

Dear All,
You will soon embark on a journey unlike any other you've taken in architecture school [and perhaps anywhere]. Congratulations, this is an exciting moment, and you've accomplished a lot to get here! While the decision you're about to make is consequential, you cannot make a 'wrong' choice. This section selection is ultimately about finding 'the right fit' for you to engage your interests, while growing as a thinker, maker, and member of our larger collective.

That said, this thesis section is designed to leverage, and further all the work you've done to date. It has an ambitious frame: a frame that affects all of our lives, and one that is intensely difficult, in many ways. It poses particular challenges for those of us working in the environmental design disciplines, as we structure 'worldmaking,' and its corresponding endeavor, 'worldbreaking.' This thesis section confronts these challenges head-on through exploration of the possibilities of architectural entanglements within the Anthropocene.

While initially this focus may appear to be exclusively environmental, in fact, upon further inquiry you will find that that's far from the case. 'Environment' here [see Etienne Benson's recent reading in the CMU Encyclopedia of the History of Science <https://ethos.ips.library.cmu.edu/article/id/481/>] can only be understood as an entanglement of people-nature-technologies [think architectural and constructed environmental relationships]. In this thesis section, explorations of the Anthropocene's 'environments' begin with ways to deconstruct the 'nature/culture binary.' Many intellectuals, usually polymaths, have undertaken this endeavor, developing rigorous approaches, which you may potentially leverage. Some include: in 1934 German Biologist, Jakob von Uexküll, proposed the theory of Umwelt in his text *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans, With a Theory of Meaning* [<https://monoskop.org/org/?p=14044>], Russian Geologist, Vladimir Vernadsky's, concept of Noosphere, developed in response to the devastation of WWII and published for a general audience in 1943 [https://sci-tech.com/translations/The_Noosphere.pdf], and Anthropologist/Philosopher/ Science and Society scholar, Bruno Latour's more recent 1991 text *We Have Never Been Modern* [https://monoskop.org/images/e/4/Latour_Bruno_We_Have_Never_Been_Modern.pdf], if you're perhaps looking for something a little quicker to digest, have a look at the 2018 film *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch: How Humans Have Impacted the Planet* directed by Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, and Edward Burtynsky [<https://www.kanopy.com/en/calpoly/video/6016074/>].

In terms of framing the thesis section, I see the 'ontological container' of the Anthropocene as facilitating diverse approaches to thinking and designing with the topic in a multitude of ways. Ways we have previously misunderstood our relations with 'nature' and ways might we be about reconsidering them, simultaneously in epistemological and material/spatial forms. Further, I believe thinking/ designing with the Anthropocene is an activity of meaning-making within a world that poses challenges to, and raises questions about, the act of human flourishing, and potentially even survival. It's largely uncharted territory, and requires an inquisitive mind, an interest in sustained exploration, and a willingness to put forward propositions that not only "un-black box" [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackboxing>], but that are unapologetically outside, and even beyond normative boxes... presented with enough supporting evidence to warrant their further exploration.

off-campus
Ultimately, I argue, that we have come to find ourselves in the Anthropocene through a series of unintentional cascading acts of Coproduction, as Science, Technology, and Society scholar Sheila Jasanoff has defined them [<https://sheilajasanoff.org/research/co-production/>]. In this thesis process, we will actively and intentionally coproduce, with awareness. As another prominent Science, Technology, and Society scholar Donna Haraway stated in *The Companion Species Manifesto* from 2003: "The relation is the smallest unit of analysis." [20] [https://xenopaxis.net/readings/haraway_companion.pdf]. We are all in the Anthropocene together, just doing our best to figure 'it' out... it's first and foremost a process... I'm really looking forward to this process of analyzing the Anthropocene's entanglements through relationships, and in relation, with you.

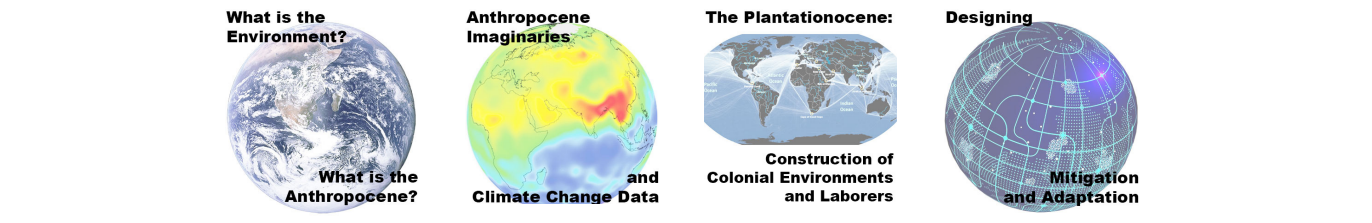
280 ppm atmospheric CO₂ = for 6,000 yrs. prior to industrialization
Best,
- meredith
sattler@calpoly.edu
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worldbreaking | worldmaking architectural entanglements within the anthropocene

thesis prospectus 2023-4 _ cal poly SLO_ meredith sattler

"Since Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer introduced the word "Anthropocene" in 2000, scientists and nonscientists alike have used the word to highlight the concept that we are now living in a time when the global environment, at some level, is shaped by humankind rather than vice versa. Humans have significantly altered Earth's land surface, oceans, rivers, atmosphere, flora, and fauna. By its emphasis on the here and now and on what humans have done and can do in the future, the word "Anthropocene" has served as a call to action..."
- Lucy E. Edwards

arch 492f : theory | research



In 2000, atmospheric chemist, Paul Crutzen, and limnologist, Eugene Stoermer, published a short paper in the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme newsletter titled "The Anthropocene" [<http://people.whitman.edu/~fierspr/Crutzen%20and%20Stoermer%202000%20Anthropocene%20essay.pdf>]. In it, they identify a need "...to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology..." [17]. They have not been the first to see our contemporary world through this lens, and in the following decades their term "Anthropocene," while still not officially adopted as a new geologic epoch by the Union of Geological Scientist's International Commission on Stratigraphy, has been embraced globally as a concept with which to reexamine how we understand and live.

arch 481f : thesis provocation | argument

As you develop your thesis argument through textual exploration in arch 492, in tandem this studio asks you to translate and rehearse the same content through spatial/visual/ tectonic modes. This first 481 term focuses on utilizing diverse modeling and drawing types as different lenses, through which to further explore and materialize your emerging ideas about the Anthropocene, and your role as a designer within it. Unlike your prior studios, this term is NOT about producing an "architecture project," potentially the entire thesis year is not about this! but rather about exploring and developing new ways of understanding and potentially interacting within our current human-environment-technology entanglement. This studio is about thinking-making-thinking-making in order to uncover interesting new ways of seeing what Rittel and Webber, designers and urban planners, identified in 1973 as "Wicked Problems" that may appear to 'break-worlds,' but upon further examination may be generative by providing analytical tools toward possible novel approaches to intervening within them : [https://www.symplectic.net/Managing_Complexity/complexity_files/1973%20Rittel%20and%20Webber%20Wicked%20Problems.pdf]. By the conclusion of fall, you will have produced a draft thesis book, structuring all of your textual/ spatial/ visual/ tectonic explorations into your thesis position/ argument. This book will not only serve as your guide through the remainder of your thesis production, but will allow you to rehearse assembling and organizing your final thesis book, due at the end of spring term.

field work _ part 1



Petrified Forest National Park
225,000,000 bce
Holbrook, AZ
National Park Service

Chaco Canyon
850-1250 ce, NM
UNESCO

Trinity Test,
Manhattan Project
16july1945 Jornada
del Muerto, NM Atomic
Heritage Foundation

Cosanti,
Paolo Soleri
1956 Paradise Valley,
AZ
Arcosanti Archive

[not in] velum [though the show is often around this time in the fall]
Dissolution Tea Table, Meredith Sattler



Jack Pierson's The End of the World, 2022 [originally 2013 at Regen Projects], Wonder Valley, High Desert Test Sites, photo: Meredith Sattler

This seminar, *Anthropocene as Global Environment*, works in tandem with the *arch 481 Studio* to further your knowledge of the body of current Anthropocene scholarship [the majority of which was produced within the last 10 years!]. It frames this work through 3 disciplinary lenses, rendering it more accessible to designers of the constructed environment : architecture history, theory, criticism [HTC], postcolonial theory, and science and technology studies [STS]. Over the course of the term, you will rehearse writing as a primary mode of developing and communicating your emerging thoughts/ arguments from different positions. Ultimately, this writing fulfills your CP GWR, while producing a focused thesis argument that will inform your final thesis visual/spatial proposal.

arch 481w : design

In winter, we will use your thesis argument, along with the knowledge you accumulated in the fall, to drive the design of an intervention within the human-environment-technology entanglement [otherwise known as the Anthropocene]. This intervention may take many possible forms : a network, a system, a constructed environment [a 'building' always operates as an environment, whether we think of it as such, or not], and/or other... Framing architectural design in this way allows us to use additional design approaches such as temporal, multi-scalar, molecular economies, agent-based modeling, etc., in addition to the more familiar architectural lenses of site, program, spatial organization, tectonic, etc. By the term's end, you will have designed/ materialized your intervention.



a bit about the thinker/ designer facilitating your thesis process...
Meredith majored in studio art, and minored in film HTC, in undergrad while taking lots of science and anthropology courses. She then worked in film industry, finance/ real estate, and started her own design firm [cambioform] in Los Angeles [see the tea table to the left]. She returned to grad school for architecture and environmental studies. Upon graduation she started teaching architecture at LSU, then at Cal Poly where she's taught across the curriculum, since 2014. She is currently completing a PhD in STS titled "Constructing an Anthropocene: Logics of Enclosure at Biosphere 2 1991-4."

FYI, my Cal Poly faculty webpage is a bit out of date, please see my website for more current production : meredith-sattler.net

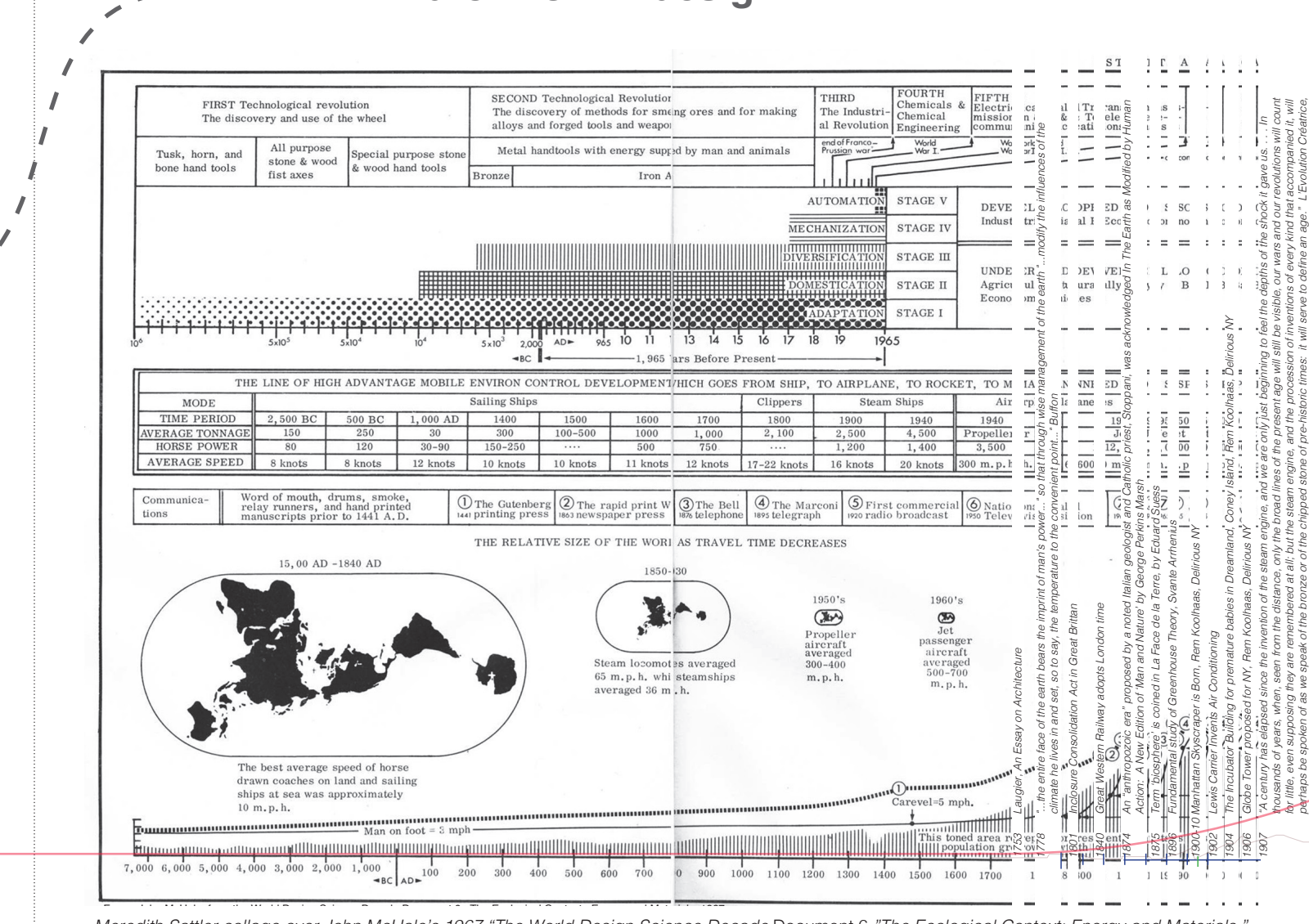
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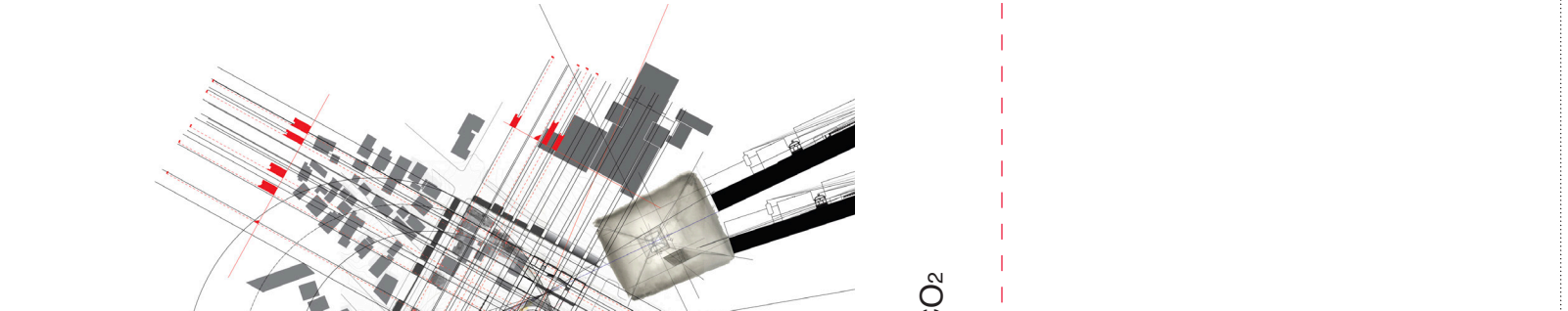
Meredith Granger Site Determination Drawing, 2022, arch 351

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arch 481w : design



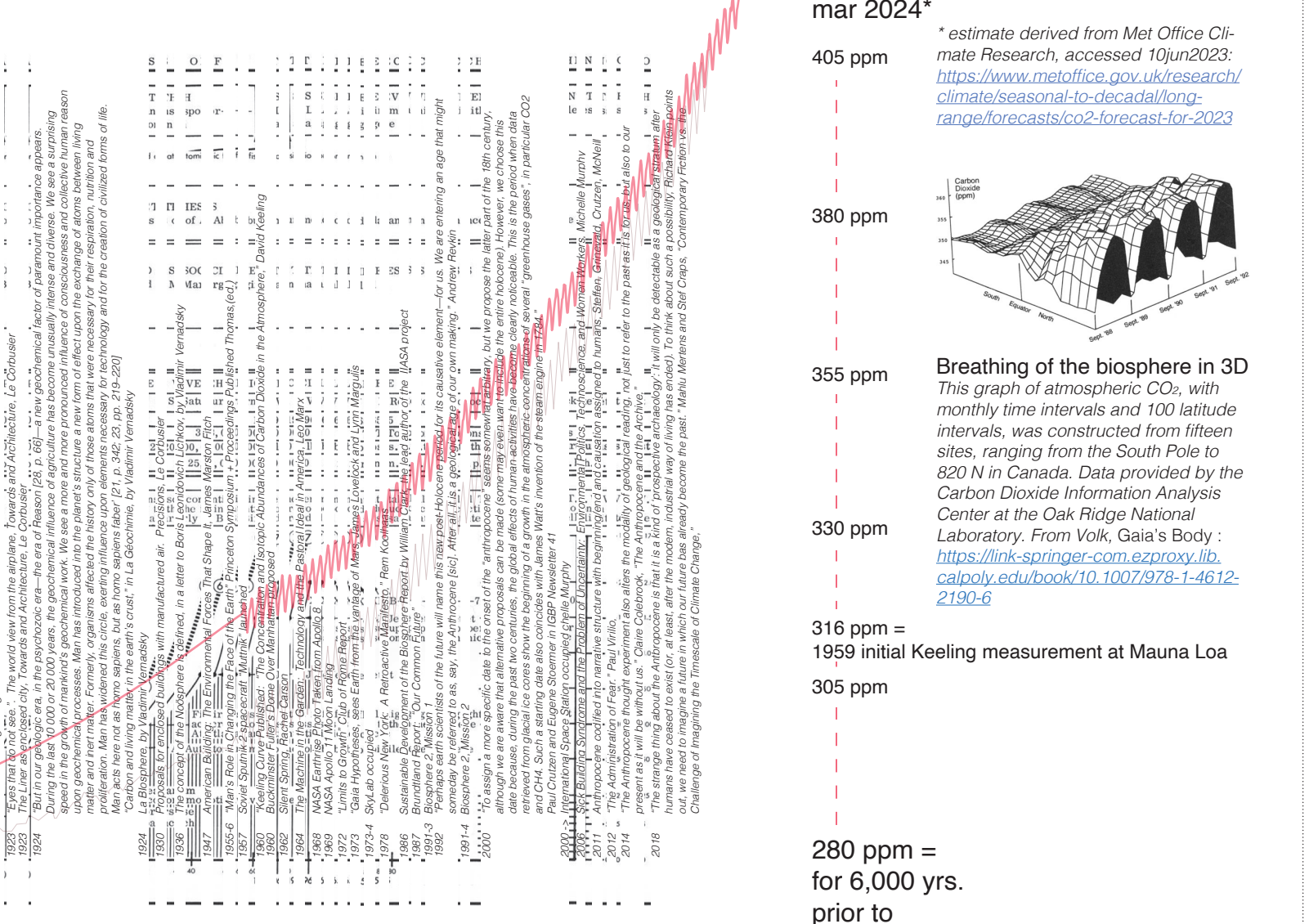
Meredith Sattler collage over John McHale's 1967 "The World Design Science Decade Document 6, "The Ecological Context: Energy and Materials."



Meredith Granger Site Determination Drawing, 2022, arch 351

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arch 481w : design



Meredith Sattler collage over John McHale's 1967 "The World Design Science Decade Document 6, "The Ecological Context: Energy and Materials."

Spring's studio is where all the pieces get put together into a comprehensive thesis. Now that you've defined and understand your provocation/ argument, and have designed/ materialized a related intervention, it's time to communicate your proposition to your larger communities. Your draft thesis book from fall will help to refresh your 'beginner's mind,' critical to understanding your audience's position, while likely providing a lot of base argument drawings, models, and text you'll need [perhaps with revisions]. This communication will take multiple forms : final thesis book, boards/ models/ text for presentation/ exhibition, pages to add to your prior architecture portfolio, etc. It is a rewarding phase of the thesis process to see your hard work coalesce into a compelling argument.

arch 481s : communicate



Mahsa Hedayati Thesis: Low Carbon Architecture: New Approaches to Existing Buildings
AIA COTE Top Ten Award Winner, 2021
Faculty Sponsors: Paul Emmons, Susan Piedmont-Palladino, & Meredith Sattler, Virginia Tech WAAC

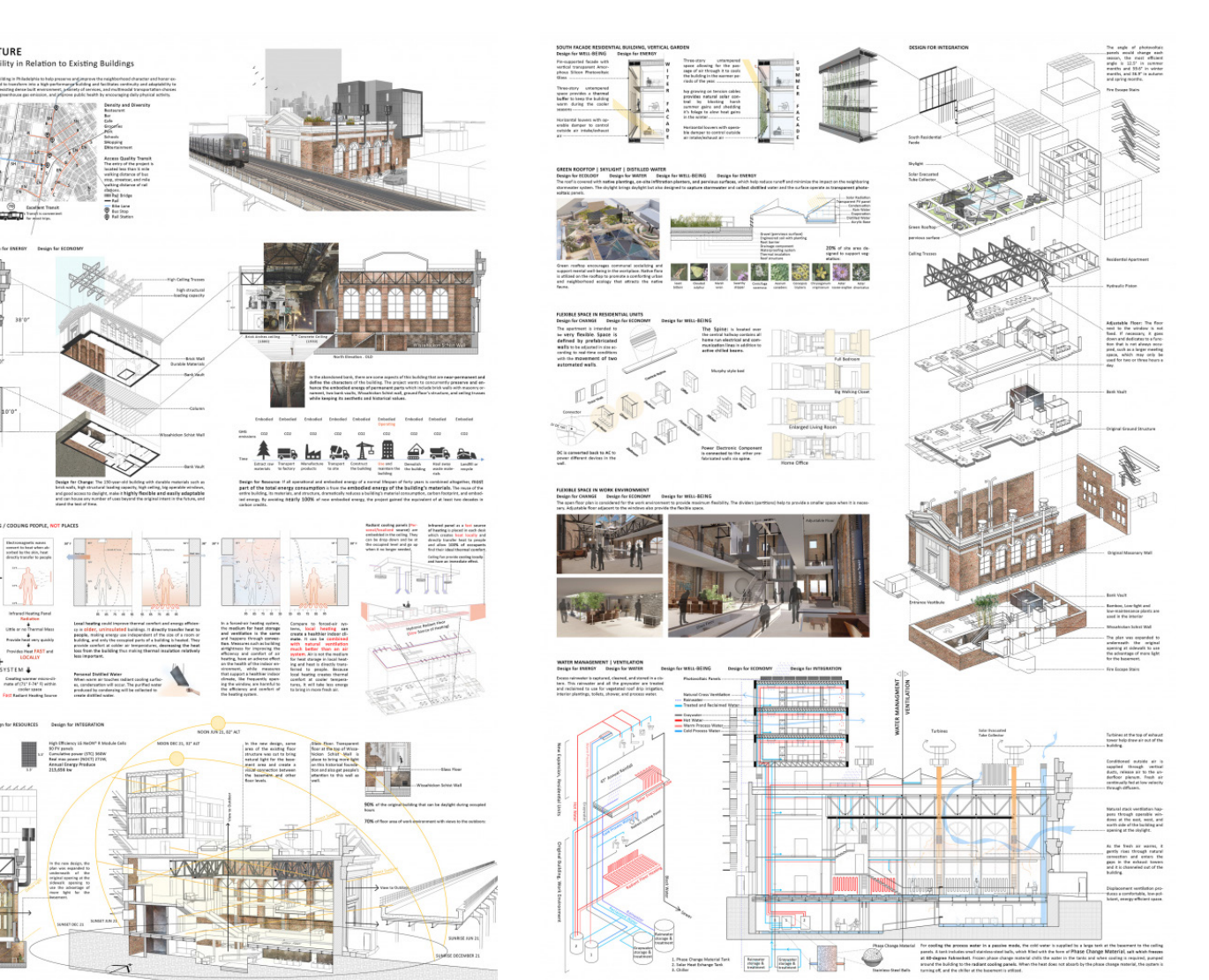
field work _ part 2



april 8, 2024
full solar eclipse
Adrees Latif/Routers

Depending on interest, spring may also contain additional fieldwork [our yet unmentioned 1st iteration of studio fieldwork will take place in the fall, and is designed to give our cohort common experiences/ language/ references of places important to understanding the Anthropocene. It is also designed to be very affordable, with the intention that our entire studio will participate]. In spring, if you choose, as a cohort you may plan a trip [I'm looking forward to seeing your proposals]. Also, not previously mentioned, there are numerous group exhibitions, competitions, and other events, that punctuate the year. These include Velum, Section and Detail shows, and more... All in all, it's an exciting year, and I really look forward to facilitating your process.

final book | final proposal



Meredith Sattler collage over John McHale's 1967 "The World Design Science Decade Document 6, "The Ecological Context: Energy and Materials."

field work _ part 2



Jack Pierson's The End of the World, 2022 [originally 2013 at Regen Projects], Wonder Valley, High Desert Test Sites, photo + adaptation: Meredith Sattler