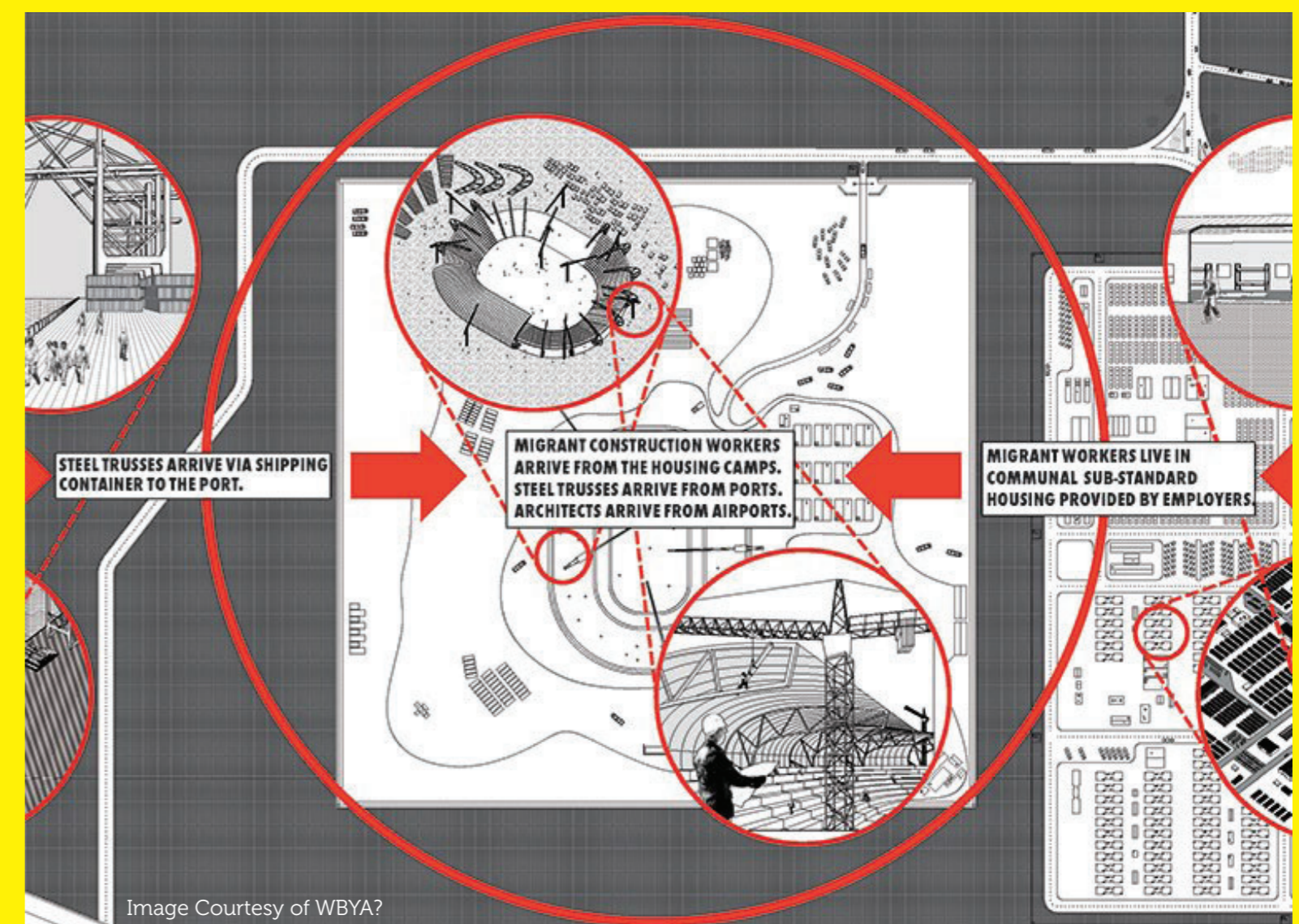


WHO BUILDS

YOUR

ARCHITECTURE?

MABEL O. WILSON



RMIT Architecture invites you to a presentation by Mabel O. Wilson on the 'Who Builds Your Architecture?' project followed by a conversation with students and staff.

Date: Friday 24th May, 2019

Time: 11:00am

**Location: RMIT Design Hub,
Level 10, Pavilion 1**

Professor Mabel O. Wilson is a New York-based designer and cultural historian whose research and teaching examines the impact of social inequalities on architecture and the built environment, with a focus on politics and cultural memory in black America. At Columbia University she is a Professor of Architecture, a co-director of Global Africa Lab and the Associate Director at the Institute for Research in African American Studies.

Professor Wilson's trans-disciplinary practice, Studio And, has been a competition finalist for several important cultural institutions including Lower Manhattan's African Burial Ground Memorial and the Smithsonian's National Museum for African American History and Culture (with Diller Scofidio + Renfro). She has authored *Begin with the Past: Building the National Museum of African American History and Culture* (2016) and *Negro Building: African Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (2012). Professor Wilson is also a founding member of *Who Builds Your Architecture? (WBYA?)*, a collective that advocates for fair labour practices on building sites worldwide.

WBYA? is a coalition of architects, activists, scholars, and educators that tackles the pressing question: who builds your architecture? to examine the links between labour, architecture and the global networks that form around building buildings. As major architectural projects unfold in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and around the globe, and as architects from the US increasingly work abroad, we explore the ethical, social and political questions that emerge under these relatively new circumstances. From workers' rights to construction practices to design processes to new technologies WBYA? investigates the role of architecture & architects: what it is & what it could be.

We name our group in the form of a question in order to jumpstart a discussion amongst our colleagues in architecture as well as collaborators in related disciplines. For us this one question sparks many other enquiries where we need to rethink ethics, new technologies, professional practice, activism and education. Ultimately, our aim is to investigate contemporary forms of globalization where architecture takes central stage, and to address critical questions, such as:

What are the architects' ethical responsibilities toward those who erect their buildings around the world? Where do these construction workers come from and what does architecture demand from them? How do new technologies transform construction methods as well as communication? Addressing labour-intensive manual labour? Or workers' rights? Or site oversight? If low-cost labour enables architects' uninhibited creative expression, what is the human cost? 'WBYA?' collaborators include; Kadambari Baxi, Jordan Carver, Laura Diamond Dixit, Tiffany Rattray, Mabel O. Wilson, and Lindsey Wikstrom Lee.