

Notes on pre:fab: An wildly discursive and overly theoretical argument in five or more parts for a new way to gather in the post individual, later than late capitalist, cultural production service industry.

Note on pre:fab: Episode 1 - Alternative Practice R0<1

Authors: pre:fab Et. al [†]

[†] kiaora@pre:fab.xyz

TLDR: Architecture has become a service industry to the supply chain. The hyper-local emerges as the only practical alternative. Consequently, alternative practice is atomized into isolated operations, often just one or two people, working on seemingly unique issues. Isolation and unscalable outcomes lead to burnout. With limited resources and little potential for greater influence, the debt borrowed from our future selves becomes so large that the fleeting achievements of the present can no longer meet our interest payments. Welcome to the logic of the Creative Production Service Economy.

Keywords: alternative practice; competition; subjugation; exhaustion; futility

1. Never Enough

Look online and be thankful we make things. That we don't shift ads and product or sell audiences [to platforms and OEMs ¹] whose value is only as high as the virality of our latest blurb. While we can believe in God [the autonomy of our purpose > field > profession], they [Creators] must pray to the algorithm...

Creative production has become a service industry to the supply chain and we have not escaped. As much as we might struggle to liken ourselves to influencers and creators streaming content online, we, as architects, planners, spatial designers, and space holders working in and around the fields of future environments and creative technologies are content makers too. This is the price of the purpose we derive from our anti-bohemian fetishtic relationship with the 'real economy'^{2,3}. We don't just make things. We make things that 'make a difference'.

This means our work [reduced to content] is subordinate to its mode of distribution, and that the vitality of disciplinary discourse and alternative practice is proportional to their refresh rate and the 19th century artistic tropes of individual genius, originality, and authorship that make this possible. The irony! Consequently, alternative practice as an OEM subculture within the field is atomized into singular practices, often just one or two people, working on niche, seemingly unique, non-fungible⁴ problems in conceptual isolation.

From within this paradigm, the hyper-local appears as the only practical alternative to

Citation: pre:fab Et al. . pre:fab 2024,

<https://pre-fab.xyz/>

Copyright: © 2024 by the authors.

Submitted to pre:fab for open access

publication under the terms and

conditions of the Creative Commons

Attribution (CC BY) license ([https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

[https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

4.0/).

¹ See 'Abbreviations' section over page

² Our aggregate cult-like hyperstitious obsession with the non-artistic utility of architectural objects and their functional role in the real economy

³ **Hyperstition:** is a positive feedback circuit including culture as a component. It can be defined as the experimental (techno-)science of self-fulfilling prophecies. Superstitions are merely false beliefs, but hyperstitions – by their very existence as ideas – function causally to bring about their own reality.

⁴ Fungibility (def): the operational interchangeability of differently existing things. Non-fungible (def): the absolute non-transferability of something from one context to another.

solipsism on the one hand and supply chain subjugation on the other; to connecting demand with outcomes that convert specialist expertise into change 'on the ground'. This further favours progressive, emancipatory issues as the only set of 'real' problems that can both justify our attention and inculcate the requisite level of romantic self-delusion. Just another face of capitalist [self]exploitation.

To a limit, and for a time, this works. But our TAM is always also [mostly?] our coworkers, our job, funding, grant, exhibition, client, and opportunity competitors. Friends and colleagues with different ideas but loosely aligned visions experiencing similar problems. Swimming together but in separate lanes, knowledge, experience, discoveries, momentum, and energy are witnessed but not shared, and progressive ideals viewed across the shoulders of motorways can only get us so far; Inevitably, the courteous competition and constant demand from ourselves, our clients, and our context, the isolation and unscalable outcomes lead to burnout or WAMmax, PATPAC, Herbstalife etc. . . $R_0 < 1$ ⁵ [and mainstream practice is just another race to the bottom down a different elevator].

The quantum of energy, time, money, and motivation⁶ borrowed from our future selves⁷ becomes so large that the fleeting achievements of the present can no longer meet the interest payments. **Welcome to the logic of the Creative Production Service Economy where your work, your commitment, your purpose is never enough.**

Abbreviations

TLA	Three letter acronym
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
TAM	Total Addressable Market

References

1. Sue Hillary, Dom Glamuzina, Kathy Waghorn, Mike Davis, Nina Patel, Rem Koolhaas, Sam Jacob, Jack Self.

⁵ R_0 , or the basic reproduction number/rate, refers to the contagiousness and transmissibility of infectious pathogens. R_0 varies depending on a variety of factors and is critical in public health management to ensure infectious epidemics (or global pandemics) are controlled.

R_0 is an estimate of the speed at which a particular infectious disease can currently spread through a given population. Specifically, it refers to the number of people that one person can transmit on average.

Key ranges of R_0 are $R_0 < 1$ which indicates the disease is contained, not spreading, or deminishing within the host population; $R_0 = 1$, in the case that, on average, 1 person is capable of spreading to 1 other person; and $R_0 > 1$, indicating exponential growth, thus potentially creating an epidemic or pandemic.

Here, this concept is used as metaphor for the both the self-reproducing sustainability and transmissibility ['infection' rate] of alternative practice as this pertains to personal and collective wellbeing, and the viability of labour unrecognized by capitalism

⁶ Labour and resources that contribute to the economy but unrecognized by Capitalism

⁷ in the absence of compounding ROI