the concept of materialism is a thought provoking one and it left me with a different perspective on the world around me and the objects I interact with on a daily basis. As a future interior designer or architect, working with objects and inanimate elements will represent 90 percent of my time, thus, learning to properly understand and take care of them is quintessential.

The philosophical concept of materialism, in a broad sense, refers to the belief that the physical or material world is the fundamental reality, and everything, including thoughts, consciousness, and ideas, can be explained in terms of physical matter. Inherently, interior design encapsulates this very concept. Objects and things, materials and textures can convey a feeling, can touch a certain sensitive cord. Together, they help create an atmosphere, without directly saying what the atmosphere is.

This ideology is a daring one, and although most people would disagree with it, it is incredibly thought provoking to analyse and form an opinion. I would not say I have completely leaned into materialism, but reading more about it has led to a change in the way I perceive things around me and the way I interact with them on a daily basis.

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fig1- Vibrant Matter book- www.dukeupress.edu

fig2- Still Life Painting-www.artfinder.com

