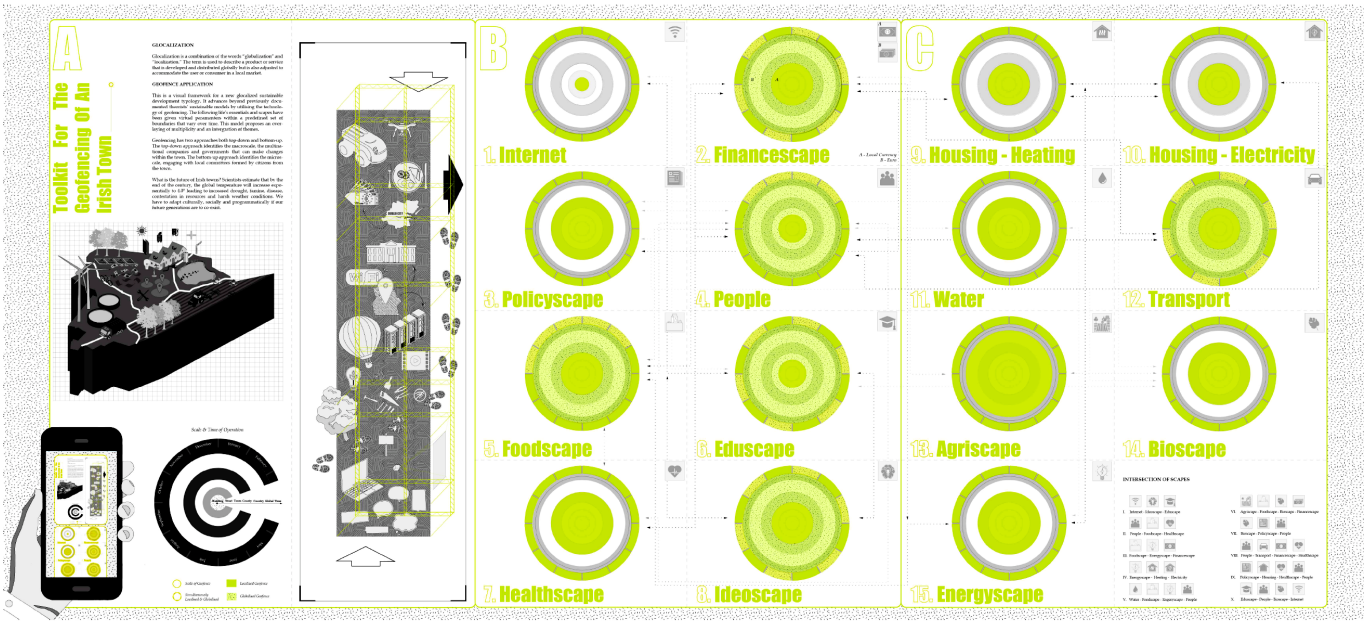

Geofencing Edenderry: Jessica Scott/Greg Keeffe/Sean Cullen

GEO-FENCE: EMERGENCY HACKING OF THE POST-EXTRACTIVE CITY

FALL 2021 SEMINAR – ARCH 4101/4102/5101/7112
Greg Keeffe

GEO-FENCE believes: Mutability is the epitaph of worlds* - Everything is urban - Everything is global - Things should be geofenced - Place is a neurosis - Change changes change - Big things are powerful, so are small things - Things shouldn't last forever – And should be super-light!

CONTEXT: The Janus face of globalisation and acceleration is more clear than ever: the globalised movement systems of materials and data, create great opportunities that were unimaginable only a few years ago. The flip side of the coin, however, is now visible: economic growth is unsustainable; we have extracted too many nutrients from the planet; cultural acceleration is eroding the permanence of architecture; communities are being destroyed; virtual worlds are detaching us from the natural world; there is no meaningful work for anyone and now we're in the middle of a globally communicated pandemic, and to top it all, severe and rapid climate change is not only on the horizon, but already knocking at the door. These are, to paraphrase Dickens, the best and worst of times.

GEO-FENCE investigates the relationship between architecture and the complex flows of globalization, versus the stasis of traditional ideas of place. The forces of globalization are impacting on unsuspecting places, and like surf from a distant Caribbean hurricane battering the Atlantic coast of Ireland, we only see the impact and not the cause. Without analysing the origin, how will we ever be able to extrapolate and develop resilient designs that are robust enough to be long-lived?

OUR METHOD: We start from a way of seeing: by standing on the shoulders of giants we look at complex problems in a serious way. We use quick and dirty techniques to visualise these, techniques more aligned to hacking than designing— mapping, diagramming, photo-montage, depiction.—for both analysing the present and imagining the future; we like to copy; to crack, to delete, to graft, to patch, to plug-in, to remix, reverse engineer and recode, rather than design. We start big and get bigger, although sometimes the effectors are small; we like exergy rather than energy; entropy as well as complexity; we think process rather than object; we see people and not place. In fact, we see design more as sylviculture than plantation.

The studio will investigate the dichotomy between utopia and dystopia. The site will be Ithaca, of course; the themes: food, energy, water, mobility, data. We will need a committed team to change the world for ever, before it kills us.

The program will consist of three parts:

1. an analysis of the climatic impact of specific personal actions (like eating a banana, driving to the mall, or writing an email):
2. the development of a brief for an intervention that creates a more circular and ultimately benign context:
3. the production of a building/city/landscape that demonstrates the power a more sophisticated local/global interaction.