



Art Feature—“Material Trail”

Isais Lawrence*, Architecture

The illustration is focused around “emergy,” which is a word created from the term “embodied energy.” Emergy is the total energy used in the life cycle of a product; it is the energy required both directly and indirectly to make a product or service. It takes a lot of energy to build; building involves mining, shipping, manufacturing, processing, and construction, which all require energy. As I enter my terminal architecture studio, I have been asked to look at how the building process and buildings themselves can become more efficient. Understanding the systems involved in creating a finished building can help us track a material trail of goods, which in turn can help us understand today’s environmental crises, like climate change and the destruction of ecosystems. As designers, we should investigate where our materials are coming from so we can limit landscape damage and shrink the trail of carbon emissions that are released from transportation and production.



*Isais Lawrence is a fifth-year undergraduate studying architecture. While his interests in the field of architecture are broad, he has become intrigued by mass timber construction and the housing crises in the United States and other countries. After graduation, he plans to apply to architecture firms that focus on the residential sector. Outside of school, Isais likes to mountain bike, hike, and hang out with friends. Please direct correspondence to isais5644@gmail.com.