

From The Atlantic

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The Architecture of Displacement

The Museum of Modern Art will host a new show on the global refugee crisis.

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Tobias Hutzler, "Nizip II, container camp" (2014). (MoMA)

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More than 500 children live in the refugee camp at Calais, France, which is today a growing town at the mouth of the Chunnel. The majority of these children are unaccompanied by parents or guardians. Life in the so-called

“Jungle” is painful and tentative for them: According to [Help Refugees](#), 129 children could not be accounted for in April following the [sweeping demolitions of homes](#) in the refugee camp in March.

The displacement of millions of people across the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Europe has given rise to permanent refugee communities in Dunkirk, France, and Lesbos, Greece, among others. The camps at Calais and beyond are home to a new kind of crisis architecture. The planning and stewardship of these camps has enormous, and sometimes deadly, consequences for their vulnerable residents.

The architecture of forced displacement is the subject of [“Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter,”](#) a forthcoming exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibit will assemble work by architects, designers, and artists responding to the global refugee crisis.



Brendan Bannon, “Ifo 2, Dadaab Refugee Camp” (2011). (MoMA)

Curated by Sean Anderson, MoMA’s associate curator for architecture and design, with curatorial assistant Arièle Dionne-Krosnick, “Insecurities” will include works of design built to help alleviate suffering inside refugee camps.

[Better Shelter](#), a joint project produced by the IKEA Foundation and the United Nations Human Rights Council, is one example: Since 2015, some 30,000 of these shelters have been deployed in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, namely in Ethiopia and Iraq. These shelters are designed to be simple to ship and can be constructed by teams of four people. Better Shelters are more than shelters—they are readymade camps.

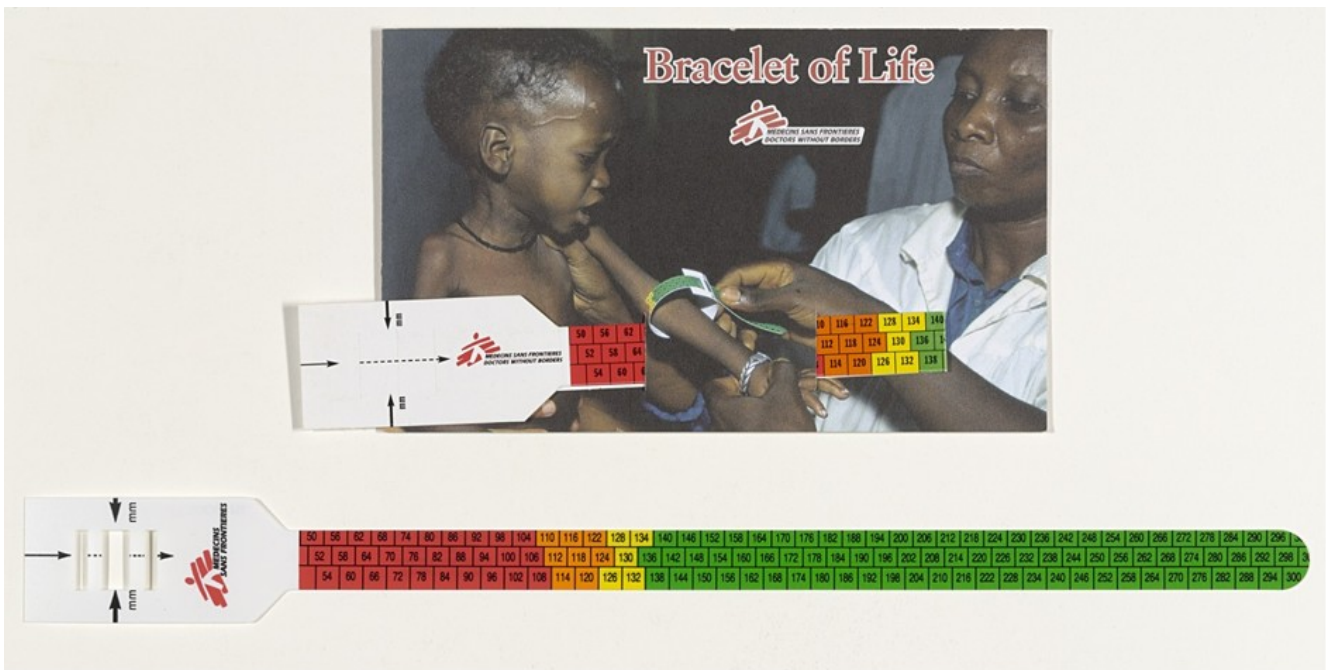
Other design examples include a Middle-Upper-Arm Circumference (MUAC) measuring device, a tool that is both elegant and horrifying in its simplicity. Doctors use the color-coded MUAC bands to detect and measure severe wasting in children. The MUAC band has proved useful in identifying children who are at risk of death from severe wasting, even given [shifting standards](#) set by the World Health Organization and the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics.

The exhibit will also feature plenty of art, with works by [Tiffany Chung](#), an artist whose work includes paintings of development plans by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and photography by [Henk Wildschut](#), a photographer known for his images of borders. Teddy Cruz, an architect who has produced research on the urban frontier along the Tijuana–San Diego border, will also contribute work for the show.

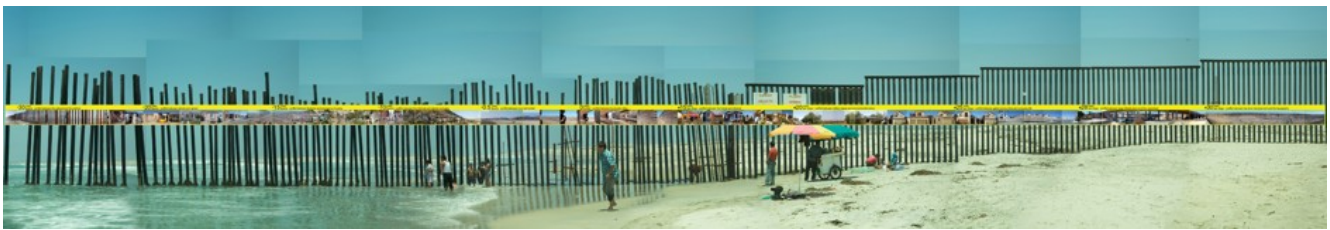
“Insecurities,” which opens on October 1 and runs through January 22, is the first show by Anderson, who is the museum’s newest architecture curator. The exhibit is part of “Citizens and Borders,” a series of projects using the museum’s permanent collection to examine territories, migration, and borders.



Interior of a Better Shelter prototype in Kawergosk Refugee Camp, Erbil, Iraq, pictured in 2015. (Better Shelter/MoMA)



A Middle Upper Arm circumference (MUAC) measuring device designed by Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), 1994. (Médecins Sans Frontières/MoMA)



Teddy Cruz, "Radicalizing the Local: 60 Miles of Trans-Border Urban Conflict Project" (2008). (MoMA)

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