The New City Reader is a newspaper on architecture, public space and the city, published as part of "The Last Newspaper," an exhibition running at the New Museum of Contemporary Art from October 6, 2010–January 9, 2011. Conceived by executive editors Joseph Grima and Kazys Varnelis, the newspaper's content centers on the spatial implications of epochal shifts in technology, economy and society today. The New City Reader will consist of one edition published over the course of the project, with a new section produced weekly from within the museum's gallery space, each led by a different guest editorial team of architects, theorists and research groups. These sections will be available free at the New Museum and—in emulation of a practice common in the nineteenth-century American city and still popular in China and other parts of the world today—will be posted in public on walls throughout the city for collective reading.

The next issue will be CLASSIFIEDS, guest edited by Leagues and Legions.

1	2	3	4

FOR WALL ASSEMBLY...

The New City Reader

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CLASSIFIEDS
Leagues and Legions

FRONT/LOCAL
The Editors

"The Last Newspaper" is curated by Richard Flood and Benjamin Godsill. For more information please visit newmuseum.org

The New City Reader online:
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DECEMBER 31, 2010

INSIDE... Obituaries Edited by MOS

The New City Reader
A Newspaper Of Public Space

C-LAB
Jeffrey Inaba
Justin Fowler
Simon Battisti
Nathalie Janson
Amanda Shin
Lauren Turner
Jeffrey Yip

Neeraj Bhatia
Charles Holland
Rory Hyde
Wes Jones
Klaus
Sean Lally
Andy Lantz
Jürgen Mayer H.
Markus Miessen
Nicholas de Monchaux
Philippe Rahm
Dong-Ping Wong

WEATHER PATTERNS

If the closed airports, buried streets, transit delays and finger-pointing of the 2010 year-end holiday blizzard have proven anything, it is that weather fluctuations, no matter how well predicted, can wreak havoc on the productivity of cities. Extreme weather is an obvious source of pressure on the economies of cities and nations, but as our concurrent installation at New York's New Museum, "Cloudy with a Chance of Certainty" shows, even everyday weather and temperature deviation introduce constant uncertainty into the urban realm that can be every bit as problematic. The data we source from the weather futures market at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where brokers bet against forecasted conditions, is but one indicator of the economy of "normal" weather. Climate unpredictability inserts itself into every aspect and scale of life, from the redundancy built into infrastructural systems to an individual's quotidian decision to choose delivery over dining out. With this in mind, the issue of representing the contingent effects of weather and the costs associated with our response to these effects is an urban and architectural matter of concern.

Weather reporting has come a long way since the watershed moments enabled by the telegraph, the U.S. Army's Signal Corps and the BBC's magnetic weather icons. Today, the weather is presented to the general public with high-definition pictorial clarity and to niche audiences online in neatly customized packets tailored to their specific industries, commodities or recreational pursuits. Most people just want to know the AccuWeather "real feel," whereas boaters, for example, check the wind conditions on the seas, and arthritics visit their "WeatherMD" smart phone app to see if humidity levels are favorable for a prolonged walk outside.

Without the capacity for instantaneous updates or specialized authority, newspaper reporting seems out of place in this dual landscape of one-glance symbols and hyper-specific forecasting. Perhaps, then, print media reports will go the way of cable news or issue-based publications by turning fact into editorialized narratives, placing information in the service of a theme. Here, weather can paradoxically be given the relevance it deserves by describing it in relation to the processes it affects in some fundamental way, such as utilities, transportation, agriculture or public health. By exploring the operations, effects and forms through which weather interacts with these areas, ranging in scale from the macro to the personal, traditional newsprint weather sections can focus on the qualities produced through these interactions instead of merely presenting tomorrow's high and low.

In this spirit, C-LAB replaces the Weather page with graphic meteorology on the theme of architecture and weather. The following begins to map out the city in terms of its discrete architectural features and their response to weather phenomena. Such a preliminary glance suggests that every aspect of architecture is engaged in constant negotiation with the weather. But if the usual inclement weather refrain of "stay inside, if at all possible," spoken by city officials and forecasters alike, promotes the belief that architecture is first and foremost a means of weather resistance—just shelter from the storm—it must also be understood that architecture makes weather. Architecture is at the most basic level a weather-making machine, generating urban climate zones that can be seen and felt. From wind tunnels to heat island effects, shade to UV reduction, architecture makes weather outdoors in the streets and parks and indoors in offices and homes, creating wholly new atmospheric environments citywide.

As a supplement to this graphic feature, we present editorials from a selection of architects-turned-climate experts as a running commentary on weather and architecture.

Leave your umbrella behind.

EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

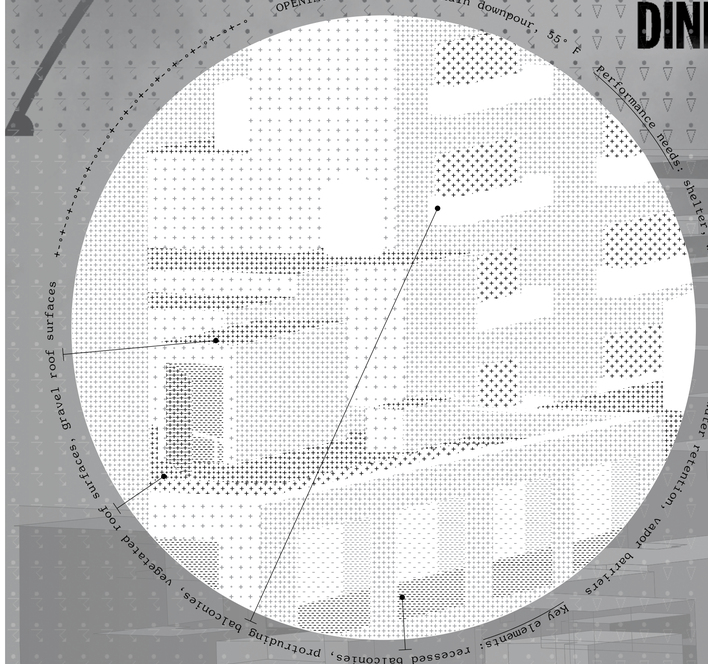
- Slight or moderate thunderstorm without hail but with rain and/or snow
- Slight rainshowers
- Violent rain showers
- Continuous heavy fall of snowflakes
- Clouds generally dissolving or becoming less developed during past hour
- Cloud development not observed or not observable during past hour
- Clouds generally forming or developing during past hour
- Haze

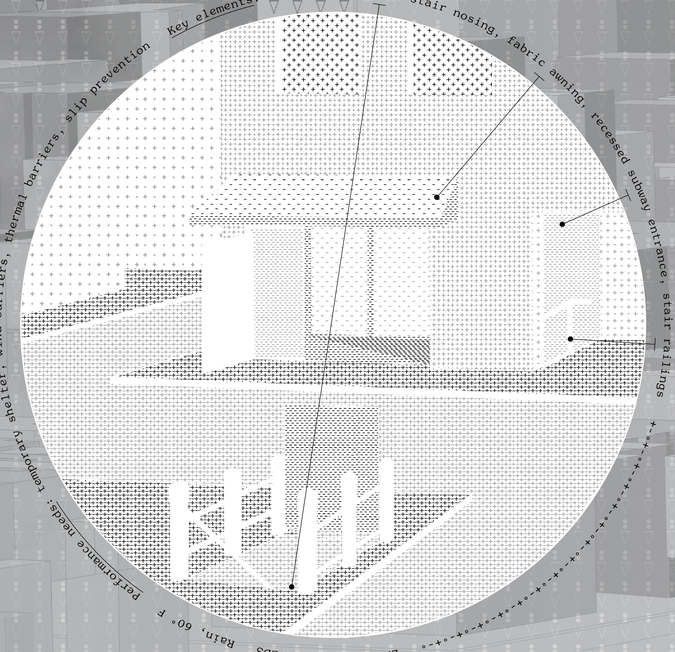
ARCHITECTURAL EFFECTS

- \+ Facilitation of weather conditions
- +∘ Facilitation of weather conditions with regard to temperature
- − Defense against weather conditions
- −∘ Defense against temperature

CLIMATE UNPREDICTABILITY INSERTS ITSELF INTO EVERY ASPECT AND SCALE OF LIFE, FROM THE REDUNDANCY BUILT INTO INFRASTRUCTURAL SYSTEMS TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S QUOTIDIAN DECISION TO CHOOSE DELIVERY OVER DINING OUT.

ARCHITECTURE IS AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL A WEATHER-MAKING MACHINE, GENERATING URBAN CLIMATE ZONES THAT CAN BE SEEN AND FELT.





NEW CITY READER WEATHER SURVEY

NEERAJ BHATIA
December 17, 2010, 11:20 a.m.
Houston
Current temperature: 18° Celsius
Current weather conditions: Sunny
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: You caught me, I am guessing at the temperature. But the windows are open, and it is comfortable, so I think I am close.

CHARLES HOLLAND
December 17, 2010, 10:59 a.m.
Clerkenwell, London, UK.
Current temperature: -1° Celsius
Current weather conditions: Cold, grey, faintly miserable
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: BBC weather homepage, personal observation.

RORY HYDE
December 19, 2010, 3 p.m.
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Current temperature: -5° Celsius
Current weather conditions: 15cm of snow on the ground, overcast sky
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: Weather app & looking out the window.

WES JONES
December 16, 2010, 10:34 a.m.
Office, El Segundo, Calif.
Current temperature: 58° Fahrenheit
Current weather conditions: Overcast, drizzly
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: iPhone and window.

SEAN LALLY
December 19, 2010, late morning
Chicago
Current temperature: Cold
Current weather conditions: Still cold, but sunny
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: What kind of socks did I have to put on.... (sock selection: the heavy ones)

ANDY LANTZ
December 20, 2010, 7:43 a.m.
Columbus, Ohio
Current temperature: 19° Fahrenheit
Current weather conditions: Cloudy, chance of snow showers
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: HTC Evo phone, weather widget with animations turned on.

JÜRGEN MAYER H.
December 20, 2010, 5.44 p.m.
Berlin, Germany
Current temperature: -8° Celsius
Current weather conditions: Overcast, not snowing for a change
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: The Weather Channel on my AirBook.

MARKUS MIESSEN
December 17, 2010, 9:09 p.m.
Berlin, Germany
Current temperature: -4.3° Celsius
Current weather conditions: Light snowfall
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: Eyesight, wristwatch, common sense, thermometer.

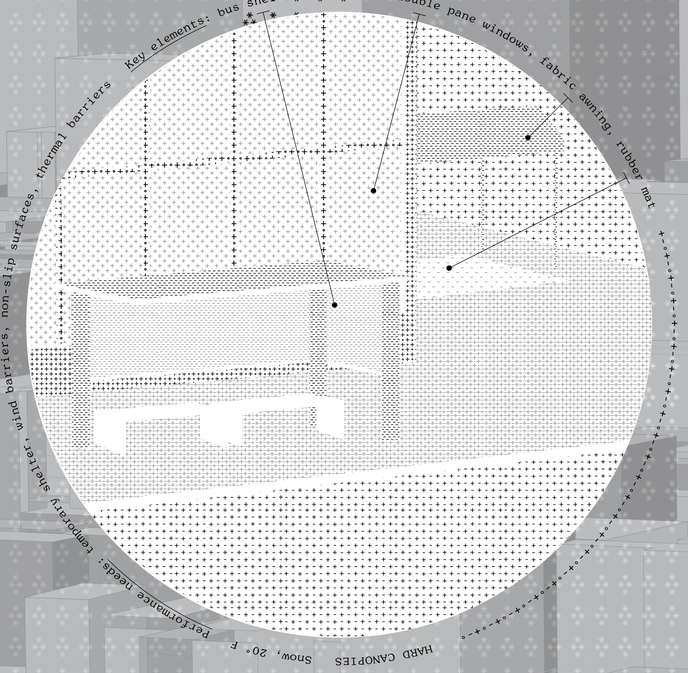
NICHOLAS DE MONCHAUX
December 17, 2010, 8:37 p.m.
Approximately 36,000 feet above Binghamton, New York
Current temperature: 18° Celsius inside, -60° Celsius outside
Current weather conditions: Clear
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: I am on-board a Boeing 757 Jet aircraft heading west from New York to San Francisco. Location was determined by dead reckoning via ground landmarks. Pilot's announced altitude is 36,000 feet; as well as being the even number mandatory for westbound U.S. aircraft (so as to minimize the possibility of collision), this number is also above the tropopause; the height at which air temperature stops going down with altitude. Within the stratosphere, the temperature increases again to roughly freezing at an altitude of 31 miles. Beyond this point, in the mesosphere, the temperature drops again to -100° C at about 50 miles altitude; after this point, temperature slowly increases, in the "thermosphere" until the atmosphere slowly merges into the interplanetary vacuum. Closer to the earth's surface, weather systems are generally confined to the troposphere: thus, jet aircraft generally fly in the low stratosphere to avoid turbulence. In addition, the especially cold air around the tropopause is most fuel-efficient for turbojet propulsion, releasing the most energy when compressed and burned with jet fuel within the engine's spinning turbines.

PHILIPPE RAHM
December 20, 2010, 3:27 p.m.
Paris, France
Current temperature: 0° Celsius
Current weather conditions: Humidity: 100%, Visibility: 3 km, Wind SSE 8 kph, Precipitation: 6.1 mm. A little snow at times
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: AccuWeather on iPhone.

DONG-PING WONG
December 17, 2010, 5:20 pm
Family Office, New York City
Current temperature: Outside: 36° Fahrenheit / Inside: Much warmer
Current weather conditions: Clear, with a couple clouds far away
Means/media by which weather info was ascertained: Phone; looking out the window.

ARCHITECTURE IS JEALOUS OF WEATHER. WEATHER IS EVERYTHING CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE DESIRES— IT IS EPHEMERAL, DYNAMIC, ATMOSPHERIC, LIGHT.

I'M THOROUGHLY PLEASED TO HAVE THE USE OF BOTH WALLS AND A ROOF.



WALLS OR ROOF?

Andy Lantz: Roof, however I would prefer floor, and yes, I realize this makes me vulnerable to all things, including weather and space invasions.

Charles Holland: Walls.

Dong-Ping Wong: Sure, thanks.

Jürgen Mayer H: Are we still distinguishing? Let´s call it "surround" for now…

Markus Miessen: Roof.

Neeraj Bhatia: With a risk of hurting "wall's" feelings, I would have to go with roof. As shed architecture grows in size, the surface of the roof becomes vast, producing its own weather such as water pooling, heat island effects, etc. There is potential to reconfigure these massive horizontal surfaces to respond to and harvest from the atmospheric elements above.

Philippe Rahm: No walls, neither roof. We are looking for different solutions for stimulating an endogenous thermogenesis which develops little by little outside the body without ever becoming garment or house. Our work begins at this moment, by recomposing space from necessities of the body, by mitigating one-by-one lacks and deficits. Architecture is here a juxtaposition of elements which each answers a lack, an incapacity, those provoked by the coolness of the winter for exemple. Architecture closer to and in the body, which brings element by element answers, heat, nutriments.

Rory Hyde: I'm thoroughly pleased to have the use of both walls and a roof.

Wes Jones: Walls.

IS ARCHITECTURE A FAIR-WEATHER FRIEND?

Charles Holland: No, but she is a harsh mistress.

Dong-Ping Wong: You mean only a friend when it's convenient? An odd question. Though I guess no, since it's always there whether it's convenient for it or not. It's not like architecture doesn't show up because it would rather watch SportsCenter. Or do you mean a friend of fair weather? In which case, who isn't a friend of fair weather? Storm chasers, I suppose.

Nicholas de Monchaux: No. architecture is never more your friend when it allows you to occupy an environment whose atmosphere—in content, precipitation or turbulence—are otherwise hostile to human habitation.

Philippe Rahm: If we want to know the essence of architecture, we finally have to return to our "endothermic" condition: the necessity of maintaining a body temperature at 37° Celsius. Architecture exists because of the enzymes necessary for the biochemical reactions of the human metabolism. Present by billions in our body, these molecules can work in an optimal way only at a temperature between 35° and 37.6° C. So man has to maintain his constant physical temperature independently of the outside temperature. For that purpose, he composes with internal means of his own body such as various mechanisms of physiological thermoregulation and external means of the body such as clothing and/or construction of shelter. So architecture is not autonomous. It really goes into the range of the means to maintain our temperature close to 37°. It is an answer to a steep decline or increase of the body temperature with, by examples, vasodilatation mechanisms, sweating, thirst or muscular contractions. These answers are remotely applied or associated. They develop themselves from nature to artificial, microscopic to macroscopic, biochemical to meteorological, food to urbanization, between physiological determinism and pure cultural freedom. In this mission, architecture appears as a bigger way of vasoconstriction, or, conversely, feeding appears as a smaller variant of architecture. Because finally architecture is nothing else than a shape increased by mechanisms of physical thermoregulators, an increased form, exogenous change and artificial thermogenesis or thermolysis.

Rory Hyde: Architecture and I get along best in foul weather. We both can agree the best time for designing is when there's no competition with the sun outside. (It's odd though to be working on a beach house in Australia; real summer heat is difficult to imagine right now.)

IS ARCHITECTURE BIASED AGAINST EXTREME SHIFTS IN WEATHER?

Andy Lantz: I don't even know how to respond to this. I am afraid I would speak only in metaphors.

Charles Holland: It doesn't like it. Most of the effort goes on excluding it from entry.

Dong-Ping Wong: Form, yes, facades, no.

Jürgen Mayer H: So far it seems to condition in a parallel universe with pockets of air stagnation.

Neeraj Bhatia: I think architecture is jealous of weather. Weather is everything contemporary architecture desires—it is ephemeral, dynamic, atmospheric, light, etc. Simultaneously, however, I think architects like to order the seeming "chaos," which is understandable as this notion forms the foundation of the discipline. The outside world, however, has typically been viewed as volatile and dangerous. Why respond to weather, when the task has always been to separate the interior from exterior? I think architecture is now more interested in understanding and dealing with dynamic systems in a less defensive manner. Recent interests in Landscape Urbanism/Ecological Urbanism reveal a new concern for fluctuating systems and how form operates in time.

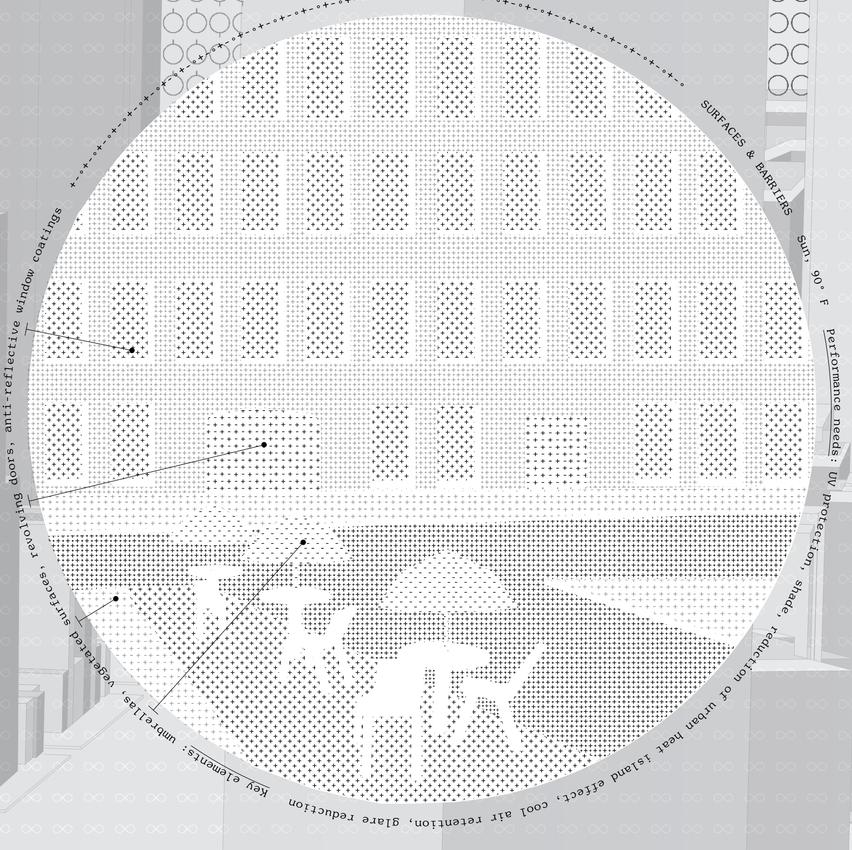
Nicholas de Monchaux: No, just against the new volatility of climate. While weather is the action of air, storm and cloud, climate is the underlying condition of atmosphere at any point on the earth's surface (the word originally meant a band of latitude). While man-made climate change has increasingly volatile weather as its main symptom, our architectures are better adapted for extremes than they are for the steady displacement in climate to come.

Philippe Rahm: From an anthropological point of view, when we think that we are too cold, or the opposite, when we think that we are too warm, we find the cause outside of ourselves, in an inadequate outside climate, at an atmospheric level. And we try to make this outside climate comfortable by correcting it—that is the origin and the mission of architecture. In reality, the first signs of architecture are physiological and totally internal and autonomous, to perspire if it is too warm or to shiver if it is too cold. They are the first answers to a rise or a reduction of the body temperature due to an unfavorable thermal environment.

After these endogenous corrections, if nevertheless the body does not manage to compensate the too-cold or too-warm temperature of the outside environment, the range of the geographical corrections develops. First action of correction is a movement, that of migration or transhumance, to move, to change place, to pass from the cold to the warm environment, to put ourselves in the sun or in the shade. The second action is to get dressed or to undress, to wear white clothes that reflect the heat or to dress in thick clothes which isolate. The third action is the one, to build shade and freshness artificially or to build sheltered places, without air movement and warmth. These exogenous measures which we take from the outside world are only an outside body projection, outside a phenomenon of thermogenesis when it is too cold or of thermolyse when it is too warm. To paraphrase Vitruvius, architecture in cold countries or winter appears as an increased, exogenous thermogenesis, outside the body. And architecture from warm countries or summer gives itself as an exteriorized thermolyse, correcting artificially the uncomfortable part of nature.

THE FIRST SIGNS OF ARCHITECTURE ARE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND TOTALLY INTERNAL AND AUTONOMOUS, TO PERSPIRE IF IT IS TOO WARM OR TO SHIVER IF IT IS TOO COLD.

THE TASK IS NO LONGER TO BUILD IMAGES AND FUNCTIONS BUT TO OPEN UP CLIMATES AND INTERPRETATIONS.



Rory Hyde: Buildings mediate and moderate weather volatility, but architectural form can be largely independent. To respond to the weather—except in extreme environments—is a hollow idea.

Sean Lally: No…it discriminates against all weather equally.

Wes Jones: The best architecture is not.

IS ARCHITECTURE MORE CLOSELY RELATED WITH WEATHER OR CLIMATE?

Andy Lantz: Climate. Weather is too impromptu, unpredictable and volatile, whereas climate is the overarching system within which weather manifests itself—it sets the parameters through which the exciting stuff happens.

Charles Holland: Increasingly weather, as in, buildings are more and more the same everywhere in the world whatever the climate.

Dong-Ping Wong: Weather as a necessity, then climate as an ambition.

Markus Miessen: Why either/or? Its like hardware and software—you need both in order to run a system. Architecture is a complex means to deal with both weather and climate; through borders on the one hand and circulation on the other.

Neeraj Bhatia: Unfortunately climate. I think that architecture as a "permanent" medium typically addresses dynamic processes by configuring for extreme circumstances in a defensive manner. In this regard the longer scaled readings of climatic extremes sets up the standards for the envelope. While heating and air conditioning were amazing inventions, I wonder if they stunted the development of architectural innovation in regards to envelope.

Nicholas de Monchaux: Architecture is situated in climate but responds specifically to weather (See previous question.) Perhaps crucially, the ancient greek "Klima," from which climate takes its name, refers not just to a latitude of weather but also to more ephemeral climates—emotional, legal, intellectual and ethical.

Philippe Rahm: We are looking towards a meteorological architecture. Climate change is forcing us to rethink architecture radically, to shift our focus away from a purely visual and functional approach towards one that is more sensitive, more attentive to the invisible, climate-related aspects of space. Slipping from the solid to the void, from the visible to the invisible, from metric composition to thermal composition, architecture as meteorology opens up additional, more sensual, more variable dimensions in which limits fade away and solids evaporate. The task is no longer to build images and functions but to open up climates and interpretations. At the large scale, meteorological architecture explores the atmospheric and poetic potential of new construction techniques for ventilation, heating, dual-flow air renewal and insulation. At the microscopic level, it plumbs novel domains of perception through skin contact, smell and hormones. Between the infinitely small of the physiological and the infinitely vast of the meteorological, architecture must build sensual exchanges between body and space and invent there new aesthetical philosophies approaches capable of making long-term changes to the form and the way we will inhabit buildings tomorrow.

Sean Lally: I guess designing climate would be like the "international style," while designing weather would be a vernacular.

Wes Jones: Climate, though more closely engaged by weather.

THIS SURVEY NOTWITHSTANDING, ARE YOU GETTING MORE OR LESS WORK DONE THAN USUAL?

Jürgen Mayer H: Snow prohibits travelling for some days now, and being stuck an extra day in the office says it all.

Neeraj Bhatia: Less, I think it's the warmer weather in Houston…

SPACESUIT/MOON OR NUDE BODY/WOODSTOCK?

Andy Lantz: Nude, but on the moon. Is that allowed? Probably would need a capsule or enclosure of sorts because current spacesuits look like hell.

Dong-Ping Wong: Nude Body/Moon. Moons?

Jürgen Mayer H: Seasonal attire!

Markus Miessen: Nude body, sauna, alpine lake, Japanese kimono, good book, the end.

Neeraj Bhatia: I am waiting to be nude on the moon!

Nicholas de Monchaux: Perhaps predictably, the spacesuit and moon. From Milton onwards, the capitalized space became a particularly fascinating architectural concept—that environment we could not enter, or survive, without technological mediation. From the first French balloonists—who experienced frightening "earaches, headaches and cold"—this environment has been an environment of heroic adventure for the human body—and practical fragility. Above three miles, or 15,000 feet, of altitude unacclimatized human beings need oxygen to survive longer than several hours, and above seven miles, or 35,000 feet, a pressurized environment is necessary to avoid eventual unconsciousness and death. As such, the spacesuit—none more than the Apollo A7L, made by the Playtex bra company—is a unique surface on which, in a technological age, we fashion our most essential ideas of dwelling.

Rory Hyde: Spacesuit. I suffer from allergies.

Sean Lally: Can I be nude in the space suit?

Wes Jones: As a Californian the latter is more appealing and likely.

(INSERT A QUESTION TO YOURSELF)

Charles Holland: Following Archigram, if it's snowing on Oxford Street do you notice the buildings or the snow? Answer: Neither, you notice the Xmas decorations.

Jürgen Mayer H: Hot or cool? Warm!

Philippe Rahm: It is clear that these steps all have a definite objective, which is to combat global warming by reducing CO_2 emissions. But over and above that goal, beyond such socially responsible and ecological objectives, might not climate be a new architectural language, a language for architecture rethought with meteorology in mind? Might it be possible to imagine climatic phenomena such as convection, conduction or evaporation for example as new tools for architectural composition? Could vapor, heat or light become the new bricks of contemporary construction?

Rory Hyde: I heard that Europeans sometimes go to the tanning salon as a remedy for seasonal depression, but I can't believe it works. Does it?

Sean Lally: Do you feel like this discussion of weather is more of just a stand-in for seeking other materials and techniques for defining the physical boundaries that construct architecture and design, and not actually controlling weather or simply accommodating it through new technologies?… Yes…yes I do.

Neeraj Bhatia: Cave or Campfire? Despite working in a cave-like space, I am much more optimistic for the potentials of the gradients in the campfire. The soft separations through temperature can configure a new type of architecture that is an open field condition, which is a very powerful notion. As a discipline, I think we are at a moment where we are ready to step out of the cave.