



*Bernd & Hilla Becher, Coal Breakers  
(1974)*

## Collecting Practices

Johan Voordouw (*Studio, Monday and Wednesday*)

Jerzy (Jurek) Elżanowski (*CDNS 3901, H&T Elective, Friday*)

*ARCS 4107 – Studio, Winter Term 2020*

*Collecting Practices* is a collaboration with CDNS 3901 (Friday 14:35 – 17:25) taught by Jerzy (Jurek) Elżanowski. All students aiming to join my studio group will need to take Prof. Elżanowski course as a History & Theory (H&T) elective. CDNS 3901 forms the theoretical foundation for the ideas explored in this design studio. Over the course of the term, students will research, discuss, and deliberate the central tenets of their project in both Prof. Elżanowski's seminar and in the studio.

The aim of this studio is to spatialize a collection. In other words, students will identify, assemble, or imagine a collection of tangible objects or intangible practices and find ways to give that collection meaning in public space. Everything from a set of baseball cards to the contents of a convenience store can be understood as a collection of sorts, a corpus of interrelated objects, thoughts and concepts that speak together. Collections help people



Todd McLellan, *Things Come Apart* (2013)

make sense of the world; they help them remember collectively. At the same time, the act of collecting, especially in the case of ethnographic museums, is linked to violent colonial practices. Therefore, the title *Collecting Practices* can be considered in two ways: as a **collection of practices** (discussing, cataloguing, mapping, drawing, modeling, etc.), and as a questioning of the **practice of collecting** (objectifying, grouping, organizing, archiving, memorializing, monumentalizing, etc.)

The first joint studio and seminar assignment will be to build a rough seminar table where students can commune and continually discuss shared ideas. As studio progresses, and design projects become more refined, these conversations will continue to test and question a student's positionality. Students will read, interpret, discuss, and write in Prof. Elżanowski course, using the studio to build and design. In studio, students are welcome to work in individually or in small groups. The site and architectural program are up to the student(s), but the seminar will articulate a series of thematic frames by which the work is theoretically defined. The studio will use these frames to explore how the architectural project is visually expressed.

*Collecting Practices* intends to generate projects that engage public spaces beyond the curatorial (i.e. the display of a collection). These include the practice of responsibly collecting a thing, considering where and how it is made, the relationality of its parts, and the networks of its assembly. Projects might engage social practices, or be embedded in biological, chemical or environmental processes. The purpose of this studio is to consider collecting as a reciprocal and relational architectural practice. While the lens that defines a collection of practices, and that guides a practice of collecting, can be very broad, the ethics of collecting remain contemporary and urgent.