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**OFFICE AESTHETICS:
NARRATIVES AROUND
CONTEMPORARY LABOR
THROUGH REPRESENTATIONS
OF OFFICE SPACES**

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Abstract

In today's office, work is equally carried out and narrated through aesthetics. The visual and textual representations of contemporary workspaces popularized by design and architecture firms, social media, and pop culture have a major influence in how we conceive work, how we value it, and how we perform it. This article presents the study of *office aesthetics*—a concept that designates the visual homogeneity of the architecture, interior design, and supplies found in offices throughout the world—and its relation to the narratives around work within the current neoliberal system, which perpetuate excessive, meaningless, and precarious labor, which is often gendered and racialized.

Keywords

Offices, Labor, Work, Labor Studies, Architecture, Design, Workspace, Precarious Labor, Gendering Processes

1. Introduction

Office Aesthetics is a research project that analyzes relevant literature on concepts such as work, labor, gender, post-work imaginaries, precarious and immaterial labor, as well as a visual study of contemporary office spaces. This second part is informed by architecture and design books, as well as online resources, which offer visual representations of offices,¹ that communicate a very particular narrative about labor and the workplace, which turned out to be completely opposite from the theoretical insights consulted for this paper. This narrative is constructed through the visual representation of offices as well as through the texts that accompany these images, both which create a rhetoric where work is everywhere, and where work is the only option.

This article uses both sources as a way of understanding the narratives around contemporary labor in a somewhat conflicting display of perspectives. By putting them side by side, they will hopefully present a wider perspective on what is labor today. What follows is a series of examples of how contemporary offices are built, designed, used, and promoted. Following this, there is an analysis of the relationship these spaces have with the way in which we narrate work, and suggest other possibilities of what that work could be—and look like—instead.



Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 (clockwise, left to right)

2. Open plan: «*People connected to people and not to desks or rooms*»

At present, open plan offices are one of the most popular office designs. However, the conception of this floor plan dates back to the 1950s, when it was rapidly disliked by those working there.² These open workplaces are often marketed—by both architects and the companies that decide to adopt them—as productivity boosting and facilitators of human interaction and creative collaborations, but many studies have proven quite the contrary, as open offices tend to be too loud and distracting for employees, as well as harmful for their physical and mental health.³

The internet-based companies that conformed what was known as the dot-bubble injunction⁴ at the end of the last century brought with them an idea of the workplace as a mobile and dynamic space, which is perhaps one of its most notable and lasting legacies. To this day, new corporate discourses still claim to challenge “traditional” structures by using open floors, which they promote as democratic workplaces where all employees can interact and collaborate with each other freely. Let’s take, for example, the following descriptions of advertising agency Leo Burnett Office in Singapore, and tech company Neology in Mexico City, respectively, which have adopted an open floor workspace:

In this large open space the creative talent is united around a series of open-plan desks that allow for individuals to either collaborate or concentrate on their own.⁵

With a focus on open-plan space, the office comprises only two enclosed environments—for private meetings, interviews or making important phone calls—and two management offices; although these are flexible enough to be adapted into make-shift meeting rooms when the senior directors are out.⁶

After seeing and reading about open offices, what I tried to analyze was if this change was truly a structural one or just a spatial redistribution of the same ways of performing waged labor. The second quote, for example, implies that the private management offices are not *flexible* enough, and that the same hierarchies that differentiate the “senior directors” from the rest of the employees remain quite visibly functional. This is relevant because the term *flexible* was a word that kept reappearing in many of the accounts of open plan offices consulted for this text. But as much as it was praised, I believe that it actually reflects, quite ironically, how work, even the kind which has been historically enjoyed by the most privileged amongst society, has become more and more precarious.

Melissa Gregg, for example, demonstrates that such flexibility in fact allows organizations to hire fixed-term contract employees who perform vital tasks without any of the benefits of regular, salaried job.⁷ And, indeed, many of the offices reviewed were actually prepared for this “flexible” positions: there were plenty of “hot desks” ready for anonymous workers that would come to work only for a short period of time, or even whole offices “where no one had a fixed position [...] where all phones were mobile—people connected to people and not to desks or rooms.”⁸

The concept of “flexibility,” when seen through these office design “innovations,” is most definitely related to precarity, as Gregg explains: “[i]n recent labor politics, ‘precarity’ has been used to describe the feeling of threat inherent to jobs with flexible conditions that bring an inevitable degree of financial and existential insecurity. For precarity theorists, labor conditions are a battle over a worker’s relationship to time. Precarious work involves living with constant uncertainty.”⁹ While architects may claim that the work culture of the past century was inflexible and isolating,¹⁰ and that today’s culture is instead flexible and social, what these “flexible workspaces” manifest is quite the contrary. Flexibility here only means that organizations can now impose this financial and existential insecurity more easily, and at the same time they get to advertise proudly their *alternative open working spaces*.

The absurdity of this is much better described in the following testimony from David Graeber’s *Bullshit Jobs*, in which Irene, a bank employee, succinctly describes what the term flexibility truly means in her workplace: “On top of the metrics, there were the cruel, patronizing

‘flexibility’ and ‘mindfulness’ seminars. No, you can’t work fewer hours. No, you can’t get paid more. No, you can’t choose which bullshit projects to decline. But you can sit through this seminar, where the bank tells you how much it values flexibility.”¹¹

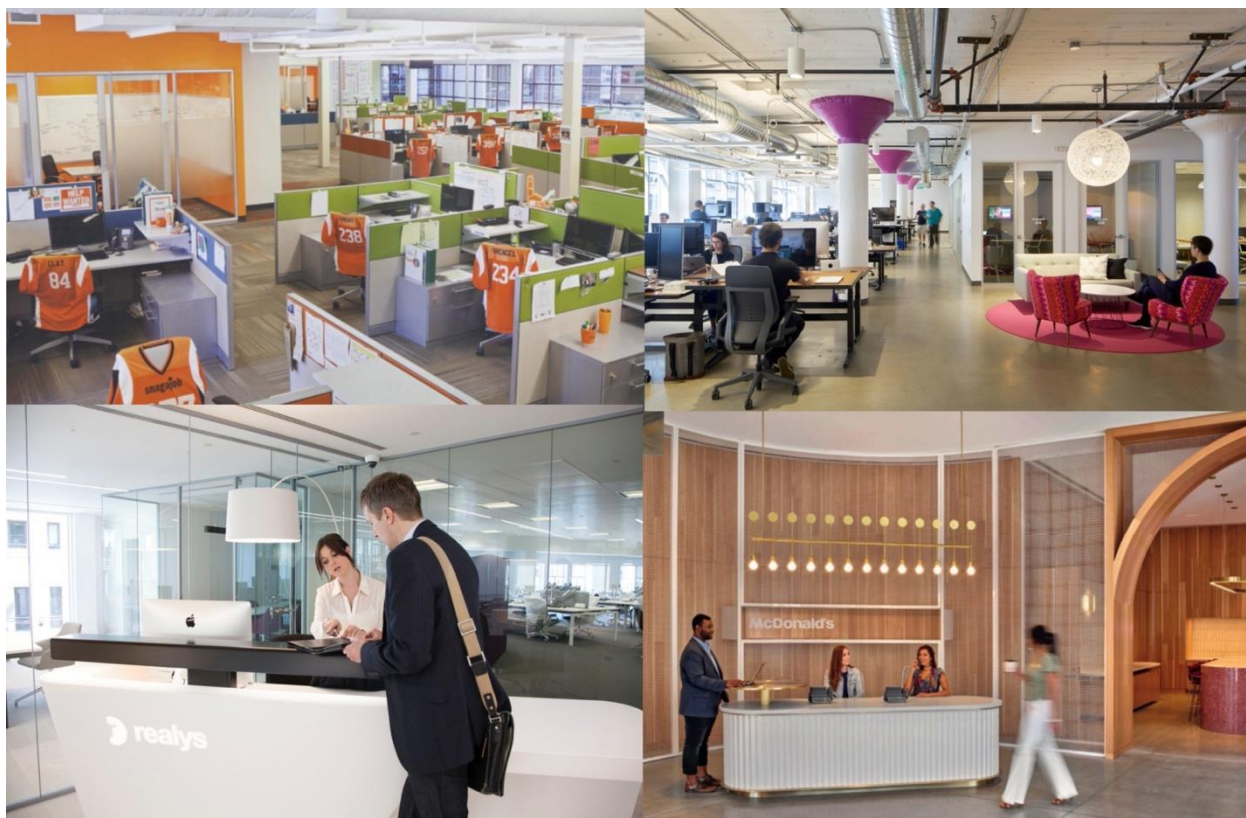
As this testimony points out, the supposedly “transformative” elements of the office are, in reality, only a discourse that organizations devise, propagate, but never actually put into practice when it comes to working conditions: from better economic compensations to creative development, nothing concrete is really improved by this rhetoric.

Instead, people in offices now find themselves working precarious jobs, just as many others in today’s labor market. Srnicek and Williams, authors of *Inventing the Future*, relate this development of work as follows:

Relative to the stable and well-paying careers of earlier generations, today’s jobs typically involve more casual working hours, low and stagnant wages, decreasing job protections and widespread insecurity. This trend towards precarity has a number of causes, but one of the primary functions of surplus population is that it enables capitalists to place extra pressure on the lucky few who have found a job.¹²

As seen in this quote, “flexible” conditions only benefit employers, as they do not only gain more economically (by lowering wages, not offering benefits, and not committing to pay a fixed number of working hours) but also create a deeper sense of vulnerability for those looking for work and those working, a social phenomenon that the authors have somberly labeled as “the misery of not being exploited.”¹³

Finally, there are also other, more evident and practical disadvantages to working in this type of open spaces. The most common complaint Melissa Gregg heard from the participants of her study (professionals from the areas of information, communication, and education) was that they couldn’t *work at work*, meaning that their workplaces were routinely full of distractions¹⁴ that made it impossible to fulfil their obligations there and, instead, had to be completed outside their working hours.¹⁵ Although these distractions were not exclusively caused by the design of the workplace alone (constant emailing and meetings were other top distractions), being unable to concentrate in one single task can be traced to working in such spaces. Employees, then, have to work at home to complete their tasks. And when this extra work is done at home, it has very different implications for male and female workers, as we will see next.



Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 (clockwise, left to right)

3. Lobbies and reception areas: «*She is our pride and joy*»¹⁶

For many of those who are familiar with labor studies, it is clear that workplaces are organized by normative conceptions of gender, race, age, class, and sexual orientations. And in the images that represent and narrate the contemporary office, this becomes clear right away. “Cool” office design aims to attract young people, while older employees constantly feel uncertain about their place in such spaces, where age is perceived as a problem. The images of a successful businessman are often—if not always—those of a heterosexual, strong, cis, white man that can control his emotions.¹⁷ Front and back doors are designed to regulate who is seen and who is not seen entering the office building; maintenance, cleaning, and other low-paid workers are even required to wear uniforms to distinguish them from the “white collar” employees.

It is important to acknowledge that all these factors intersect and shape the working conditions of many, in particular those in historically marginalized groups due to their race, ethnicity or class, and are just as important in any discussion and analysis of labor. This article, however, only focuses on how gender organizes the contemporary office, but it is good to remember that all these other elements are present in the workplace too, often found alongside gendering processes.

When analyzing offices, one does not have to go very far to find certain unmistakably gendered spaces. For this researcher, it did not take long to recognize that the lobbies and reception desks—the first area one sees when entering an office—were perhaps the most evident examples of how gender can organize and visually define the contemporary workplace. As I was searching for images of offices in design books, soon enough I realized that when I came across a photograph of a lobby in an office, a woman was behind the reception desk almost every time I saw such image, the alternative being a photo without any person in the frame. A search in *Office Snapshots*—an online source on global office design—threw mostly the same results: overall, women were sitting at reception, some desks were shared by a man¹⁸ and a woman, and very few other photos featured a man alone.

The texts that were consulted for this research on office design kept repeating buzzwords like “alternative work habits,”¹⁹ or insisting that their employees conform “a knowledge community that is in control of how it wants to work,”²⁰ but the reality shown by these images seemed to me very far away: while the *evolution of the workplace* might have taken place already in the blueprints designed by architects, the depiction of people, and in particular women, using these spaces proved the contrary.

Another aspect that is perhaps more important and influential here is the perception that many people *still have* of women in the workplace. The following extract from a text called “I’m the Manager, not the Receptionist,” published in 2016 by Emily Dunn, relates precisely this:

The number of interviews I have conducted where the candidate will speak over the top of me, direct the answers to the questions I have asked to the CEO and fail to shake my hand upon leaving is astounding. Yes, I have a notepad in front of me and take notes; no, this does not mean I am a secretary. Just last week I interviewed five males in a row. Of these five, only one made extended eye contact with me when answering the interview questions that I had asked. Three of the five only shook the CEO’s hand.²¹

There is, it seems, a persistent perception of women in the office as those who are there to receive visitors, take notes, or follow the instructions of male workers. It is not a coincidence, then, that women appeared and reappeared in so many photographs of reception desks: these images, then, not only represent this disparity found within offices, but perhaps this depiction can also help perpetuate it.

Yet, the sources consulted proved that the gender stereotypes that organize the workplace are not only represented visually in the space—for example by the fact that mostly female employees are portrayed sitting at reception desks—but these stereotypes are also created by the people who work and interact in these spaces. Office workers constantly construct a *perception*

of women in the workplace by the ways in which they believe how women are supposed to perform work and which kind of careers they should follow. For example, Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist's case study of a trainee program for young Business Administration graduates found out that the managers

reproduced the picture of a normal man and a normal woman. A normal man is the person who can build a career with support from his family—the source of balance and harmony. A normal woman is the person who bears children, but with that follows a responsibility that makes a top career impossible. For her, the family is no source of balance and harmony but rather something that takes all her attention, at least from the company's point of view.²²

Although the author explains that the managers in charge of this program were in fact aware of workplace gender inequalities, the quote above demonstrates that they could also not escape from the powerful influence that normative gendered perceptions generate regarding the career progression of women and men. So, although women do not face anymore a systemic imposition of certain roles within an organization, the perceptions that employees themselves have of them, particularly those in higher positions such as the managers, still play an important role in defining the kind of careers women end up pursuing.

Finally, this perception is not restricted only to co-workers. Yvonne Benschop and Hans Doorewaard's study on gendering in the Dutch banking system also revealed the aggravating perception of clients when assisted by female bank employees: "Female consultants, for instance, are regularly confronted with clients who think them secretaries [,] and women at the telephone help-desk of Loans report clients to ask explicitly for 'one of the men', even if they have to wait longer."²³ Benschop and Doorewaard's case study further demonstrates how influential gendered stereotypes are in society at large.

As mentioned earlier, other disturbing findings when it came to women in the office were related to their apparent innate nature as caregivers. Consider, for example, the following quotes that quickly relate female workers to emotional labor:

The reliance on women workers also undoubtedly influenced the development of comfortable office environments, as employees bring with them the experience of creating such environments at home and the expectation of maintaining such comfort at work.²⁴

Women have been steadily more integrated into the workforce, and given much more meaningful roles. So have minorities and, lately, the elderly. This has humanized the workplace and made it more truly emotionally resonant and a more complete mirror of the rest of the life.²⁵

These two quotes are a selection from many other similar statements that consistently equated women in the office with emotional labor, however oblivious of it the authors of those texts might have been. As it has already been established by many, the work that women have performed at home throughout history has not only been unremunerated but also invisibilized as the motor of capitalist production and surplus.²⁶ This labor, of care, of emotions, and mainly immaterial, that women have to perform often—both at home and at the workplace—is seen here as innate, as if women exclusively had the capacity to create nicer or more meaningful working environments, no matter that this task is most of the time unremunerated and not even acknowledged.

As administrative tasks entail many forms of emotional labor—as well as many others of material, physical work—, women are then immediately linked to them, no matter what their *actual* position is within the organization. Amanda Sinclair’s study on bodies and leadership, for example, supports this view by analyzing the different ways in which leadership is embodied and expected from men and women. Her research discovered that “[w]omen in management roles—despite their seniority—are expected to answer phones, take minutes and embody nurturance through their tone of voice and demeanor.”²⁷ Gender thus defines and differentiates the same job roles, expecting of women more labor than their male counterparts.

The link between female labor and emotional labor is further analyzed by Melissa Gregg, who actually found out that not only the liberating promises of new technologies reveal themselves false in the contemporary workplace, but that they in fact create even more work, particularly for women. This happens precisely due to the second shift women have had to fulfill historically at home after their “day job” is over: taking care of the children or elderly family members, as well as having to deal with all the domestic work usually by themselves.²⁸ As opposed to the quote cited before where we read that women are used to creating comfortable environments at home and expect the same from the office, what Gregg explains is that, instead, “women’s extended history of working from home prepares them well for the mobile, multi-tasking, high-paced environment of the contemporary workplace.”²⁹

Gregg’s study cases also showed that, aside from women being expected to perform (even with gratitude) affective labor on top of the other material aspects of their jobs (administrative or physical), mobile devices and new technologies only made women move “between various phases of a never-ending working day” at the office *and at* home, which no matter if they happened to be double income households, the woman would inevitably carry out more responsibilities and a heavier workload.³⁰

The current global pandemic caused by covid-19, which has forced millions of people to work from home, has only made this dynamic clearer.³¹ Aliya Rao, a sociologist specialized in gender and unemployment, focuses on the spaces mothers and fathers use to work from home

during the pandemic, and how this can also indicate gender inequalities: “When both partners work at home in dual-earner couples, I’m wondering how the space of the home will be shared. For instance, if men’s jobs are prioritized, does this mean that they will get dedicated spaces to focusing on paid work, potentially away from the noise of children, and women won’t?”³² Once again, the extra work done from home tends to be unequally distributed between women and men, visually represented here through the use of these emergency home-work-spaces.

4. Home office: «A home away from home»

The office is nowadays not only a workspace, but a domestic space too. In the architecture sources researched for this paper, there were plenty of examples where companies deliberately searched for a home-like design and decor. Advertising agency TBW\CHIAT\DAY, for example, asked the architects in charge of redesigning their San Francisco headquarters “to refrain from using anything they would not wish to have in their homes.”³³ The Mexico City offices of design studio Archetonic, built on a structure that used to be a house in Lomas de Chapultepec residential neighborhood, also tries to merge an office space with a living space: “While some areas have been turned into traditional office environments, some still appear as though the space has been laid out for living in.”³⁴ Finally, a more extreme example of this tendency is that of Airbnb Sao Pablo’s offices, where they chose to replicate some of the houses rented on their platform “following the interiors to the letter. By setting a variety of rooms the designers created a mixture of environments that make up, quite literally, a home away from home. [...] Thus, the Airbnb office comprises sofas, not chairs; rotating work counters, not desks; and a yoga room.”³⁵

There were many more examples of offices adopting home and domestic features during this research, but it was perhaps the concept of “resimercial design” that resonated the most. The term *resimercial* results from the combination of the words residential and commercial, and refers to “[a] layout and furnishing style that brings the homey feel of residential furniture into the workplace. Resimercial design celebrates commercial quality, residential-inspired features over the sterile and standardized feel of corporate furnishings.”³⁶ This approach to office architecture tries to distance itself from “old corporate” design, while encouraging the idea that personal and professional spheres should not be separated anymore:

There was a time when keeping one’s personal life separate from the professional was good advice. But today, that no longer holds true. Younger employees don’t just want to work and go home—they look to form meaningful relationships with the colleagues they work with. Co-workers become more like extended families, often sharing meals, laughs or a post-work drink. Resimercial spaces cater to this change in professional behaviour much better than traditional offices.³⁷

Plenty of examples were found that, like the quote above, described an image of work merging with one's private life as an ideal, a goal to aim for. The way texts like this were written really struck the author of this text, as the language they used reinforced and even normalized the fact that our private life should now be brought to and enjoyed within the workplace. This style seemed utterly cynical, even opportunistic, not to mention the fact that people's actual experiences in offices might be very far away from this rhetoric where, apparently, millennials "place 'my job' equally or even ahead of 'my family' as their dream," and "have their best friends at work—including best friends who are customers."³⁸

The book *Dead Man Working* is a great example of what seems a more realistic portrait of life in an office, and even the extreme opposite of that uplifting language used in the quoted design sources. In this book, the authors relate with deep sorrow and hopelessness what they have defined as a *feeling of non-living* in various contemporary workplaces, from offices to warehouses.

Cederström and Fleming in fact emphasize the problematics of bringing home to the office by talking about a "formalized informality," which means that organizations demand from their employees *just to be themselves*³⁹ in order to profit from this imitation of life: "Extending workplace regulation by imitating life serves an important economic role when capitalism becomes super-reliant on human qualities like social intelligence, reciprocity, communication and shared initiative."⁴⁰ Then, when the workplace is presented as a space where you should not feel like you are working but perhaps just living, where you can decorate your working space with family photos or even play your favorite music, the reality of merging workspaces with home spaces can take away the freedom to live outside of work for many. And, at the same time, Cederström and Fleming's concept of *formalized informality* allows corporations to exploit people's social skills in a labor market that has become so reliant on content production, networking, creativity, and other forms of immaterial labor.

Finally, another important consequence of this phenomenon is that it can also diffuse the differences between the private and the public sphere in a more structural level. This is a reference to Kathi Weeks, who urges us to analyze the power relations found in the employment relationship, which according to her should not be conceived as an individual matter but as a systemic one. Weeks warns us that within this system, "[t]he workplace, like the household, is typically figured as a private space, the product of a series of individual contracts rather than a social structure, the province of human need and sphere of individual choice rather than a site for the exercise of political power."⁴¹ In this same line, when office design adapts the workplace to make it feel as if it were a home space, it can also be supporting a system wherein the problematics of work are never addressed as an issue at large that affects all those who work in an office.

5. Conclusions

Workplaces, office design, and the architecture of these spaces clearly narrate the ways in which we work today, perhaps more so than the actual work we perform there. Thus, it is crucial to understand and question the narratives that are created in those spaces, since these discourses have larger implications in our lives as individuals and members of the society. My point of view is that, in this larger scale, one of the most important consequences of contemporary office design and its visual and textual narratives is that they support, promote, and perpetuate a work-centered society, an idea thoroughly explored by Frayne in his book *The Refusal of Work*.

The fact that many of the images that were presented in this text are also those feeding public imaginaries of office life is one of the reasons why I believe studying office aesthetics is important in any critical study of contemporary labor. While these offices are only a small percentage of the millions of offices around the globe, they are still positioned as an ideal—perhaps never reached by many—, something to keep working for until one gains a cubicle inside a cloud or a desk shaped like a wave. That is, this ideal is also supporting and maintaining the centrality that works holds in our society.

As I have tried to establish throughout this article, the office as a workplace is not the democratic, equal space that the narratives studied sought to present and promote. Perhaps the term that could best summarize this attempt is one of the buzzwords that kept reappearing in the sources consulted: “work-life balance.” This concept—which is of course not particular to the realm of office design—creates an aura of individual control in which workers are portrayed as free agents that can determine the limits between work time and life time. And when it comes to work performed in offices, the term positions organizations as those who bestow this harmony to their employees, particularly through the kind of workspaces they provide.

The problem, it seems to me, is that the balance that turns out to be promoted is that in which employees have to balance work and life in the same space: the office. When the term work-life balance is used in this context, it might seem to indicate that new office design and labor practices are evolving to give people more time and space to pursuit personal interests outside their jobs, but in reality, that time and that space are actually just incorporated inside the workplace during work time, which then inevitably prolongates and even gets diffused with private time.

The concept of work-life balance erases the fact that life is also comprised of other types of labor that do not necessarily have to be waged but which allow our lives to be not exclusively within consumerism and commodity relations. In other words, while capitalism has shaped our worldview by establishing that we can only be inhabitants of this society as productive citizens who earn a wage in order to have a living, there are in fact many other aspects of life that require

a labor that is neither waged nor reproductive, but simply enjoyable and pleasurable, but which many do not have time to fulfill—perhaps because some of them are trapped in an office.

Picking mushrooms, practicing new printmaking techniques, or learning how to ride a bike without holding the handlebars—to mention some of the things I personally enjoy more than the jobs I have had in order to earn a living wage—are just some examples of activities which involve labor but are not waged nor do they have to balance out work in order to be satisfactory or relevant. I believe it is important to recognize these activities as a source of pure fulfillment and enjoyment and, most importantly, let them be outside capitalist and commodity relations in order to shape, perhaps, a new narrative around contemporary work and labor.

¹ For examples of these images, you can visit the Office Aesthetics online archive, an ongoing project I curate: <https://www.instagram.com/office.aesthetics/>

² The landscape office plan was designed in the 1950s in Germany (called *Bürolandschaft*), where it soon became evident that such an open space for working “was chaotic and inhospitable to concentration,” (Saval, *Cubed*); “made it more difficult for individuals to escape the scrutiny of their managers” (Budd, “The Office”, 29); and simply became an excuse to overcrowd offices, not to mention how it produced anxiety (Kneivitt, *Responsive Office*, 22).

³ For a summary of recent published studies on open floor design and employee dissatisfaction, see: Anna Winston, “Open-plan office designs unpopular with workers and can damage productivity,” *Dezeen*, November 21, 2014, <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/11/21/open-plan-office-designs-unpopular-with-workers-damage-productivity/>

⁴ “The dotcom bubble, also known as the internet bubble, was a rapid rise in U.S. technology stock equity valuations fueled by investments in internet-based companies during the bull market in the late 1990s”. Adam Hayes. “Dotcom Bubble.” *Investopedia*, June 25, 2019.

⁵ Judy Shepard, *The Office Idea Book* (New York: RSD Publishing, 2012), 186.

⁶ Ana Martins, ed. *The Other Office 3*, (Amsterdam: Frame Publishers, 2018), 480.

⁷ Melissa Gregg, *Work’s Intimacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 56.

⁸ Philip Ross. “Typology: Offices.” *The Architecture Review*, July 24, 2012.

⁹ Gregg, *Work’s Intimacy*, 154.

¹⁰ The Nodal Office, according to the authors of *The 21st Century Office*, is “a response to the inflexible, isolating culture of 20th-Century headquarters buildings as hierarchical containers for work, populated by largely sedentary workforces unable to share ideas with clients or colleagues on account of the status-driven, departmental, static division of space.” Jeremy Myerson and Philip Ross, *The 21st Century Office* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006), 9.

¹¹ David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

¹² Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future* (London: Verso, 2015).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ It’s no surprise, then, that “office pods” are some of the newest elements of the contemporary workplace: soundproof pods—around the same size as a phone booth—located in many open plan offices that employees can use to make phone calls or do any task that requires some degree of privacy (anyone can see them inside through their windows, though). An odd and intriguing sight for anyone who spots them for the first time in an office.

¹⁵ Gregg, *Work’s Intimacy*, 1.

¹⁶ One of the participants of Benschop and Doorewaard’s study describing the only female member of their team at a Dutch consultancy office said: “We have this one woman in our department. She has a high position and she is our pride and joy.” (Benschop and Doorewaard, “Covered by Equality”, 792).

¹⁷ For a study on the normative image of male workers as heteronormative, family men, see Joan Acker’s “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations.”

¹⁸ Many times, the man pictured there would be a security guard, i.e., not a receptionist.

¹⁹ Martins, *The Other Office 3*, 346.

²⁰ Jeremy Myerson and Philip Ross, *Space to Work* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006), 58.

²¹ Emily Dunn, “I’m the Manager, not the Receptionist,” *Medium*. May 1, 2016, <https://medium.com/swlh/im-the-manager-not-the-receptionist-ce7ce2fbc99f>

²² Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist, “Construction of gender in corporations,” in *Casting the Other*, eds. Barbara Czarniawska and Heather Höpfl (London: Routledge, 2002), 101.

²³ Benschop and Doorewaard, “Covered by Equality”, 800.

²⁴ Kneivitt, *Responsive Office*, 54.

²⁵ Larry Keeley, “Work Waves,” in *Workspaces*, 22.

²⁶ “Dalla Costa and James insisted that, despite what Marx both did and did not write, domestic labor is essential to the production of surplus value, and the site of its extraction is what they called the social factory.” (Weeks, *Problem with Work*, 120.)

- ²⁷ Sinclair, "Leading with the body", 119.
- ²⁸ Pat Maniardi's *The Politics of Housework* wittily narrates how self-proclaimed left-wing men still won't do any housework while at the same time promote themselves as feminists and revolutionaries. The text, although published in 1970, still feels relatable, and it supports this view of women still having to deal with all the domestic labor, even in double income households and with partners who claim to believe in gender equality.
- ²⁹ Gregg, *Work's Intimacy*, 54.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, 54.
- ³¹ For a review on the global situation of working women around the world, see: Sandrine Lungumbu and Amelia Butterly, "Coronavirus and gender: More chores for women set back gains in equality," *BBC News*, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-55016842>
- ³² Anne Helen Petersen, "Who gets the office, who gets the kitchen table," *Culture Study*, 2020, <https://annehelen.substack.com/p/who-gets-the-office-who-gets-the>
- ³³ Matthew Stewart, ed., *The Other Office*, (Basel: Frame Publishers, 2004), 48.
- ³⁴ Martins, *The Other Office* 3, 199.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, 94.
- ³⁶ Wayfair, "An Introductory Guide to Resimercial Design," <https://www.wayfair.com/sca/professional/ideas-and-advice/interior-design/an-introductory-guide-to-resimercial-design-T4900>
- ³⁷ "Home sweet work: The rise of resimercial office design." *Space Matrix*.
- ³⁸ Jim Clifton, "The World's Broken Workplace," *LinkedIn*, 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/worlds-broken-workplace-jim-clifton>
- ³⁹ Carl Cederström and Peter Fleming, *Dead Man Working* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2012).
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*.
- ⁴¹ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 4.

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