To see ourselves within the (un)built environment anew, one must respond to the legacies of boundaries that have been imagined and inscribed. Since the 17th century until today, pervasive tensions across urban centers, the disenfranchisement and displacement of millions of individuals, and relentless structural racisms and division as experienced by those most affected—all have signaled that the promise of modernist codes for a “well-tempered society” or postmodernism’s appeal of “ordinary” pluralist forms have been largely rhetorical in nature and press upon questions of who constitutes the “public.” These spaces have been designed. Liberation, consequently, from these perilous but all too common acts, does not necessarily absolve the conditions through which power has been used to inculcate spatial violence. To escape is to surpass that which has been constructed to render one immobile, voiceless, erased.

Questions concerning how (public) spaces might be “repaired” by renewed attention to the legacy of racial and indigenous inequities, for instance, are a central conceit to how the ground is prefigured in definitions of value. Furthermore, striking disparities across the world exist as lasting reminders of how external determinants having been embedded in the built environment that still determine where, how, and why architecture is allocated. Lateral to sites of disinvestment and deprivation exist forms of sociality that are often unrecognized by design professionals but are resonant within literary works and other responsive cultural manifestations. This seminar proposes various lenses to “unbuild” processes and systems within the contemporary built environment and its cultures to assert an uncertain promise for rethinking the roles of architecture, art and design today.

The semester is staged across three platforms for independent and collaborative research. The first, **Grounding** observes a cross-section of diachronic architectural and artistic practices across multiple contexts including the landscape to underscore the shifting nature of bordering. **Reparation** will reframe and undo normative assumptions concerning recent and historical exhibition and art making around spatial identities. The third, **Premises**, will allow each student to develop the first documents, questions and lines of inquiry for the imagining of a thesis, a prospectus, a scaffold for responding to the imagining of critical spaces today. Our semester will be organized with opportunities for provocative conversations with artists, architects, thinkers, advocates, and designers.