As such, materialism's philosophical labour is buried in design practice. All the import of non-human actors into information, these disciplines are haunted by materialism. And, while discourses of materiality have tended to focus on large-scale flows and ecosystems, or extraneous practices amongst squatting, dropouts, and vernacular collections are erased. We contend that these re-organizations of the built environment occur through human labour: how something is made determines what is made.

Designers have been grappling with the nature and effects of the globalization of urbanisation on the built environment since the 1990s. Today, this preoccupation continues through the fascination with chains of production and consumption, networks, and logistics: the presence of every local thing is linked interminably to global complexity. The return to materialism in this issue of Scapegoat calls our attention to the dynamic relay between humans, materials, and the political economy dimensions that condition them across multiple scales and social registers.