

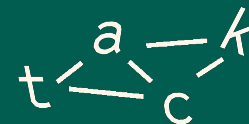
Understanding Situated Tacit Knowledge through Southern Urbanist architectural practice approaches

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Teaching Module 8



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 860413.



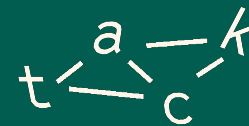
Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

Module Aims

- To introduce the theory of Situated Knowledge within architectural design research
- To examine how this tacit understanding can be applied to architectural design research methods within urban contexts
- To identify methods of 'situating tacit knowledge' through a Southern Urbanist lens
- To engage with this method through two conceptions of 'situated tacit' architectural design research:
 - The positionality of a 'situated' researcher
 - Critical applications of this understanding in urban contexts



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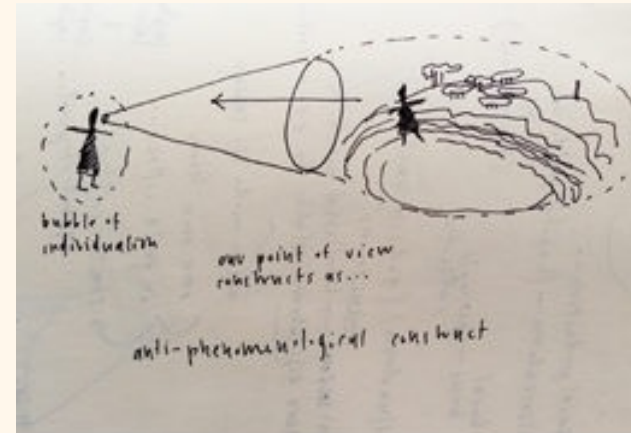
Situating Knowledge

“But, of course, that view of **infinite vision** is an **illusion**, a god trick...”

(Haraway, 1988, p.582)

“ ...**Feminist** objectivity is about **limited location** and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It **allows us** to become **answerable** for what we **learn** how to see. “

(Haraway, 1988, p.583)

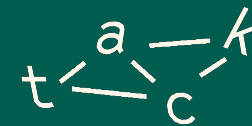


DONNA HARAWAY
Situated Knowledges:
The Science Question
in Feminism and the
Privilege of
Partial Perspective

Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” in *Feminist Studies*, Vol 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1988).



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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A Situating Knowledge

What is Situated Knowledge?

- Knowledge which is **qualitative, partial, embodied** (i.e. not impartial, disembodied, quantitative 'objectivity')
- Recognises the **multiplicity of perspectives** as producers of person/site/spatial specificity (positionality)
- Addresses implicit **asymmetric** social/spatial/cultural **power relations** (e.g. gender, sexuality, race, ableism, socio-economic, environmental disadvantage)

How does it align with Tacit Knowledge?

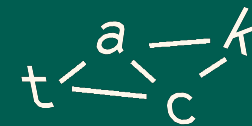
- A user of situated knowledge will **make explicit** the implicit architectural, urban, social, economic, cultural and political characteristics that define the researcher and the object of study
- The study will recognise the specific **underlying** social, historical and cultural **status** of their chosen objects/people/sites of study



My Spatial Phrase Book: A situated translation tool for Southern African socio-technical spatial practice (Bennett, 2022).



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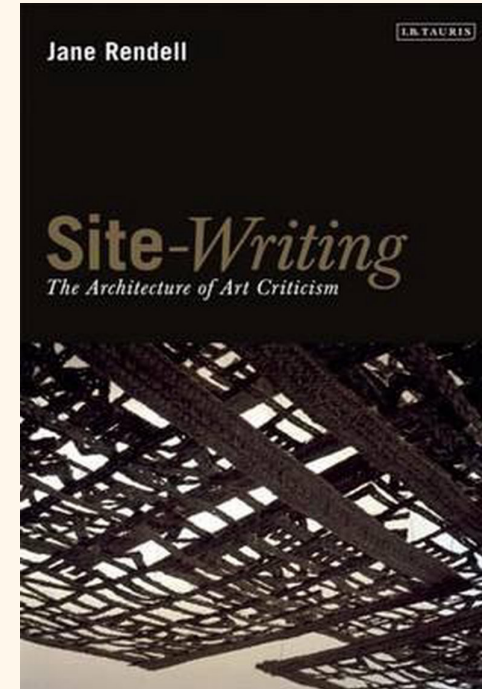
A Situated Architectural Approach

“It is here that site-writing is probably best situated, suggesting as it does, that conducting **urban research through writing** offers more than analysis and description. Rather by working with the **complexities** offered by overlaying critical responses to sites through the **interlocking** matrix of positionality, spatiality, subjectivity and textuality, writing can operate as a form of **spatial proposition.**”

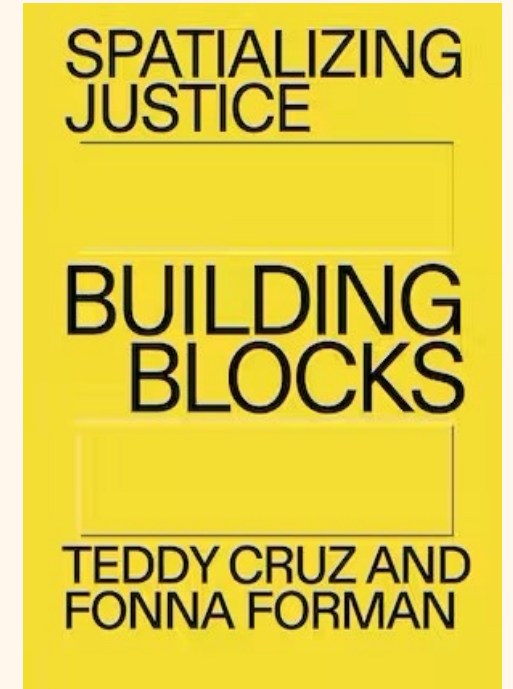
Rendell, Jane. “The Siting of Writing and the Writing of Sites.” In *‘The Siting of Writing, and the Writing of Sites’*, edited by Matthew Carmona, 1st ed., London: Ashgate, 2017.p 17

“To **remain neutral** in the face of today’s social and economic injustices is to **be complicit** with norms, institutions and policies that perpetuate what is ethically and morally wrong. To think more socially and politically is to **prioritize**, to take a **position.**”

Forman, Fonna and Cruz, Teddy. *Spatializing Justice: Building Blocks*. Germany: MIT Press, 2022. p.25.



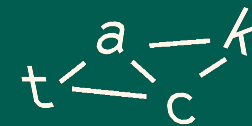
Rendell, Jane. *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. London: New York, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2010.



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

A Situated Architectural Researcher

What is a Situated Researcher

- A researcher who is deeply concerned with **questions** about:
 - Where knowledge is located
 - How it is produced
 - Who produces it
 - Why it is made
- A researcher who **works through their relationship to** knowledge production, the subjects and objects involved, and by taking into account individual and collective values

How does this demonstrate Tacit Knowledge?

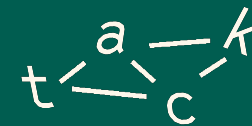
- This relationship to knowledge production makes explicit understandings of power asymmetries in society through an **embodied recognition of self/other**
- It explicitly prioritises critical concerns of **ethics and responsibility**, when producing knowledge
- It develops knowledge methodologies that aim **not to extract value** or objectify research subjects and topics



Developmental Gestures: Series 3 (Bennett, 2022).



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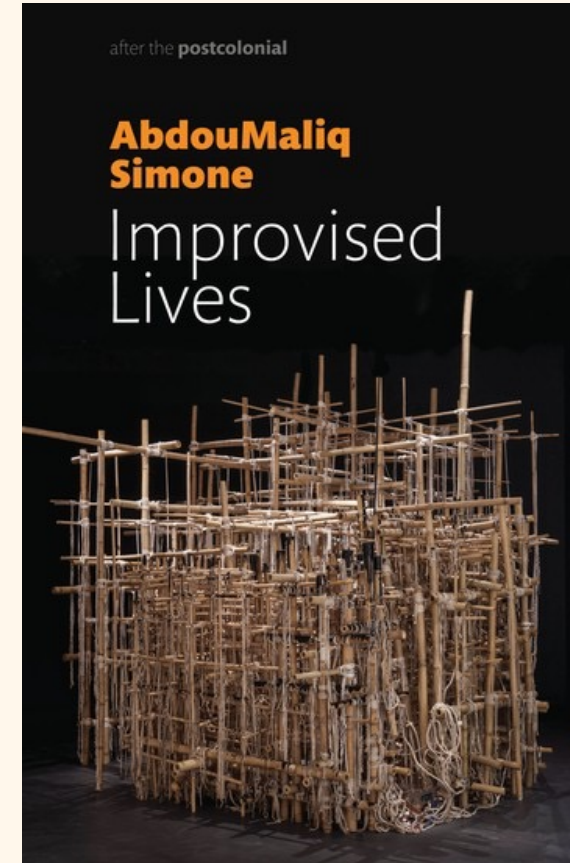
Situated Architectural Subjects

“....These intersections, particularly in the last two decades, have depended on the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become **an infrastructure**—a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city. “

Simone, AbdouMaliq. ‘People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg’. In *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, edited by Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe, 16:407–29. Johannesburg, South Africa: Taylor and Francis, 2008. p.47.

“Here, I use the notion of ‘collective’ not as a coherent entity but as more diffracted and super-positional. The collective is a means of **deploying force**, of folding in discernible individual lives and things into **spaces of operation** that are not inhabitable in a strict sense.”

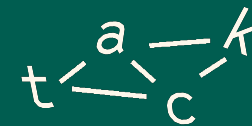
Simone, AbdouMaliq. *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South (After the Postcolonial)*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019. p.125.



AM Maliq, *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South (After the Postcolonial)*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019.



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Situated Architectural Objects

What is a Situated Architectural object?

- A research object (artefact) that:
 - Locates knowledge from where it was made
 - Demonstrates a tacit relationship to how it is made
 - Acknowledges the positionalities of the researcher and the subject/context

How do they operate as tacit knowledge in architectural design?

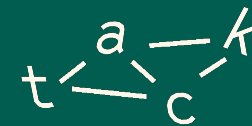
- These objects (artefacts):
 - Reveal implicit values in an explicit manner towards a spatial intervention
 - Translate collective tacit knowledge into accessible forms of knowledge for spatial interventions
 - Allow the practice to take place by actively locating the practitioner in relation to the artefact



The Spirit of the Order: Animation Series 1 (Bennett, 2021)



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Situated Tacit Knowledge: Southern Urbanism

“... two founding impulses of Southern inquiry.

The first is to look from a set of places, paying particular attention about the contexts from which they speak, acknowledging that this is a challenge to the current geographies of authoritative knowledge.

The second is to think of the South not just as a set of places but as a set of moving peripheries, a loci of ‘ex-centric locations’ as the Comaroff’s have termed it.

In this sense, the South is as much a project as a place, a relational geography that insists on calling out hegemonies of knowledge and dominant forms of practice no matter where they emerge”

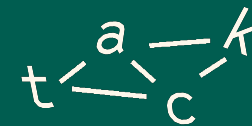
Bhan, Gautam. ‘Notes on a Southern Urban Practice’. *Environment and Urbanization* 31, no. 2 (January 2019), p.645.



Bhan, Gautam. ‘Notes on a Southern Urban Practice’. *Environment and Urbanization* 31, no. 2 (January 2019), pps. 639–54.



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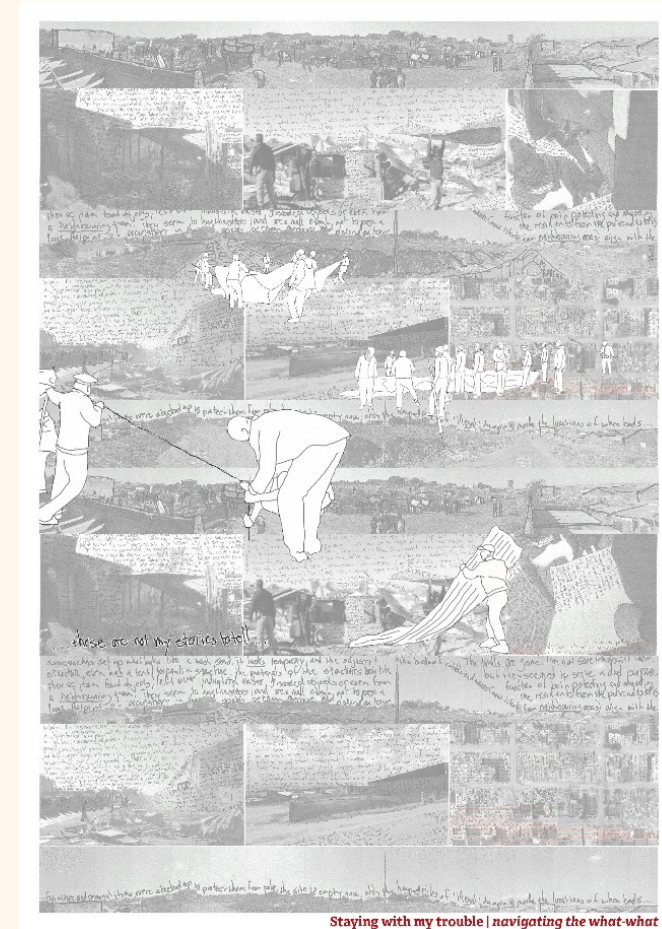
Situated Tacit Knowledge: Southern Practice

What is Southern Urbanism?

- Not be confused with binary framings of a 'Global South/North'
- A term used by urban scholars to **counter** the hegemony of **normative framings** of urban conditions by 'northern' paradigms
- Defined by situated relations to urban 'centres' and readings of urban characteristics based on location, **periphery** and **relationality** to power
- Relevant for all architectural scholars due to **global dynamics** of power in urban framings across the world

What is Southern Urban Practice?

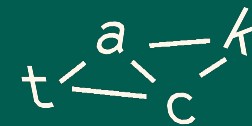
- A situated practice that **takes seriously**:
 - A consideration of place, periphery and **positionality in relation** to normative centres of practice
 - A relationship to architectural disciplines that address the urban through **historically situated** subjects and objects
 - A manner of work that **enacts values** of collectively, shared accountability and forms of spatial production, beyond the creation of only structures/buildings



The Spirit of the Order: Staying with my Trouble - Navigating the what-what (Bennett, 2021).



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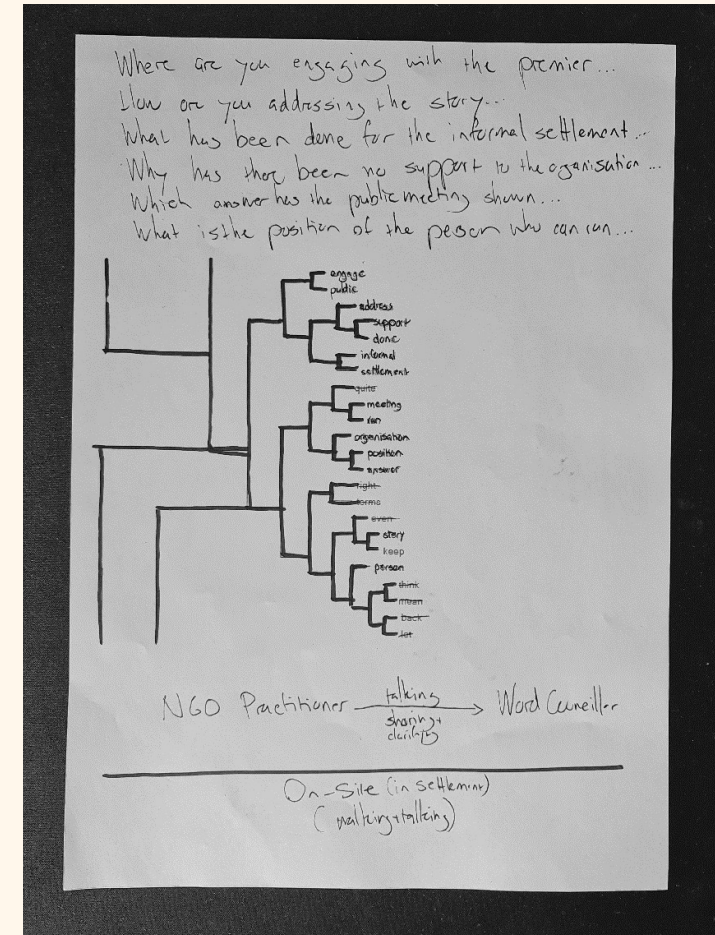
Situated Tacit Knowledge: Southern Practice

“... The first is when theory remains arguably ‘unrooted’ in context and thus seems impossible to translate, apply or use to influence practice in particular places.

I will argue that recent work on Southern urban theory reveals partially this challenge of ‘unrootedness’.

The second is a narrow reading of ‘practice’ that restricts it to professional, formal or institutional modes rather than a more expansive sense of different *ways of moving* by differently situated and motivated actors and institutions.”

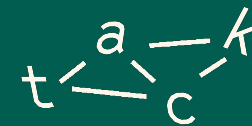
Bhan, Gautam. ‘Notes on a Southern Urban Practice’. *Environment and Urbanization* 31, no. 2 (January 2019): pp 646



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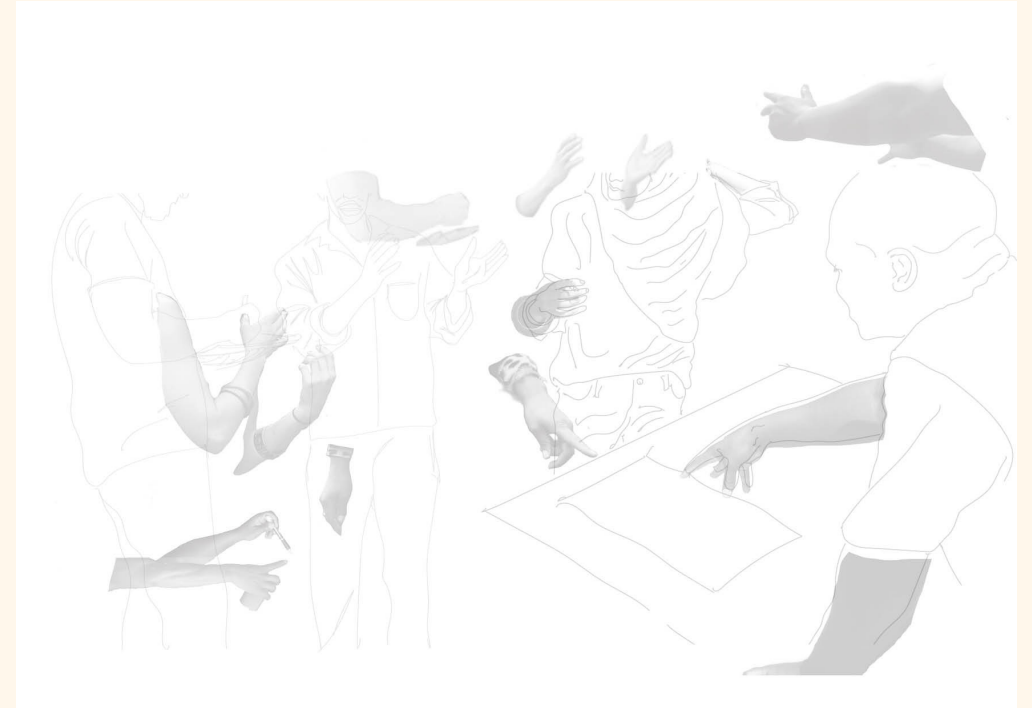
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A Southern Architectural Design Research Approach: In Practice

Locating **Tacit Values in Southern Urbanist** design research means working through the globally homogenised readings of people, place and practice and developing **positionally critical and contextually attuned** forms of spatial understanding or intervention.

Tacit values in southern urbanist situated objects:

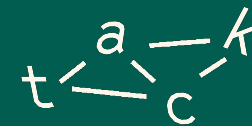
- Often performed **collectively**
- Typically address systemic **inequalities** in their context and form responsive means of addressing these asymmetries e.g.:
 - Replacing governmental infrastructures
 - Enacting social justice on a micro-scale
 - Working with multiple identities of practice
- Work through multiple research actions **simultaneously** with a mixture of local and global **stakeholders**



Developmental Gestures: Series 0 (Bennett, 2021).



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