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‘The Oxford Brookes Department of Architecture exhibition explodes with colour and zeal, each presentation as unique as the area of study it represents’. Thus began the review of the 2009 end of year show in the Architect’s Journal, the first of two in the national architectural press.

We made the decision early in the year to put energy and resource into the end of year show, making it more comprehensible for the visitor, keeping it open for several weeks and inviting both press and practices to come and see the work. The curatorial team consisting of Andrea Placidi and Harriet Harriss was entrusted with pulling together the ideas and presentations of all the various studios and programmes and making the exhibition more than the sum of its parts.

It was fascinating to see how the two critics interpreted the show. Will Clifton, in the AJ, was clearly bowled over by the range and exuberance of the student work – ‘a wild assortment of mixed media… laser-cut models… collage, video, haunting renderings painted over with watercolour, hand drawings in charcoal … floor plans and sections in antique frames’. He related this directly to the studio culture nurtured by the two huge open studios, open 24/7 and shared by students from the second to the sixth year, where they both learn from and compete with one another. ‘Oxford Brookes’ studio system is in ebullient form’, he concluded.

A different perspective was offered by Charlie Luxton in Building Design. Luxton, a Brookes graduate, confessed that he had stopped going to school shows some years ago when they turned into blob-fests; but he clearly enjoyed what he saw at Brookes this year. He was reassured by the lack of an identifiable ‘school style’ (‘always such a strong point for Brookes’) and commended especially the work of the M.Arch in Advanced Architectural Design (‘very very good… provocative and
as good as I have seen anywhere’).

Luxton was interested particularly in the work on sustainable building and humanitarian development, the ‘two areas of architecture that offer the biggest opportunities for our profession to make a difference’, drawing on the expertise that the school has developed in its masters programmes. What he noted here was the willingness to pursue ideas without becoming obsessed with image making – ‘engaging in key issues that face the planet’ rather than obsessing about the latest fashions.

Taken together, the two reviews do point to some of the features that make Oxford Brookes unique. We do pursue diversity as a central goal, believing that a wide range of approaches and agendas provides the stimulus to students to produce their best work – work that compares with that of any school in the country. We do believe in connecting the research work that underpins our masters programmes to the studios of the undergraduate programme. And we do believe in giving students the opportunity to learn from one another, whether from their peers or from those in other programmes.

From first year undergraduate through to masters and PhDs, the school seeks to engage with the issues that face architects not just today, but over the coming 30 years. The pages that follow present some of the work that resulted and that was on show in the 2009 exhibition. If you were not able to come to Oxford to see the exhibition, I hope you will join us next year – and see for yourself the range and vitality of what the school is doing.

Prof Mark Swenarton
Head of the Department of Architecture
Jane Anderson, Colin Priest, Ana Araujo, Emmanuel Dupont, Dirk Lellau


‘ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPER’

By Rodolfo A. Rodrigues, Joshua Thomas and Ergit Bedalli
The year started with Body Building—a series of short group films exploring the empirical qualities of Oxford. For the second project we were lucky to work with a live client, Donnington Doorstep, a local family centre who needed ideas for a weather related outside playspace. Working with air, water, temperature, light and earth a variety of elementary environments and instruction manuals were constructed. The ideas of these projects concluded with the design of an essential Service Station on Cowley Road. In the second semester we focussed on the experiential and the imaginary, Feeling Studios and the design of an outdoor theatre and residence for a Shakespeare play in Headington Hill Park. Working with Oxford’s Creation Theatre, and continuing our summer OB1 LIVE projects we plan to design and construct a Ticket Booth for their summer showing of Twelfth Night at the Said Business School. We visited Littlehampton and Berlin and along the way tackled convention, investigated spaces, screened films, evolved unique modes of communication, preparing the ground for speculative twenty-first century architecture (www.ob1architecture.blogspot.com).

With thanks to Luke Chandresinghe, Marcel Croxson, Angela Ford, Mike Halliwell, Helen Harrison, Carolin Hinne, Carsten Jungfer, Chris Kempster, Asif Khan, Judith Loesing, Andrew Longland, Jonathan Nicholls, Stephanie Schulze-Westrum, Kim Sordillo, Anna Thorne, Justus Van Der Hoven, Jack Wates, Nicola West, Jamie Williamson, Suzi Winstanley and second year critics.

Overleaf, left: Jack Morton-Gransmore, Community Theatre; below: Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez, Joshua Thomas, Ergit Bedalli, Artificial Landscaper. Overleaf, right: Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez, Romeo and Juliet Theatre. This page, clockwise from top left: William Fisher, Ice Cream shop; Holly Newnham, Collected Decay; Ralph Saul, Shadow Theatre; Ned Drury, Headington Hill Park shadow theatre. Facing page, top: U To, House for a canopy maker; Merete Claudin Nielsen, Merchant of Venice Theatre; below: Joe Brown, Unfolding Hamlet; Richard Farrelly, Tension at the theatre; Julia Neophytou, Super-nature Theatre.
Infrastructural networks that have been built around primary needs over the last centuries have attracted a diverse range of secondary uses, creating parallel worlds of co-existences. These initially unintended relationships have developed into a system of hybrid conditions and offer opportunity. This year the River Thames was our study area, where we investigated its trajectories and evolved scenarios alongside the new Blackfriars station engaging with public space, services, mobility and public infrastructure to propagate hybrid typologies.

Simultaneously we held a collaborative charrette with Design for London; undertook visualisations with RIBA Building Futures exhibiting at RIBA this summer and embarked upon an inter-unit field trip around the Netherlands. The projects articulate individual and site-specific responses in the form of a brief, a programme, a strategy and architectural proposal.

With thanks to: Tom Gallant, Emmanuel Dupont, Mike Althorpe, Tamsie Thomson, Max Gwiazda, Kamiel Verschuren, Tim Rettler, Stephanie Schulze-Westrum, Ema Bonifacic
Facing page, from top: Joe Dinwiddie, the Blackfriars transport interchange; John Hodgkins, SFMA storage for metropolitan artefacts; below, Lawrence Cottam, the pro-local monument. Overleaf, clockwise from top left: William Fisher, the homeless memorial; Benjamin Northover, the talking bank; William Fisher, dipterea; Ayesha Patel, Blackfriars public house; Adam Burnett, odur eden complex; William Smith, osmotic landscape and Blackfriars house; Georgios Makridis, the London agora; Gregory Andrews, a circus for insomnia; Ithomi Zafropoulos, transport exchanger; Jonathan Medlock, municipal.
Time flows past us as we stare out into the past, the future unseen behind us rushing towards us at unrelenting speed. Each moment a fragment, a memory, before there is time to register it. The clock, the mechanism abstraction of time, gives a structure to time but does not control it, is not it. Try to define time, to explain it and you find yourself in cutting edge physics. It is not yet fully understood, but it is so familiar it is impossible to imagine life without it. Responsive architecture’s aim is to respond to and express this fourth dimension of time. Trees bend in the wind, sunlight dapples dance across the grass, cloud shadows race across the hills. The world is constantly changing in front of us. Nothing stays the same. The only constant is surely change itself and time is the engine driving this.

It would seem that buildings should flow with the tides, sway with the wind; drawing poetry from change, celebrating the beauty in corrosion, weathering, decay. Is it possible to
make architecture which relates to and expresses our experience of time - not the static photograph, but the moving, changing vibrant world we inhabit? That place, at that time.

Facing page, from top: Joel Cullum, chronograph interiors; Jon Headland, time machine. Above, from top: Joel Cullum, chronograph; Joel Cullum, chronograph exterior; Astrid Bois D’Enghien, concept site model. Overleaf left, from top: Ben Hawkins, touchstone; Neil Burgess, time machine; Tai Lee, time machine. Overleaf right, top: Valters Pozarnovs, time machine device; bottom: Patrick Simpson, time machine.
The 2008-9 Unit C studio aimed to explore attitudes to migrant place and home making in the United Kingdom. After researching the history of different migratory groups and their settlement in enclaves in London or Birmingham students imagined how their fictitious migrant character modified a traditional British terrace house to accommodate the cultural habits and beliefs they brought from their homeland. They did this by designing ‘The Non-British-British House’.

Students also examined the different migratory journeys by boat to the Southampton Port and designed ‘A Tower in which to sit and wait for a loved one’. The tower located on the docks is also a tribute to the neglected site’s significance to Britain’s dynamic multiculturalism.
How can we, as architects and designers, help to support communities who are having to deal with the reality of rapidly increasing urbanisation, rising disparity between rich and poor, competition for scarce resources, the impending food crisis and the ramifications of climate change?

In Unit D this year we tried to unpack these issues and explored themes such as vulnerability, access (or lack of) to services, land tenure, health, livelihoods, gender, materiality, cultural sensitivity, a bottom-up approach, participatory techniques and engaging stakeholders in the design process. We took apart mattresses and remanufactured them into products to empower homeless people in Oxford as part of the Discarded Dreams competition run by Architecture for Humanity. In groups we designed a pavilion using a harvest mapping technique, developed by 2012 Architects from the Netherlands, to source local waste materials to raise awareness about homelessness. We built one of the six pavilions at Oxford Brookes and attracted a great deal of local media attention. For the last and final project we designed a masterplan for a community of flower sellers in Mumbai, India. The brief included responses to the needs of the flower sellers who also live on the site, the local taxi drivers, the visitors to the local Hindu temple and the commuters using the adjacent railway station. The projects we do in Unit D strive to ‘make a difference’ in a culturally-
conscious and respectful way, and focuses on the potential for architects to make a positive difference to the lives of people. Wherever possible we use the means at our immediate disposal, ensuring that any negative impacts of our projects on the communities and regions in which we are designing are minimised.

A strong sustainable agenda is inherent in all social, economic and environmental considerations that Unit D students are expected to deal with.
UNDERGRADUATE
Unit E aimed to provide a new kind of physical space - a setting for community forums, a local topographical archive, and ‘a contact zone’, a centre of networked creativity.

The main site was a city dockyard space in Bristol, recently used as an urban beach. From existing boat hulls, the unit designed water-based vessel and dock spaces for a database laboratory (a distribution warehouse and archive store).

We wanted to make visible the networks of communication, through public space and make a record of things that link people to other people. The unit created event space on the site itself and transported this back to the studio.

We Fished the river and dug out the site, deep into the caves, to find creatures for making illuminated models, as poetic dioramas of Bristol harbourside and dock area. We Cooked and shared a banquet (Marinetti’s tourist meal from the Futurist Cookbook) in a kitchen at the edge of the dock and watched the river by night. We listened to its sounds and developed them in a cymatics workshop in the studio.

With thanks to visiting tutors Annabel Other, Louise Short, Dan Blore, Marcus Toop.
PART 2

The Vessel

ART (With) — patents & experience
Excerpts from the brief, September 2008 - June 2009: ‘In taking as our site the existing but partially disused railway line between Oxford and Cambridge (the so-called Varsity Line), we created an inhabited virtual corridor, a sympathetic environment within which the ‘groves of academe’ may flourish.

‘Initially investigating, surveying and documenting the Varsity Line, the first piece of design work was to create a pied à terre for a particular client: a living/working environment tailor-made to his or her own specific needs and personality. This will be a carriage which moves freely back and forth along the line. In the wake of this portable community comes the resultant infrastructure necessary to sustain it: cafes, bars, hotels, gardens. This aspect will be the substance of your major design project of the year.

‘You will be asked to create a significant building set in beautiful grounds: a highly civilized, even rarefied environment where professors from universities can meet, discuss and push ground-breaking concepts forward.’

With thanks to Tim Oliver, Maita Kessler and Theo Bishop.

This page: Casey Bibby, Brainbox project. Facing page: Christine Murphy. Overleaf left, from top: Emily Lowry; Emily Lowry; James Hartnett. Overleaf right, from top left: Kate Jones; Kate Jones; Nick Green.
Toby Shew, David Greene

Adamu Adamu, Steven Ascensao, Will Ballard, Oliver Beros, Pavan Birdi, Charlotte Bovis, Charlotte Buckley, Louise Cann, Riddhi Chauhan, Kristine Cimane, Dan Collier, Emma Cuthbert, David Debidin, James Dowding, Tom Greenfield, Chantelle Holt, Jonathan Hughes, Francis Hunt, Gareth Leech, Helen Matikainen, David Morgan, Hayley Poynter, Hannah Sharkey, Oliver Thomas, Natalie Tomsett, Matthew Townsend, Robert Tsang, Alexander Wateridge

The unit took on two sites this year – semester one was centred on the Tucson Aircraft Graveyard, where rows of disused US military aeroplanes sit alongside regimented streets of houses. Semester two was sited at the iconic Battersea Power Station: allowing the students to engage with the city’s transport, social and cultural infrastructure whilst giving them the opportunity to re-use or re-invent a symbol of London’s past.

The unit was initially fascinated with reclaiming aeroplane components – using the 747 and Airbus as material palettes the students envisioned living in suburbia in the desert. The lessons learned were transplanted to the Battersea site and evolved into personal project briefs.

Students are asked to take a position on the site and develop an architecture that addresses the issues of living in the city in the twenty-first century. Projects included public buildings for small gap spaces, recycled material tower buildings and vertical boatyards, all of them realised in a variety of media.

Unit G is interested in the edges of city and society; the lines where iconic London meets the River Thames and where the desert meets suburbia. The river marks a divide, separating the affluent residential areas such as Chelsea from the less affluent and more scattered industrial and residential areas to the south.
This year, students in Unit H explored sustainability in the city. For us ‘sustainability’ had two meanings: projects were to be sustainable in terms of environmental impact pertaining to urban architecture, and they had to be sustainable in terms of the dynamic social and cultural issues that pertain to the urban life.

We sought architectural propositions that reconciled these differences.

Students investigated the theme of contemporary culture in historic context, the idea of enriching a conservative culture through intervention. They focused on the creation of place, on how an existing city could draw from its history or raison d’être to be reinvented.

The unit created an aesthetic language of sustainable architecture, criticising existing stigmas and stereotypes, and proposing models informed by interaction between art and technology.

We investigated the idea of enriching culture through intervention, and focused on creation of place asking if site could process the fluid nature of society.

By reference to contemporary art installation, we investigated how past and possible future events could have existence today through how we assembled material to create space and a sense of time. We speculated on positive architectural scenarios that might still happen.

With thanks to Mary Hancock, James Roach, Toby Smith, Alan Berman, Mark Davies, Charles Parrack.

Below: Yvonne Hamell. Facing page, from top: Kumudu Kananke Arachchilage; Elizabeth Barnes; Sam Lund-Harket; Beth Madgwick. Overleaf left, from top: Ali Adamson; William Bayliss Brown; Jenny Young. Overleaf right, clockwise from top left: David Cloux; Sally Marshall; Ruth Marsh; Jonathan Comfort; Tom Walker.
Andrea Placidi, Ro Spankie, Matt Clay, Allan Sylvester, Abi Abdolwahabi, Maita Kessler

Rebecca Adjei, Maryam Alavi-Mozneb, Clarice Awuondo, Karma Bdeir, Holly Beazley, Parveer Braich, Adam Brazier, Lynsey Brough, India Bryant, Sofia Burnusuz, Emily Falcon, Heather Fox, Becky Fulton, Kate Gavrilovic, Alison Gray, Johanna Hansen, Georgina Hodgetts, Ted Jefferis, Corrine Kramer, Alice Lockerbie, Nicola Lowery, Tina Mansour, Caroline Meadowley, Sheree Modeste, Bente Noeren Erikson, Emily Norman, Yasemin Oz, Kate Petit, Sophie Pocock, Gemma Roberts, Anna Rugeroni, Mami Sayo, Adele Seaward, Laila Sheikhzadeh, Kathryn Sims, Rika Sonobe, Victoria Spencer, Katherine Sweeney, Jennifer Thompson, Helen Warren, Rebecca Woods, Irmak Yapan

Interior Architecture is an independent degree course that runs alongside the degree in architecture, with an intake of around 25 students per year. While working within the architectural field the course explores areas such as reuse of existing buildings and product design.

The first semester focused on reuse, the 3rd year students working on a practice based project set in an existing nursery school while 2nd years took on the Smithsons’ Robin Hood Gardens. In the second semester we changed scales and the students divided into two groups designing and making large scale pieces in either concrete or wood.

In November the whole group visited the Venice Biennale ‘Architecture Beyond Building’ that had a particularly Interiors theme. Following three days on the lagoon we headed to Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza taking in some of his villas en route.
The first project undertaken by second year students was called Atmosphere Room, led by Ro Spankie, Allan Sylvester and Abi Abdolwahabi. We spent the first semester looking at two seemingly disparate themes.

Firstly the basic building block of the interior, the room, particularly the ephemeral quality one might describe as its atmosphere and secondly the more tangible premise that interior architecture is concerned with the reuse of existing buildings.

Using Sir John Soane’s house in Lincoln’s Inn Fields as an inspiration the students were asked to design a series of case study rooms. Working not just in plan and section we also explored tools relevant to the interior: layout, sightlines, circulation, lighting, colour and arrangement.

Finally the designs were combined into a group proposal for a reworking of the Smithsons’ Robin Hood Gardens whose future has recently been the subject of much controversy (with thanks to the Sir John Soane’s Museum and guest critic Ed Harty).
The second project was called Nursery Furniture. By 2010, every community will be served by a Sure Start Children’s Centre, offering permanent universal provision across the country, ensuring that every child gets the best start in life.

The project brief states: ‘The new Children’s Centre at Grandpont, Oxford, equipped with a large nursery school, a day care and family centre, is considered a successful building. However, no building is ever perfect.

Critically analyse the Grandpont Children’s Centre buildings and outdoor gardens to get an understanding of how the buildings work functionally and spatially, how the children interact with the different spaces, how the staff use the different spaces, how the buildings are used at different times of the day and week, lighting and heating levels in the buildings through a typical day, aiming to find good practices and potential problems.

‘The survey will take numerous forms: video diary, photographic log, drawn analysis of movement, measured survey of internal and external spaces, mapping exercises with children and staff, interviews and sketches. You will also need to do background research into the concept of ‘nursery’. How does a child interact with the different spaces within the overall nursery? The survey measures the relation between the activities and the design of the spaces. As the building changes during the day several times, the lighting and the activities are constantly modifying the inside, while the outside is a unifying backdrop.
The third project was called Immeuble, led by Ro Spankie, Allan Sylvester and Abi Abdulwahabi.

‘A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier. That is why Chippendale is famous.’ (Mies van der Rohe)

This project looked at built-in furniture, or ‘permanent fixtures’ as French designer Pierre Chareau liked to call them. Permanent fixtures can include all elements beyond the structural frame. Usually one-off designs, specific to a location, they work on a variety of scales, mediating between the architectural scale of the space and the finer more detailed scale of the objects it contains. Permanent fixtures create atmosphere through precise minute interventions but also organise and define how the overall space or building is used. Inspired by both by a competition for innovative use of concrete in interiors and some of the recent work being done in concrete by the likes of Girli Concrete, the semester began with a two-week concrete workshop.

Techniques developed during the workshop were then developed into a proposal for a permanent fixture in London’s Borough Market. The final form and purpose of this piece was open but was developed both in drawing and 1-1 prototype.

With thanks to guest critics Ana Araujo, Orit Sarfatti, Ruth Morrow and Trish Bedford of Girl Concrete and Ray Salter in the concrete lab at Oxford Brookes University.
The fourth project was called Timber, led by Andrea Placidi, Matt Clay, Ricardo Assis Rosa and Paolo Procesi.

What is the potential of any material in its original, un-worked state? And how is it transformed once the material has undergone a crafting process? What is the texture and feel of this material, when presented to us in a finished state that stimulates our senses and informs our actions?

All of these are qualities and descriptions which can be attributed to timber in the refined state that it reaches once the craftsman has worked, and reworked, it. But what aspects of these descriptions can be attributed to the timber itself, or to the materials adjacent and juxtaposed to the timber?

The craftsman needs to appreciate every nuance and characteristic of timber, in all its shapes, forms and manifestations. The designer should also appreciate the inherent qualities that this material – indeed, any material – possesses to allow it to breath and take on a life of its own in his designs.

The brief comprised five stages: structure/group workshop, details/group study – individual drawings, precedent/individual study, chair and light/main design brief – groups of two or individually, and space/individual portfolio pages.

Facing page, clockwise from top: Corinne Kramer; Irmak Yapan; Irmak Yapan; Irmak Yapan; Corinne Kramer; Alice Lockerbie; Alice Lockerbie. This page, from top: Kate Gavrilovic; Timber group work; Tina Mansour.
The DS1 studio is concerned with the chronicle of design development and the ways in which we record and communicate our creative journey from the earliest idea to a fully considered work. Our approach involves developing a ‘narrative’ disclosure of the design route. This is applied to tutorials, design reviews and to the production of a comprehensive ‘design diary’ which forms the basis of the Integration studies.

‘An environment is an environment only by virtue of the life that it surrounds. We do not talk about surroundings without reference to the people surrounded, nor should we talk about housing as a thing of intrinsic value separate from the people housed.’ John Turner

This year’s programme dealt with the topical concerns of accommodating a range of functions in a single design. The brief seeks to explore the benefits of integration in terms of economic, social and cultural cohesion, but also of energy efficiency, waste and water recycling, and security.

As an area, the square mile that forms London’s Soho has an extremely rich history and retains a number of unique idiosyncrasies that have defied the uniformity that blights many inner city areas. These have helped it to retain its identity as a unique ‘place’ within the overall mass that constitutes the city centre. Soho retains a relatively high proportion of residential property and a variety of occupations and lifestyles also call it home. This unique combination gives the area a ‘village’ feel - it is this ‘sense of place’ that provides unique design opportunities.

The first objective was to begin to understand the ‘place’. That meant a detailed investigation of all the components that go to make up Soho and these observations formed the groundwork for all subsequent work.

This exercise was not only about facts and statistics; it involved digging deep, talking to people, getting under the skin of the place and starting to understand how this unique ‘identity’ works now and how it might develop in the future.
The communications tower beams out and receives information and data: a digital showcase for GO creations and information sharing.
Anna Hart, Rute Ferreira, Ruth Macclennan

Nat Daniels, Ashley Dicks, Laura Evans, Anne Hooper, Fiona Kelling, Lesley Leung, Ziga Misjak, Rob Stannard, Imen Tili, Esther Vince.

DS2 works with site as a dynamic palimpsest, a full-scale network of material, person and time. This year we continued our response to Ruth Macclennan’s ‘Polytechnical Institute for the Study of the Expanding Field of Radical Urban Life’, paying particular attention to the ‘Department of Domestic Arts’.

The four stages of production in Oxford, Archway and Moscow - moment, incident, journey, proposal - explored domesticity, connections and how to transport an idea.

‘The purpose of the polytechnic is to be a forum for the study of urban life and the production of ideas and artworks that enable participants and audiences to imagine and enact formal, civic, surprising, critical, helpful, questioning, funny, difficult, spirited, profound, demanding, beautiful, fleeting or perpetual interactions with the city, with other places, and with each other, that do not involve commercial exchange’. Macclennan, 2007.
DS3 projects explore the creation of connections: visual, physical and cultural.

This involves an engagement with site and a concern for discerning thresholds, not just the physical point of entry into and exit from buildings but also the invisible or almost imperceptible lines and boundaries that define territories.

This year’s theme focused on the notion of separation and reconciliation.

A progression of projects explored the making of a series of rooms focusing different experiences. This culminated in the design of a justice centre for Oxford.

‘Architecture comes from the making of a room. Structure is the beginning of containment, and each room deserves its own clearly articulated and perceivable spatial definition. You might say that the nature of a room is that it always has the character of completeness. This completeness of each room required that it be developed as a self-defined, self-centred and self-supported element in the larger composition that was the plan. The room is a place of the mind. In a small room one does not say what one would in a large room’ Louis Kahn

‘Is man able to penetrate the material he organises into hard shape between one man and another, between what is here and what is there, between this and a following moment? Is he able to find the right place for the right occasion?’ Aldo van Eyck

With thanks to Martin Markcrow, George Bradley, Paul Grindley and John Stevenson.
The cathedral offers company, he thought, [it] invites you to membership of a society’ (Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, 1925)

We studied how the individual experiences building, matter and space alone and as a member of a collective, how the individual is represented in the work, specifically in the intimate encounter between the animate or corporeal and inanimate, between for example the body and the book, the body and the car and the body and the building.

We developed three projects:

- The Empty Book of Me; A Parking Structure for 1,000 Vehicles; and Research Institute & Library for 250,000 Volumes.

In the first, a book is made, in the second, the cars are parked and in the third books are stacked and a society in microcosm established. When we hold a book there is intimacy, when we enter a space dominated by similar inanimate objects and stand in their midst the individual is moved by the atmosphere these objects create. When we do so do we transgress a line and accept the embrace of their intimidating collective presence and density or, should we seek to defuse this atmosphere? Of course cars parked, and books stacked, are both an extension of the building built to house them. Cars, books, walls, floors, columns and rooms fuse together as one fabric. In the case of the Institute a second condition emerges in a shift from the personal encounter to the collective condition in an environment animated by people.

We therefore considered the material, individual psychological and collective social dimension. Architecture that should concern itself with ideas of nobility and beauty. DS4 explored the visceral aspects of matter and building against the functional and meta-functional aspects of buildings.

With thanks to Catherine Truman, Noel Cash, Neil Deely, Thomas Easdown, James Renfrew, Ben Clark.

Above: David Mackay. Facing page: David Mackay. Overleaf, clockwise from top left: Phuong Le; Phuong Le; Ruidong Deng; Chris Dawkins; Aniko Mazsar.
Andrew Holmes, Thomas Arnold
Tony Berongoy, Lewis Critchley, Abiola Oni, Diana Phiri,
Matthew Scammels, Stuart Ward, Robin Waterman,
Zoe Webber, Nicholas Zammit, Sandra Zuvela

The Writers of the Last Archive looks at the area around London Borough Market, on the South Bank of the Thames. The seductive pleasures of the city, its cafes and pubs rub up against the staples of the open vegetable and flower market, beneath the rail lines leading into
London Bridge Station, transformed by the influx of digital media and advertising companies with their attendant wine bars and brasseries, boosted by the corporate national art gallery of the modern art of advanced capitalism, the Disneyland for the middle classes, with its riverside walk, The Golden Hind and The Clink. Movies, their characters, locations and sets were taken as the starting point for the projects.
The major design for this unit explored what it means to dwell in the twenty-first century. At the beginning of the year, the unit re-examined Martin Heidegger’s ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ which promoted the sense of dwelling as meaning to build, or to be at peace, or to be stable. Students were encouraged to make their own definition of ‘to dwell’, and to think through what live, work, play involve, both today and in the immediate future.

Four pieces of work formed the backbone of the unit’s scope of study. Reading Heidegger, constructing a monograph that speculated on definitions of twenty-first century beauty, confronting the threshold between the natural and man-made through a radical redesign of the landscape of Blenheim Palace, and finally to Battersea Power Station.

The programme for the proposal was generated on an individual basis. Each student asked to state and justify a new use to be brought to the site. This new use was then amalgamated with their definition of lifestyle and their interpretation of twenty-first century dwelling.

A major challenge was to speculate on the possible legacy of their proposal until 2050, some 42 years. The unit explored the implications of alternate strategies, globally, locally and individually.

With thanks to: Sarah Banham and her colleagues at Treasury Holdings UK, the Education Department at Blenheim Palace, Purcell Miller Triton, David Greene, Harriet Harriss, Paul Nicholls.
Here I am applying the fragmentation concept I explored earlier to my conceptual form. These models begin to show spatial qualities I want in my building.

Site plan
Access routes through site and to the cosmetic surgery are cut into the ground, scaring and manipulating the unkept existing concrete landscape.

- Patient access
- Public routes
- Staff access
- Patient exit
In 2008-9 Sustainable Building: Performance and Design focused on the sustainable refurbishment of existing housing and innovative proposals for new high density housing. It explored new ways of living within a low carbon economy that relate to local and bioregional resources and values, enhancing human well-being and biodiversity.

Sustainable development briefs were developed through groupwork and individual building design briefs were developed individually. The technological design solutions were tested from their conceptual stage through to the detailed design and build on an understanding of the performance of buildings gained in other taught modules including computer modelling, building physics, low carbon building technologies and post-occupancy evaluation. In collaboration with Penoyre & Prasad Architects we evaluated buildings designed by the practice for energy performance, environmental impact
and occupant satisfaction. The results were presented to the practice in a student-led workshop, an academia and industry collaboration working towards evidence-based sustainable building design.

Oxfordshire was chosen as the bioregion for this year’s focus and two sites in Oxford were selected. The first site is in north Oxford and comprised four 1960s blocks of flats, with a strong Brutalist aesthetic, which had to be upgraded in terms of energy performance and comfort as well as altered to address the changing needs of the existing community. The second site, located behind a city-centre Tesco store on Cowley Road, provided an opportunity for a new-build high density mixed use development. The detailed site analysis for the Cowley site included real-life student-led consultation workshops with the children and staff of the adjacent primary school.
The intake on the Development and Emergency Practice programme this year comprised 46 students from 21 countries, including six on the Diploma in Architecture programme. These students were tasked with learning about development and emergency practice in semester one’s taught modules, followed by the application of their learnings into a design project in semester two.

For this, three students used their experiences from DEP’s January field trips. Siti Najwa Sheikh Yahya and Sophie Jopling based their work on a visit to India’s Tamil Nadu state to spend time with coastal fishing villages affected by the 2005 Asian tsunami, while Caroline Cage continued work from the field trip to Peru working with...
indigenous Andean communities.

Dipti Hingorani meanwhile undertook an extended visit to Mumbai to spend time in the large unplanned settlement of Dharavi. Elizabeth Parker focused her project on community engagement within the UK, while Fiona McLellan developed designs concerning an orphanage in Ukraine.

DEP is about applying architectural skills and sensibilities to the ‘messy global realities’ of increased natural disasters, climate change, rapid urbanisation and chronic poverty. Students from DEP often go on to work in aid agencies or in specialist practices focusing on such issues.

With thanks to Matt Gaskin and Charles Parrack.

[Images and diagrams related to the text]
The main studio project took the ‘West End’ of Oxford City Centre and attempted to produce a set of coherent design strategies for ‘re-balancing’ this fragmented urban landscape. The students identified a number of design opportunities and motifs, including the West End as a ‘gateway’ to the city water and natural elements to underpin identity; and strengthening the potential of existing residential, educational, transport and other functions to create a vibrant and forward looking city quarter. Part of the task this year was for the students to determine the boundaries for potential development and to consider the factors, both natural and otherwise, that would constrain or enable growth for the city.

As in previous years, the students worked in groups to produce an overall strategy/ masterplan, and took parts of this for individual designs – re-testing these against the group vision as the project developed at a number...
The work explored issues of identity, townscape, commercial and social coherence, and the aesthetic and sensory dimensions of place-making. This was reinforced through a public consultation exercise with residents and visitors to the area, bringing often abstract design thinking up against the pragmatic needs of local communities.
The Houses of Enchantment is set in Ridley Road Market, the open-air vegetable, meat, and clothing market, which provides the cheapest, most varied food from all over the world, in the poorest district in London. The project starts from the standpoint of designing from the detail of an interior, its objects and furnishings, for a cast of three characters from fairy tales. The rooms and buildings they inhabit are seen as sets in a location. The architect’s job is seen as providing the art by which everyday life is seen as a fable.

Below: Ben Clark, billboard of illusions. Facing page, from top: Faye Chantler, sketch; Sai Man Ho, view of fish globes. Overleaf, left: David Werren, section AA; right: Marina Illum, section.
The International Architectural Regeneration and Development (IARD) programme aims to provide students with the knowledge, tools and skills that will enable them to play an active role in the re-use, enhancement and regeneration of the built environment, including vernacular architecture. The regeneration and development project is the opportunity to put theory into practice through ‘real’ projects.

Following taught modules that provide the theoretical context in the first semester, the second semester culminates in a regeneration and development project. This year the group travelled to the United Arab Emirates. Working in groups the students developed regeneration strategies for the restored but disconnected historic centre of Sharjah and the largely dilapidated historic area of Ras Al Khaimah. The second stage of the project was to make individual design or regeneration proposals within the framework of the strategy that also recognised the cultural, climatic and socio-political sensitivities of the region.

The project was undertaken in collaboration with the American University of Sharjah and Parsons School of Design in New York through a joint web-based virtual studio (www.uaeurbanidentities.com).

Above: Kiran Sharma, Brick Lane. Facing page, from top: Caroline Ford, park in Sharjah; Sawsan Alnahhas, re-examining the courtyard Sharjah; Stefano Ambrosoli, courtyard in self build workers housing in Ras Al Khaimah. Overleaf left, from top: Peter Preston, plan for a courtyard hotel in Sharjah; Stefano Ambrosoli, section through skateboard park in Durham. Overleaf right, top: Kiran Sharma, spatial connection revitalised traditional dwellings in Ras Al Khaimah; middle: Tamsin Walmsley, contemporary courtyard housing in Sharjah’s historic quarter massing models and section...
POSTGRADUATE
The Major Study offers students the opportunity to undertake intensive independent research over one year in an area of their choice. Students work with their supervisor and meet monthly in group seminars for discussion about their research projects.

During 2008-9, Major Study attracted fourteen students, the largest it has had for several years. Students explored a vast and variable range of topics, critical and historical. Some projects were traditional in approach and contained themselves to a literary study. Others tested the boundaries of how research and architectural design might inform one another. Stuart Mansell undertook an historical study of a selection of architects who used comics as a means of construction communication and focused on the work of Yona Friedman. Mansell then designed a comic of one of his own designs which was built without his involvement by people inexperienced in building. Justus Van Der Hoven wrote his Major Study as a logbook of the discussion of two intellectuals engaged in a heated debate on the topic of the continuously shifting underground metaphor. Jamie Williamson offered a personal reading of the space between, investigated via a photographic and then design study of Archway in London. The research was of exceptional standard, a credit to the group, their invention and commitment to engaging creatively with academic research.

Between birth and death is life.
Between there and here is space.
Between then and now is time.
Between the beginning and the end is the middle.
Between me and you are these words.
Postgraduate Research Degree Programme

Marcel Vellinga, Bousmaha Baiche, Rob Beale, Rod Burgess, Elizabeth Burton, Carol Dair, Nicola Dempsey, Mike Godley, Rajat Gupta, Michael Humphreys, Mike Jenks, Lynne Mitchell, Fergus Nicol, Ray Ogden, Paul Oliver, Aylin Orbasli, Brigitte Piquard, Shibu Raman, Fionn Stevenson, Mark Swenarton, Igea Troiani, Nicholas Walliman


There are currently 30 full-time/patient UK, EU and international students within the Department, all working to complete one of the three routes offered: MPhil, MPhil transferring to PhD or PhD Direct. The research topics are diverse and reflect the wide variety of research expertise in the Department, ranging from environmental design to social housing and from vernacular architecture to steel technology.

- Dr David Sanderson, Integrating development and disaster management concepts to reduce vulnerability in low income urban settlements

Disaster management and developmental interventions from aid agencies, while often focusing on the same populations, employ very different approaches.

This PhD explores the methodological approaches used in disaster management and development, with the assumption that a more unified understanding will add value to the work of aid agencies. This is because, from the perspective of those who are chronically poor, disasters and poverty are linked.

The work, a PhD by Published Works, draws on projects and research undertaken by the author in a variety of countries between 1995 and 2008.

- Dr Daniel Kozak, Urban fragmentation in Buenos Aires: the case of Abasto

This thesis sought to examine existing concepts associated with urban fragmentation and to further develop the theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon through empirical research in Buenos Aires. It proceeded from the general to the particular; from a review of the meanings of the term fragmentation in mainstream urban discourse worldwide, to an analysis of the meanings of urban fragmentation in the specific case of Buenos Aires, the local characterisation of fragmentation as a spatial phenomenon at different scales and the comprehensive examination of a single micro-urban case. The research involved a discursive and a spatial dimension of analysis, with two sets of methodologies that included in-depth semi-structured interviews, self-administered and street questionnaires, site surveys with checklists, photographic recording of physical-spatial indicators and GIS mapping. The conclusion explored ways in which the celebratory vision of the city as a sum of fragments has increased urban fragmentation by being subject to neoliberal urban strategies.
Examiners: John Stevenson, Charles Darby, Matt Gaskin, Mary Hancock, Michael Hill, Nick Hardy, Ronald Green, Maita Kessler, Ronnie MacLellan, Peter Norman, Martin Pearce, Sarah Stevens

The RIBA Office-Based Examination provides an alternative work-based route to qualification at Part 1 and Part 2, and is designed to meet the learning and qualification needs of individuals who are employed full-time in architectural practice.

The OBE examination mirrors the curriculum, level and criteria applied to full-time study in the UK, and leads to the award of the RIBA Certificate in Architecture (Part 1), and the RIBA Diploma in Architecture (Part 2). Working with a mentor in practice and a tutor appointed from outside of their practice, candidates engage in critical studies in relation to design, technology, and cultural and professional contexts. These subjects are examined through formal written examinations, written coursework and design-portfolio submissions comprising personal and set design projects.

The personal project, ‘Museum of Mathematics’ in South Kensington, London, was submitted by Peter Chiu, a Part 2 candidate, as part of his portfolio submission (illustrated above).

The four main concepts are: first, the puzzle box. This is a diary account of a particular journey in mathematics and the analogy to a puzzle box, inspired by Waterhouse’s 1903 painting, ‘Psyche Opening the Golden Box’ and Turner’s ‘Fisherman at sea’. Second, the journey of the proof. Following on from the narrative, this maps the emotion journey of a mathematical process. Third, the universal truth. This illustrates the ability of mathematics to capture the universe in seemingly simple terms. Fourth, abstraction. The relationship between natural phenomena and mathematics is explored.
EVENTS

• In December 2008 the Department of Architecture hosted the 20th anniversary conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE). Held in the Examination Schools in Oxford’s High Street, the conference was co-hosted with the University of California, Berkeley. It brought together more than 250 delegates from all over the world and from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including architecture, anthropology, historic conservation, architectural history and planning. The conference was opened by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester.

• Building Futures. The work, by second and third year students in Unit A, tutors Carsten Jungfer and Colin Priest formed part of the ‘Visualisations of the 21st Century City: Conflict in Architecture’ exhibition organised by the RIBA’s future studies programme, Building Futures. The exhibition explored ways in which we can anticipate and accommodate within our cities the substantial changes that they are likely to face in the next 20 years under the impact of social, technological and environmental factors. The projects were envisaged as ‘seeds’ of the future, engaging users to address and adapt to the unpredictable conditions of tomorrow along the River Thames in London.

• OB1 Live - Ticket Booth. This year OB1 Live project coordinated by Jane Anderson and Colin Priest was a ticket booth for the Creation Theatre Company in Broad Street, Oxford. Year One architecture students were asked to design a demountable, secure and weatherproof structure with potential for advertising as well as multiple vendors. With kind structural guidance from Gifford Engineers the main frame used recycled timbers and corrugated boards and an applied Letraset text pattern to merge with new contexts.

• Homeless Shelter. Students from Unit D designed and built a temporary pavilion which tried to tackle peoples’ often prejudiced perceptions of the homeless community in Oxford. The pavilion was made up of reclaimed bits of wood and pallets from skips symbolising individuality within the homeless community: each person has his/her own story to tell.

PRIZES

BA First year: RIBA Oxfordshire prize for best portfolio, Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez; school fund prize for best overall performance, Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez.

BA Second year: school fund prize for greatest ability in environmental science and technology in comprehensive design, Ruth Marsh; Doric Club Oxford prize for the best portfolio, Alex Wateridge; sponsored prize for interior architecture, Parveer Brahch; Berman Guedes Stretton prizes for creative originality in design, Astrid Bois D’Enghien and Thomas Pniewski; Riach Architects prize for best progress in sustainability, Misha King; Leslie Jones prize for best overall performance, Charlotte Griffiths and Francis Hunt; Tom Lethbridge memorial travel award, Pavan Birdi; nomination for the Women in Property award, Ithomi Zafiropoulos.

BA Third year: Doric Club Oxford prize for best portfolio, Robert Fitzpatrick; Riach Architects prize for best dissertation, Georgios Makridis; Hays Architecture prize for best performance in design, Hannah Durham; Leslie Jones construction prize, Kathrine Thoen; Leslie Jones memorial prize awarded by the RIBA for most progress in building construction, Marc Midavaine; sponsored prize for interior architecture, Jennifer Thompson; RYB Konsult prize awarded for the most important contribution to sustainability, Nicolas Villa; Scott Brownrigg prize for best hand-drawn 3D visualization, Louise Cann; RIBA Bronze Medal nominations, Joel Cullum and Charlotte Bovis.

Diploma: Energy efficient architecture prize, Rob Fairfield; Regional W Cave prize for best major study, Jamie Williamson; Fielding Dodd prize for outstanding work, Justus Van Der Hoven; RIBA South student award for all-round excellence, Justus Van Der Hoven; graphics prize, Fiona McLellan; Hunter Johnston Doric Prize for contribution to the Department, Elizabeth Parker; PRP Architects bursary awarded for the best demonstration of sustainable design, Mina Samanogoei; Scott Brownrigg prize for the best perspective, Lewis Critchley; West Waddy ADP prize, Rebecca Welford; special prize for exceptional contribution to the Department, Victoria Batchelor and Caroline Cage; RIBA Silver Medal nominations, Marina Illum and Justus Van Der Hoven.