



OPTION STUDIO Fall 2021
Prof. Anna Dietzsch

Forest City is a platform in evolution, a manifest for an alternative city. As it questions structural paradigms of our modern industrial city, it proposes a reconciliation between “nature” and “urban”, so we can transform the current process of extensive urbanization (Lefebvre) into one of extensive naturalization (Monte-Mor). It is a hybrid-city that results from the productive encounter of the forest (and its dwellers), traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices, and Western technology.

This studio will propose design ideas for a *Forest City* in an area known in Brazil as the “Death Hug”, where extensive monoculture farming is turning rich environmental biomes into deserts, as it encroaches into the Xingu Indigenous Reserve (TIX). Located in Central Brazil, at the Xingu River Basin, this area houses important biomes that are part of the larger Amazon ecological system. As the global economy advances deeper into “natural realms” forcing border territories to disintegrate through changes in ecological systems, the region has also been integrated into a vast web of Amazon urban nodes interconnected by highways and other large-scale, extractive infrastructure.

We will work at different scales, zooming in from the regional scale framed by TIX and Xavante Nation territories, to Canarãna, a 20.000-person city that is key to the regional agrobusiness of soy and grains. It is also the main gateway to TIX and the 26 indigenous peoples who inhabit the territory. Starting with the collective construction of a reference data base about the region through mapping, research and discussions with guest speakers, students will zoom in to the urban design or architecture scales to define their project focus and develop their designs.

Discussions and designs will be inspired by themes dealing with low-carbon construction systems, passive energy techniques, creative ways to use natural materials, alternative infrastructure, and nature-based solutions. Based on indigenous practices we will also look into concepts of community embedment, circular economy, spatial and time fluidity, holistic regional planning and alternative models for ownership.

*This studio will have a partnership with a design seminar taught simultaneously at *Escola da Cidade*, a progressive architecture school in Sao Paulo, as well as with representatives from Indigenous communities in Xingu.