



[Reclaiming Land Pt. I: Property in Crisis](#): Have You Thought About the Land You Live on Now?

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Reclaiming Land Pt. I: Property in Crisis was the first iteration of the three-part seminar *Reclaiming Land*, held on September 21st and led by Architecture faculty Janette Kim and the Urban Works Agency research lab at CCA. The event asked participants to reimagine the role of property and restructure it away from the lens of the “private.” Questions of properties—such as who owns them, who lives in them, who profits off of them—often deal with complicated issues such as racial inequity, climate, defunded public health, and exploitative markets. The ideas shared at the symposium called for the de-commodification of property for racial and social equity, challenging the dominant notion of property as belonging solely to an individual buyer.

Kim began the event by explaining how there are different lenses through which property can be framed. She gave an example of the Muwekma Ohlone tribe’s Indigenous lands, Huichin and Yelamu, on which CCA campuses are located. CCA campuses’ historical background recognizes Indigenous cultural heritage, finally integrating a land acknowledgment into daily practice. I was surprised to have just learned the names of the Indigenous stewards of this land as a student who has studied in CCA for more than two years. I hadn’t thought about the history of the land and its relationship to the Muwekma Ohlone tribe. Now, I would like to explore these hidden stories more deeply, as teaching students about this Indigenous presence is also part of community engagement.

There were a few guest speakers who talked about different forms of properties. Noni Session, from the East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative, had an awe-inspiring

speech. Housing is always a hot topic of discussion in the Bay area. The housing market prices are incredibly high, and many people cannot afford houses here and have been pushed out of the community they were born into. EBPREC was formed as an organization led by people of color who take lands and houses on the speculative housing market and turn them into affordable housing. It is a community organization that focuses on equal housing development in partnership with the government. EBPREC wants to break the security laws and protect the smallholders, such as tenant groups, as they have fewer rights under such security laws. If that is accomplished, East Bay residents can live in affordable housing thanks to the collective powers of residents.

It has been a few months since I attended this event. Covid-19 is still spreading and does not end yet. With this hindsight, I want to discuss the questions of ownership. Many people are required to stay and work from home, meaning we spend most of our time at home. In order to buy a house and be completely in control of our living quarters, we have to prepare a lot of money to buy a house. If we do not own a house or land, we can rent an apartment but maybe share some common areas. We do not have that much choice in where and how we live. During Covid-19 times, living with many people increases the chance of spreading and catching the disease, but many do not have the choice to live alone. Some people lose their jobs, so they become homeless. As our living habits have changed during these months of quarantine, we might have to re-think what we value and what is valued in a home post-Covid.

Reclaiming Land Pt. 1: Property in Crisis taught its participants about different means to know land. Resilience management and strategy are the ability to face a crisis and prevent an accident from happening. This symposium helped me learn how to recognize the value of labor, rights, and ownership embedded into questions of property. I appreciated that the speakers discussed such problems that are easy to ignore; for example, the homelessness crisis across the Nation is indeed a crisis, but it is not treated as such by citizens and politicians. In the Bay Area, the topic of race is closely related to community, so we have to understand the culture to know more about local properties and the function of property within a community.

Reclaiming Land Pt. 1: Property in Crisis was organized by the CCA Architecture Division and part of the Architecture Lecture Series for Fall 2020, and presented by CCA's Urban Works Agency research lab.

Do you have questions or opinions about this response? Have you seen an event at CCA you'd like to report on? Please email exhibitions@cca.edu to contribute to our Letters to the Editor series, or to submit to *Review Rewind Respond*.

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