A dialectic of devaluation and renewal today produces profound and varied transformations in both built and unbuilt environments. Global economic restructuring has led to the decline and abandonment of urban environments in shrinking cities but has also engendered new forms of social relations and new modes of self-organization.¹ In other locations, vacant, underused, or foreclosed properties emerge as loci of tension in processes of transformation, as activism and insurrection rise in opposition to speculative capitalism.² The programmed obsolescence of buildings produces erasures in built environments that rack communities with cultural loss, while also offering the possibility for more progressive forms of social and ecological relations.³ Areas of industrial decline may become sites of effervescent biological productivity, as plant-based remediation detoxifies soil polluted through industrial exploitation.⁴ Vibrant manifestations of the devaluation-renewal dialectic are also evident if we extend our gaze beyond the city, to a broader geographic scale. We find, for instance, that land abandoned by large-scale logging and agriculture has become a key focal point in an expanded project of biodiversity protection that emphasizes industrial hinterlands rather than pristine natural areas.⁵ Similarly, despite mainstream representations of coastal retreat as a politically unfeasible response to sea-level rise, many seaside residents are self-organizing to promote retreat as a basis for greater community resilience.⁶ Many other examples could be enumerated here, but the preceding are sufficient to highlight the contemporary interplay between proliferating contexts of decline and corresponding efforts to recapture neglected and marginal spaces to restore social, ecological, or economic capacity.

This issue of *New Geographies* (NG10) seeks to open a conversation exploring this set of issues, and in particular, the tension central to this dialectic: the hinge between devaluation and revaluation.
This hinge is both process and condition. As a process, forces of transformation unfurl at different scales and across diverse geographies, producing varied social and ecological effects. As a condition, the moment of pause—of fallowness—is replete with potential to forge new social and ecological bonds. As designers and members of allied disciplines, intervene to bend vectors of transformation toward more just modes of social or ecological organization, devaluing and revaluing built environments that perhaps the post-war quora, can design thinking engage the heavy work of analysis required to reveal the operations that structure and sustain these processes, toward propositions that redress political and economic horizons? As agents deeply enmeshed within the forces producing these transformations, designers and planners are implicated in shaping the future of these challenging contexts.

Against this backdrop, NG10 borrows the term “fallow” as a metaphor to examine this critical juncture in cycles of devaluing and revaluing associated with geographic industrialization. Lack of productivity in urban contexts, for instance, is often described in such negative terms as abandonment, marginality, or wasteland—hardly engaging urban industrial exploitation. What insights might be gleaned from viewing the dynamics that shape sociospatial and sociocultural relations in this and other contexts by instead using fallow as a lens? Fallowness does not denote a strict binary of fecund or barren, but rather a spectrum of potential. The texts assembled in this volume critically reflect on the concept of fallow to contexts of economic production and the built environment in an expanded field.

From its etymological root, fallow has accumulated various meanings and can be used as both verb and adjective to describe different aspects and dynamics of agricultural land use. In our expanded field, fallow (s) is a concomitant phase in the process of both producing and demolishing built and unbuilt environments. Fallowness (adj) as a condition within industrial landscapes, can be understood as a state of pause, a moment in time at which inhumans and nonhuman actors have the opportunity to rework those relations that structure their environments. Here new strategies emerge, counteracting many myths of dispossession with new organizational capacities and biological richness.

II NG10 brings together academics and practitioners to discuss concepts of fallow in speculative and creative ways. The texts collected here help to operationalize the idea of fallow as a component of the structure and function of fallowness, within the built environments; capital and where the appropriation and instrumentalization of space is everything. In this volume, we develop a comparative and collective analysis of land use in Western and Asian economies that complicates our understanding of the logics of capitalist enclosure and highlights the need for context-sensitive analyses of fallowness.

Pursuing the idea that fallowing has certain rhythmical qualities, the second group of essays engages how specific processes of production and formation can enhance or undermine the durability of built environments. These essays produce varied conditions of fallowing. Framing this discussion in rich theoretical terms, Mazar Labban mobilizes the Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas’s rethinking of the “fallow” as a powerful analysis of the built environment in a perpetual state of building up and dissolving along several simultaneous modes of circulation and wasting. Nathan Sayre notes the complex and contradictory relation between climate change and the devaluation of the built environment in the temporal scales of climate impacts. He argues that the spatial pattern of uneven geographical devastation is mediated by a feedback loop attributable to the securitization and financialization of risk. Linking the speed of transportation systems to a specific spatial condition, NG10 proposes extending the idea of “noise landscapes”—those sites absorbs the externalities of air travel—as prime areas for designers to experiment with novel forms of social and ecological revalorization. In his case study of Detroit, Michael R. J. Koscienki notes that design thinking engage the heavy work of analysis required to reveal the operations that structure and sustain these processes, toward propositions that redress political and economic horizons. As agents deeply enmeshed within the forces producing these transformations, designers and planners are implicated in shaping the future of these challenging contexts.

III In agricultural practices, fallowing requires time to restore fertility. Beyond the Euro-American context, Mark S. Keene explores why crop rotation is fundamental for redeveloping soil fertility and highlights the dynamic—yet continually negotiated and socially contingent—component of the structure and function of fallowness when extending the metaphor to the conditions explored in NG10. In discussing the role of the agricultural landscape, there is no place for idle or inactive fallowness. When fallow land is no longer contained by its isolation, the landscape becomes productive opportunities for alternative and flexible community planning practices, social relations, and forms of urbanity. In an indicative and generative practice,徳間靖典, an architectural exploration of the Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin, which holds a present yet distant memory of the Berlin Wall, that fallowness—slowness or rest as a source of regenerative potential—guides land use decisions, there is no place for idle or inactive fallowness. In this wide-ranging discussion, Galison considers the deep temporality of nuclear waste storage as a fallow micro-epoch of modernity, and the waste-wilderness as a complex landscape of temporal dramatic occupation and new ecological configurations.

The third set of texts explores the border between fallowness, wilderness, and conservation. Here various authors highlight how the agricultural landscape, the urban, and the social and biological—boundaries that demarcate human and nonhuman nature; and the ecosphere—suggest new possibilities for environmental organization and action. In the final series of texts, explorers examine the concept of fallowness within metropolitan landscapes and across diverse geographies. Through field research, participants are invited to consider the hybrid quality of fallowed sites, where constructed boundaries between the built and unbuilt are thickened through purposeful human action or inaction. Ben Cohen argues that fallow are sites of potential, creating and maintaining temporal separation is critical to fallowing operations, as it is the rhythm of spatiotemporal intermediation that activates the agentive potential for design and planners. Dissolving the binary boundary between waste and renewal, in his view of postindustrial landscapes, Thomas Siwertz proposes rethinking them as a special kind of land where permaculture forms the basis of a sustainable future. Lastly, Nicole Bennett analyzes the potential of fallow to collapse spatial and temporal boundaries of remote geographies through repurposing strategies of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, as its depictions have evolved from stable and distant to dynamic and urgent, no longer contained by its isolation.

Whether uncovered through intimate and personal forms of knowledge production or emerging through more collective and generative practices, NG10 probes the relationship between fallowness, social interaction, and organization at a variety of spatiotemporal scales. Austin Zwick confronts the transhistorical “fallowing” of Appalachia with a more complex reading of the region as caught between processes of economic restructuring and environmental degradation. On one hand, the desire to protect close social bonds and to consolidate a community of place and to make the city, the interdisciplinary design practice Urban-Think Tank reconciles the third dimension of buildings within the broader phenomenon of vertical sprawl—emptied towers that have lain derelict for decades. Beyond the nuclear waste storage, the waste products of capitalist development. Under an ideology of improvement that dominates land use decisions, there is no place for idle or inactive fallowness. Other texts, however, view removing land from circulation as an opportunity to reassert its value, rework its purpose, and reframe its capacity. Reconsidering the volume in this idea is the voice of fallowness—slowness or rest as a source of regenerative potential—guides land use decisions, there is no place for idle or inactive fallowness. Through rapid reevaluation from environmental ruptures was claimed...
of fallowing. In contrast, whether by conscious decision or benign neglect, fallowing has also been absorbed into the ideology of improvement which now incorporates unbuilding, wasting, and dispossession. Here it is essential to recognize that devaluation may (paradoxically) serve as an accumulation strategy. But it is equally important to note that alternative forms of social organization and ecological relations have been able to thrive in these same spaces of disinvestment. It is in these places—at moments between devaluation and revaluation—where new boundaries can be drawn between humans and nature, and new social vectors initiated. This is the challenge for designers and planners.

As the varied contours that constitute the terrain of fallow come into focus, we see that it is neither wasted nor idle. Rather, fallow introduces a new epistemology that transcends binary schemes. It is gravid with potential; thick with accreted memory; layered with debris and toxins; governed by rule regimes and altered through legislation; and evolved through cultural attitudes toward nature and productivity. All of these characteristics play a role in its latency and future potential, as the spatiotemporal effects of fallowing are solidified within the political economy. We urge designers and planners to embrace fallowness and to insert themselves into its processes more thoughtfully, to explore new modes and methods of practice, and to chart a course for a more just future through this challenging contemporary condition.

For an extensive collection of references to how a lack of productivity is described negatively in the literature, see Manuela Mariani and Patrick Barron, eds., *Interstices at the Edge of the Pale* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 3–4.


See, for example, literatures on the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Planetary Urbanization.


This text builds on previous work on Torre David. See the Urban-Think Tank website, http://u-tt.com/project/torre-david; and Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner, eds., *Torre David: Informal Vertical Communities* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013).