Abstract:
I consider several forms of political violence and postnatural urbanism as revealed by the current DKI Jakarta government’s plan for widespread “normalization.” This normalization plan — whereby Jakarta’s urban poor are first blamed for congestion, overcrowding, flooding, and then violently displaced, only to be replaced by more affluent and ecologically imperiling settlements — is an aesthetic strategy for “urban renewal” characteristic of neoliberal capitalism in the Anthropocene. This strategy is an attempt to coercively separate “urbanism” from “poverty.” I will show how a design research practice can create modes of interference among these processes and suggest how architecture, as a practice of social emancipation, can confront political violence by advancing strategic forms of urban solidarity and community mobilization.

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