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INTRODUCTION

Few things give a better guide to the state of studio culture in a school than the end of year exhibition – and if this year’s exhibition is anything to go by, studio culture at Oxford Brookes is flourishing. What to me is striking is not just the quality of the work but its diversity, with exquisitely crafted hand drawings and maquettes – architecture as fine art with a capital A – jostling alongside strategies for tackling urban deprivation in the UK and for promoting development in South African townships. While some (but not many!) schools can match Oxford Brookes in terms of quality of output, none I think can match us for the sheer diversity of student achievement.

Take for instance the three new studios introduced into the BA and Diploma programmes this year. In line with the school’s policy of ‘cascading’ the world-leading research expertise of its research clusters – from PhDs to masters degrees, to postgraduate, to undergraduate programmes – this year saw the introduction of a new undergraduate studio aligned to the masters in Sustainable Building: Performance and Design. Students in Unit G were asked to engage directly with the challenge of climate change, conceiving buildings that move beyond zero carbon – a tall order for experienced professionals but one that our undergraduates showed themselves keen to address.

The approach adopted in Unit E, taught by a team fresh from the École Spéciale in Paris, could hardly have been more different. Here the emphasis was on the sensuous and sensibility, using advanced digital techniques not just to represent but to explore a post-consumerist attitude to nature and the city and to develop a language appropriate to it. Here again the challenge posed to the students was daunting but their response, in terms of imagination and formal manipulation, was remarkable.
The focus of the new Diploma unit, DS2, was different again: architect not just as form-maker but as facilitator, the person who, in a world marked by recession and economic collapse, has the skills to help mend the city. While the objective is social, the discipline is financial, and so the students collaborated with their peers on the Brookes MBA programme to develop and test the value modeling of their proposals. By working with the ‘two Oxfords’, the city of privilege and the city of deprivation, and exploring the business case for architectural invention, it was not just the environment but the role of the architect that was being re-invented.

Climate change, digital enquiry, social entrepreneurship – these are just three of the themes being explored in the 20 or so different undergraduate and postgraduate studios currently running in the school. In other studios the agenda was every bit as demanding and exhilarating, ranging from the live projects in first year BA (where else do first year students present their proposals to local councilors just a month into their studies?) through the Make Bethnal Green housing competition in Diploma (what other school took the two top prizes in a national RIBA competition?) to the Tunis project of the IARD masters (where else do students get the chance to re-shape the centre of a 1000 year old city?).

At this year’s exhibition, thanks to Andrea Placidi’s clever but simple cube structures and Harriet Harriss’s striking graphics, the clarity of the displays made the richness of the work fully apparent. Located outside the exhibition proper was another clever but simple structure, but one with a very different purpose, namely the hurricane-proof shelter for Haiti. This demonstration building, constructed by students on the Development and Emergency Practice masters, was designed by Bill Flinn at the request of international charities who had seen too many dollars being wasted on inappropriate structures. Prominently located on the main route through the campus, it was a powerful reminder of the challenges we face as a civilization – and of the crucial role of architects, and architecture, in ensuring those challenges are met.

Prof Mark Swenarton
Head of the Department of Architecture
This year we focussed our attention on Matter starting with the design of public realm improvements for Oxford City Council at Mount Place. This included a presentation to the planning Committee and a commission to design a INFO_BENCH to be realised via the OB1 LIVE voluntary design and build programme. We continued our thinking with Extraordinary Matters and a bespoke members’ club for Jericho. As well as our annual field trip to Berlin the second semester centred on Headington Hill Park and the design of a Literary Festival for a living fiction writer.

With thanks to Bruno Silvestre, Nick Gazanis, Ashifah Dhalla, Gesa Schenk, Anna Mansfield, Mike Halliwell, Heena Mistry, Carsten Jungfer, Sarah Stevens, Toby Smith, Suzi Winstanley, Laurie Cottam, Ithomi Zafiropoulos and second and third year critics.
UNDERGRADUATE
This year, with fiscal crises and natural disasters underlining how inter-dependent the human economy and natural ecosystems have become, we investigated the spatial praxis of currency. Implementing the production of Pro-local Infrastructures© in the context of Lewisham, London, we engaged in negotiating a new pedestrian connection – Route No.1 – under collaboration with Design for London. Social, environmental and economic processes were harnessed to create new forms of ‘acupuncture’ interventions in the public realm. Identified themes were then stabilised in the heart of Deptford to form typological trading places with hybridic qualities. The needs of a specific transaction, critically reflecting on locality, engaged bespoke methods of production and spatial enterprise with sustainable technologies, exploiting context as a resource.

With thanks to Andrew Carmichael, Michael Corr, Emmanuel Dupont, Tobias Goevert, James Gunn, Christoph Hadrys, Robert Helmholz, Tak Hoshino, Elliot Krause, Amanda
Li Hope, Georgios Makridis, Anna Mansfield, Johannes Müller-Lotze, Jan-Marc Petroschka, Richard Phillips, Mike Stephens, and Conor Worth.

Facing page: Nicholas Green; this page: Joseph Brown; Vincenzo Di-Trollo. Overleaf left clockwise from top: Jack Morton-Gransmore; Joshua Thomas, Casey Bibby; overleaf right, clockwise from top: Joseph Brown, Thomas Walker, Carlos Lora Yunen
A cloak of amnesia has fallen over the city, the inhabitants are lost in dreaming. Like sleep walkers they unknowingly interact with natural global systems. Meanwhile the consequences build. Encased in their human centric compound, its layers of protection, once an aid to survival now form blinkers to reality, building a belief of infallibility and control.

The city is so vast that the edges are forgotten. The world within revolves around processes and matters alien to the natural world once inhabited, which they now believe they control.

In the shadow of Copenhagen, Pittsburgh and the economic crisis we aimed to question human society’s underlying relationship to the natural world in the midst of the largest expression of human culture, the city. We explored the potential for new ways forward, pushing away the entrenchment in paradigms of control and domination over nature to reveal the complex, chaotic and nonlinear world in which we now live.

We do not live in a static unchanging world. Can architecture reawaken within the city a link to the world’s fluctuations and our place within them?
What happens when water resources diminish, when industrial pollution becomes so thick we can’t breathe, when we can no longer live on the earth? What architectural technologies will we adopt to save us? The environmental agenda is having an unprecedented effect on contemporary architecture, practice and education. All our media heralds it as the most important design issue. This Unit C studio evaluated, in a critical, speculative and playful way, the problem of the future of planet earth. By embracing science fiction as an architectural tool, the studio deliberately set the environmental agenda as a creative one, extending beyond our current solutions into a world of unknown architectures, urbanism and new social systems. Students were encouraged to design a futurist-primitive architecture for 2048. The two projects were: the British Ministry of Survival Research Laboratory, Trafalgar Square, London; and M2SW (Manhattan Sanctuary of Spiritual Worship), Manhattan or London.

With thanks to Esther Rivas Adrover, Maita Kessler, Christophe Gerard, Hieu Nguyen, Paul Southouse, Lars Teichmann, Will Elkins.
Edutainment: investigating issues of social, contextual and ethical space; developing arts-based catalyst projects to reunify and reunite communities

In 2009/10 this unit worked closely with Beat the Boundaries, a youth-run organisation aspiring to encourage excellence in creativity. This innovative young persons trust has been set up to develop ambitious projects which centre on music and the arts as an appealing medium in which young people can build confidence and self-respect.

One of the first projects that Beat the Boundaries asked the unit to develop was a Mobile Music Studio. The Music Studio will, once funded and finally built, act as a catalytic tool to be deployed into hard to reach communities around the world, and form the initial seed from which a Beat the Boundaries arts facility will grow.

The mobile studios were developed by students in small teams and the projects had to be designed to facilitate and enable initial pilot events in many different contexts and cultures. The students were encouraged to consider how to create studios which would nurture outreach work taking place from the grass-roots up to where music/dance/performance can become a tool to engage with all people, beating down possible boundaries between different cultures, classes, genders and ages.

Tapping into semester one’s theme of Edutainment, semester two’s project built on the students’ understanding of the research, thoughts and issues that formed the basis of the design of the music studios. After participating in two workshops in Durban, South Africa with different local organisations and engaging with a local community group in Blackbird Leys in Oxford, the students began to understand what it means to work with a more developmental focus.

From here they were encouraged to investigate the question, ‘How do we as designers begin to address complex issues within marginalised communities?’
The experimentation of this unit is driven by research which focuses primarily on a ‘digital green’ design methodology that is intrinsically associated with a sense of formal, structural and spatial complexity as seen in the nature of plants. This borrows from baroque thinking along with the morphing with classical architectural semantics, which allows for playful theatrical tectonics and typologies.

‘Luxurious’ once had a close association with ‘elegance’ in historical architectural discourse, most notably in baroque arts and architecture, where the dramatic style of form, geometries, tectonics, lavish foliage and ornamentation was to impress in the most sensual and opulent manner. ‘Luxuriance’, the phenomena of the 21st century consumer driven culture, is one that is excessive with lavish goods driven by desires, sins, and obsessions. ‘Loss’ - the void must be ‘discovered’; it is concealed within the illusions generated by the sophisticated composition of excessive foliage. The foliage could be defined as a natural, artificial, or semi-living material.

The narrative-driven design methodologies were experimented on a wide range of design techniques and media, flipping between the digital and the actual to formulate discoveries. The investigations can involve relationships formed by biosciences, greeneries, food production, climatic ecologies, and bio-diversity in an urban environment. The knowledge gained from the studies of east and west gardens is used intellectually to design natural and artificial tectonics as a hybrid construction methodology. The final building project redefines luxurious, luxuriant, or loss values and breaks free from the conditioned spaces of the city.

With thanks to Jason Chan, Yaojen Chuang, Ben Cowd, Myoungjae Kim, Linnea Isen, Tobias Klein, Dietmar Koering, Damjan Iliev, Sara Shafiei, Natasha Telford, Sanja Tiedemann, Filipa Valente, Johan Voordouw.
This year the unit examined the domestic environment and designed two types of home - the first for an individual, the second for a group.

The first project was to create an idiosyncratic country retreat (a folly, a boat-house, a tree-house, a dacha, a pavilion) set in the relatively rural and picturesque environment of the upper Thames. The client for this home was one of four given MPs (William Gladstone, Benjamin Disraeli, Jeffrey Archer or Jonathan Aitken).

The second and main project of the year was to design a home for a number of MPs (a group, a gang, a clique, a tribe), which could be as little as 10 or as many as 500. This might be called a castle, a barracks, a palace, a ship of state, a ship of fools, a prison. Situated in Westminster, within an eight minute dash to the Houses of Parliament.

The link between the rural environment of the first project and the urban setting of the second is the Thames, thereby obviating the need for transport by car.

Our starting point was the MPs’ expenses row and the Architects’ Journal Brief that was set in the wake of it.

With thanks to Barti Garibaldow, Adrian Robinson and Pascal Madoc-Jones, and to Conor Worth and Richard Philips for their help with computer skills (and to Rich for his steer on the Architects’ Journal Brief).
Location and Site Plan

Location Plan  Scale 1:2500
1. Westminster Bridge
2. The London Eye
3. The Houses of Parliament

Site Plan  Scale 1:500
Climate change is here – how do we move forward? As architects we are challenged to design environments which positively enhance our planetary resource base. We promote a way of building and living that moves beyond zero carbon buildings and into regenerative architecture which helps a place to grow naturally. To do this, we used an evidence-based approach to design which draws deeply on the ecology of place and its link with emerging sustainable construction methods which best integrate with local ecosystems. A rigorous process of evaluation, modelling and testing helped to hone the creative ideas generated, utilising the latest tools and techniques from the MSc degree in Sustainable Building: Performance and Design programme which is run in the Department.

This year the unit explored the link between architecture and mental health, focusing on different states of perception and engagement with the environment, understanding how wellbeing can be positively linked to sustainable design.

In the first semester the students designed a biodegradable bicycle ‘sculpstand’ for Warnford Hospital Outpatients’ Department and then a Retreat Pod intended to provide an escape from the stress of urban living.

In the second semester the unit worked on two live projects with RESTORE, an Oxfordshire charity that supports people with mental health problems. Second year students designed a new autonomous and ecological office building on the charity’s Oxford site. Third year students designed a new training facility at RESTORE’s site in Didcot, including workshops, offices, communal room and ancillary accommodations. Both projects, located in a communal garden and adjacent allotments respectively, had a strong relationship with the natural environment.
Unit H speculated on the future wealth of the UK being based on the Ideas Economy. The unit’s theme was to design a place for this process. We encouraged students to explore issues that were of particular interest to them. Consequently the projects were student, rather than tutor, centred.

The projects focused on the provision of space for the development of ideas - desk (non site), writing room, and an ideas laboratory (Grandpont nature reserve). These formed the Ideas Exchange, for which students developed their own brief within a proposed framework.

If we had a manifesto it was that we sought an architecture that was driven by design process, rather than dogma or adoption of style. We expected this design process to yield form which was expressive of meaning, a celebration of what the building was and contained. We did not support self referential, attention-seeking architecture. Rather we hoped to find a way to add to the environment in a manner that connected to what was around. We believe architecture must be sustainable in a meaningful way, taking only what was essential, and giving back more in return wherever possible. We all questioned everything – assumptions belonging to the field of tradition which had no place in our thinking. We were not afraid to be innovative. Finally, we asked that ideas should be given their fullest expression in carefully crafted presentations, explicit, so that their consequences could be appreciated, perhaps enjoyed and maybe even influence future constructions. This year’s unit patron was St Jerome.

With thanks to Sarah Royse.
'Architecture does not consist in the sum of the width, length, and height of the structural element that enclose space, but in the void itself, the enclosed space where man lives and moves . . .' Bruno Zevi - Architecture as Space, 1957

This year we introduced a new module in product design for Interior Architecture. This was intended to support the design in the studio and introduce specific design detail, using sketching, prototyping and testing models.

The design proposals were evaluated from a branding point of view, including a design mission statement with corporate/brand identity and production process.

Measurements Workshop: the aim of this exercise was to understand and represent the activity of a person in space, in this case a work environment. Measuring exactly the complex work ‘routine’ became indispensable. This design workshop included detailed information about both equipment, space, and the more difficult measures of movement.

Further subjective aspects that required recording were qualitative notions, dependent on materials, finish, texture, details, and other elements that evoke immediate sensations.

The students recorded the working sequence by tracking the presence of people onto sequential orthographic drawings, complemented by a series of images showing different visual point of views, including the use of short films or 3D computer animation.
Working (for a) Living: today the office is not only the place where people work and produce, but is also where they spend a large part of their adult life. The aim of this design brief was to investigate the design parameters between office furniture and people, in the context of the work place, taking into account measurements, scale, movement and the interface between private and public areas.

The parameters usually fell into two categories: objective, relating to functionality and ergonomic criteria; and subjective, concerned with modes of use and lifestyle. Students had to determine the concept of a ‘working space’, a continuous connection between objective parts and their use, articulated in mechanical and human movement.

The site was inside an old industrial building located between Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street in Oxford. Additional parameters had to include an assessment/survey of the existing building, alteration and the differences between objective measures and subjective perceptions.
Inside/out (staircase brief): the starting point for this brief was to consider the possibility that architecture might not only be concerned with the design of buildings, but also with the activities and the experiences that take place inside them.

When the focus shifts to people and their movement and occupation through space, design becomes more like choreography, with the built form shaping and containing the stage for a variety of rituals and meaningful experience.

This inverted design approach, where the outside of the building is determined by its internal complexity, produces visible ‘scars’ of the conflict between inside and outside forces, and can alter the way in which aesthetics and technical priorities are dealt with.

Sustainable technology allows for materials and space to seamlessly connect across the once impenetrable external skin. Inside ‘organs’ can evolve and adapt to survive exposed, and do not need to be hidden away, but can be celebrated as primary design features.

The design brief was to replace the staircase of the Department of Architecture at Oxford Brookes with a new structure. The expectation was to create a suspended meeting place and also to improve the relation with the courtyard and the roof space above the library.
This year DS1 explored the notion of dwelling. Housing has been off the architectural student agenda for a while, but has returned in recent years as a topical and challenging proposition, in part due to the profile of schemes such as Accordia in Cambridge, which won the 2008 Stirling Prize. Our ambition in DS1 was to challenge the codes, conventions and standards by which new housing is assessed, and apply a post-graduate level of discourse and design to exemplary - albeit hypothetical - environments for living, working, leisure and recreation. The programme was tailored to dovetail into the Thinking Architecture module lecture series, film-making, essays and various technology requisites.

Introductory projects introduced the theme of Living. The first, Paradigm, involved group research into 30 seminal twentieth century houses and the design of a new small guest houses for each host house, through an understanding of the underlying principles adopted by the original architect. We then used Inaki Abalos’ seminal 2001 book, ‘The Good Life; A Guided Visit to the Houses of Modernity’ as a vehicle for a series of imaginary lifestyles around the notion of home. The benefits of this early theoretical investment were manifested in individual entries for two national competitions: Make Bethnal Green (RIBA in association with Affinity Sutton); and Urban Suburban (RIBA in association with Nationwide). The first involved group site analysis and research, which led to proposals for the replacement of tired mansion blocks in Bethnal Green with 170 new mixed dwellings. The second was an ‘anywhere’ site with no prescriptive parameters or scale. Both competitions called for an intelligent response to energy efficiency.

In a break between the two competitions we undertook a week-long study trip to Netherlands, spending time in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Delft. This first-hand experience of exemplary housing projects by international architects proved to be an inspiration - it also produced many of the social highlights of the year!
Architecture and urbanism have a systemic problem – we have lost the art of asking the right question. We have become obsessed by what we reap (buildings) rather than what we sow (good ideas). This translates into a lack of capacity to create strategically valid building and design briefs within both the academic and industrial sectors. This means less sustainable, less strategically and socially responsive, non-wasteful building. This problem has become more acute in the context of an economic downturn, as it prevents agile, cost effective, sustainable thinking.

In DS2 we recognise that our cities, towns and villages are in the midst of significant change. Factors include the increased relevance of the green economy, social entrepreneurship, and growing free agency working, among other things. In this challenging impending future, place shaping and making is increasingly recognised as being critical to effectively managing change. Place-nomics responds to this between the two cities of Oxford - where almost a third of the population live in poverty through a process of prototyping and scenario testing.

This process included collaborations with MBA students as a means to explore the value proposition of architectural innovation on a field trip to Detroit to participate in collaborative community design with students at the University of Detroit-Mercy (sponsored by Ibstock Brick).

In both Oxford and Detroit, the students developed integrated ecologies of interconnected micro-urban interventions, designed to infect and transform the existing urbanism of poverty. Working as agents of innovation, the projects contain fresh design thinking that transforms urban and planning infrastructure to include the systems, interactions and environments of the future.
Water - our most precious commodity, the essential element for life. Without it we could not survive. In some places it is in abundance, and its presence and power through the forces of nature can threaten existence. In other places it is the scarcity of water that threatens human survival. Human habitation has grown up around rivers for both the water supply and transportation opportunities. Water is the beginning and sustainer of life. We explored a number of water based projects: the shape of water/water harvester; temperature of water; purification of water; paradise regained and the urban pool. Plato once declared that anyone who could not swim lacked a proper education. ‘Go swimming, become healthy and beautiful’.

With thanks to Chris Bannister, Robert Grindley and Sarah Stevens.
POSTGRADUATE
“If anything is described by an architectural plan, it is the nature of human relationships”
Robin Evans, Figures, Doors and Passageways, 1978

DS4 pitches the visceral aspects of matter and building against the functional and meta-functional aspects of buildings. Logic, culture and social anthropology, history and type, landscape and the public realm, scale and intimacy, theatre, material and light, engineering and construction all play their part in the work. Sharing the development of common projects - Mildmay Fields Park Infrastructure and Chess Stadium & National Chess Centre - the students have been asked to partake in collective work and research.

The students have been encouraged to make maquettes and models and in doing so to distill architectural production to the essential and conceive of it often in rudimentary ways and, to resist excessive and complex formal expression and computer generated imagery.
Andrew Holmes, Thomas Arnold
Lionel Real De Avza, Maria Buontempo, Michael Chou, Yinka Enirayetan, James Gunn, Marcella Leone, Philip Meikle, Iris Michalou, Matt Morris, Omar Raza, Perran Trewheza, Michelle Wardle, Becki Woodhams, Hayley Yu, Justin Zawyrucha

The Extra Room aims to redefine function as psychological. The project starts at the small scale, from the standpoint of the design of three interiors that provide the theatrical backdrop for a particular cast of characters with a complex series of relationships. The first task is to choose three characters from three existing movies. They are developed and seen as a set of characters, seen over a time span of 24 hours. Each inhabits a set of rooms. 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 theatre. Construction of black and white collages provide the first step in the description of the rooms and in the outlining of a storyboard supported by sketches, and photographs.

The site is seen as a location in which intense and particular social interactions take place within the physical fabric of a set. The set is seen as including buildings, but also includes the sky, the plants, the railway and the fabric of the whole city with its history and biography.

One of the factors that determine designing for movies or any mediated form is how it looks on film, on the screen, to an audience. It is the technologies of surface that determine the effectiveness of the illusion.
Unk-Unk Jungle: this unit revolves around a vision of the future applied to science, lifestyle, politics, and self. In all there were seven projects - the project marathon (five projects), the main project (one project) and the complementary project (one project). The main project was an Exploratory Science Institute.

The unit’s site was Victoria Tower Gardens and its immediate surroundings. The agenda for the unit, namely dwelling (MP’s second homes) and Exploration (The Science Institute) overlapped with one another, next to, or perhaps even in place of, the Houses of Parliament.

The Exploratory Science Institute acted as both a public face for the work, a research institute and the headquarters for the Department of Science, which at present is located within the Ministry of Defence. The design comprised of a department office, a research centre and an exhibition space. In addition, students explored the relationship of their design to the River Thames, the Houses of Parliament and the new accommodation for MPs.

In 2010 there was a General Election. Given the criticisms and ethical dilemmas of the current Members of Parliament, the unit looked to overhaul their public image. In order to change the look, process, and relevance of politics and MPs this unit challenged the very nature and role of MPs, their relationship with the public and their exposure to the world.

This page: David Banner; facing page: Anna Griberman. Overleaf left: Mas Fiza Masron; Andrew Watson; Norsyazril Abdul Karim; overleaf right, clockwise from top left: Conor Worth; Jonathan Barnard; Adrian Buckle; Rahul Vishwakarma
Layering Diagram
The SB-PD (Sustainable Building: Performance and Design) programme aims to help students develop the skills to create sustainable designs and developments, which are derived from a sound understanding of sustainability and rigorous testing of relevant environmental parameters and social context.

The design module is an opportunity to synthesise the information and knowledge gained in other taught modules relating to building physics, low carbon technologies, bioregional resourcing and post occupancy evaluations in collaboration with architectural practices. Design projects are based on real development requirements and briefs and solutions are derived from discussions with live clients and are tested through computer modelling.

This year’s projects were located in Oxfordshire and included the refurbishment of housing and offices, the creation of a new food hub for North Aston and landscaping for north Oxford. Projects consider the need for new ways of living in a bioregionally-focused low carbon economy while maintaining a high quality of life.

With thanks to Jeremy Taylor, Anna Ballance and all other members of the North Aston and Wolvercote communities.
This year’s cohort comprises 51 full and part time students from 20 countries, including 9 students from Diploma in Architecture. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and between them explore issues and practice-based approaches relating to chronic poverty, natural disaster, conflict and the nature of humanitarian practice.

In January 11 students undertook a two week participatory assessment workshop in Pentha Kota, a low income fishing community in the town of Puri, located on the coast of Orissa, India’s poorest State. Pentha Kota is home to some 5000 families who have lived ‘illegally’ on the beach for some sixty years.

The workshop comprised students learning and applying social-science rapid assessment techniques including ‘mapping’, ‘transect walks’ and ‘wealth ranking’. A key element of this approach concerned both students and residents uncovering and discussing together strengths and challenges community members face, which in Pentha Kota’s case included a strong and vibrant community with means of income, but which lived in conditions with poor sanitation, limited services such as water and electricity, risk from coastal storms and climate change and the threat of relocation.

At the end of the workshop students presented back their findings and questions to community members. An assessment report was also produced and can be found on the CENDEP website. The workshop was held in collaboration with the non-governmental organisations SEEDS India and the Urban and Development Resource Centre (UDRC).

With thanks to Matt Gaskin, Charles Parrack, and Anshu Sharma.
The main studio project took the west of Oxford city centre and attempted to produce a set of coherent design strategies for re-balancing this green-field site. In particular the focus was on handling the challenge of a site that is prone to flooding, and managing the relationship between an existing sensitive ecology with the needs of sustainable development. The students identified a number of design opportunities and motifs, including water and natural elements, to underpin identity and to create a vibrant and forward looking city edge. 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 of scales. The work explored issues if identity, social coherence, and the aesthetic and sensory dimensions of place-making.

The other main design project, Sexy Sustainability, centred around three contrasting sites in Milan, Blackbird Leys and the Oxford Canal system. The focus was on exploring how existing places can be developed to take on board the growing challenge for cities of environmental and social sustainability.

This page: Aristotelis Vartholomaios; Nicole Strong; facing page: Aristotelis Vartholomaios; Emma Chung. Overleaf left, clockwise from top left: William Usher-Smith; Mihir Naik; William Usher-Smith; Kin Tang; overleaf right, clockwise from top left: Kin Tang; Sarah Facey; Baku <NO NAME>; Sarah Facey
Most recent concerns about the city have involved reintroducing and preserving the values of the historic by interpreting the word urban as meaning streets and plazas. Historically, architecture contained artifacts or services denoted by the building’s function, e.g. banks contained money, offices files and paper, and palaces kings and queens. Information, the power tool of the people, erases old patterns and creates an abstract world without hierarchy.

The purpose of architecture is thus to contain social relationships and not utilities, since the utility is now a worldwide database. Chat rooms discuss Bubbles, a creature that never existed. The database scratches the itches of personal psychology, excess and consumption. The city is a nervous system without a centre, and the purpose of architecture is…

Armstrong’s Spacesuit looks at a dense section of east London, in particular Ridley Road Market. Here the old dubious and seductive pleasures of the city, its cafes and pubs rub up against the old staples of the open vegetable and meat market, with the cheapest food in Britain, serving the poorest population in the poorest borough in London.

With thanks to Sheena Joughin, Paul Davies, Martin Earle, William Firebrace, Austin Houldsworth, Saskia Lewis, Marie Paysant LeRoux, Bibi Nelson, Elena Paikkou and Thomas Thwaites.
The International Architectural Regeneration and Development (IARD) programme provides 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 existing environment, including vernacular architecture.

Following taught modules that provide the theoretical context in the first semester, the second semester regeneration and development project provides the opportunity to put theory into practice through a ‘real’ project. This year the group travelled to Tunisia, where they assisted the Association de Sauvegarde de la Medina de Tunis in developing ideas proposals for a derelict early 20th century school building in the heart of the old medina that would support the social and economic regeneration of its immediate neighbourhood.
The Major Study is an independent research dissertation or design-research project. Students have the opportunity to explore in detail a topic of their choice, and to explore that topic via architectural design or through any kind of interdisciplinary or exploratory medium.

‘We sat, all together, then she said, “have you considered how it is we see? I have tried to extend the work of Zeki, concerned with image in art, to aesthetics in architecture. Are you aware of the commonality of response to visual and sensory stimuli and that beyond cultural differences, there may exist an innate emotional response to all we perceive; an ingrained biological process, a universal way of seeing.”

‘He disagreed, “All I know, I can link to my past. Every experience an echo, the forest, fields and laneways of my childhood, haunt the motorways, the hypermarkets and the retail parks of my present. Every river a reverberation of the river by my home, all streets a recollection of those walked before. When modernity fails, it is only by comparison. My perception is my memory, therefore unique.”

‘But,” he said, “consider a truly unique perception. That of an agoraphobic. How through their eyes the modernist ideals of space, symmetry and the pragmatic grid, render the city an object of fear. Who, like canaries in the mine, alert us to what we may soon lose; the character and soul of the partial perspective and the blind turn, and the sanctuary in imperfection that these can offer. What is it to be alienated by ones environment?”

‘Here he agreed and continued, “we all feel alienation in the metropolis. It may, in fact be intrinsic to the experience of the urban. Have we not, all of us here, sought sanctuary within the narcotic pull of the metropolitan crowd? Embraced the anonymity of the city, surrendered to it, become enslaved by it, abandoning a sense of self to the act of getting lost? Or, perhaps, envisioned a metropolis devoid of the crowd, stripped bare, made dangerous by the lack of habitation? Where in the absence of a populace, only place can hold a memory?”

Tamsin Adams - The Limbic in Architecture
Christopher Dawkins - Computer games as a Medium for Participatory Design
Ben Doherty - Design under Conditions of Uncertainty: Calibration, design and hitting a Moving Target in the dark
Rob French - Alienation: the Architect’s Reaction
Oliver Lowrie - (E)state of the Spectacle
Roxanne Walters - Imagineering Civilisations: Memories of “other”, Archives of cultural memory
Stuart Ward, The Architecture of Agoraphobia
George Wilson - Mourning the People’s Princess: Public Grief and the Consecration of Space
Postgraduate

Research Degree Programme

Marcel Vellinga, Bousmaha Baiche, Rob Beale, Elizabeth Burton, Carol Dair, Nicola Dempsey, Mike Godley, Brian Goodey, Rajat Gupta, Mike Jenks, Ramin Keivani, Fergus Nicol, Ray Ogden, Paul Oliver, Aylin Orbasli, Brigitte Piquard, Shibu Raman, Chris Rust, Pete Smith, Fionn Stevenson, John Stevenson, Mark Swenarton, Igea Troiani, Nicholas Walliman, Katie Williams, Elizabeth Wilson, Graham Wood

Kjartan Bollason, Alma Clavin, Mariana Correia, Sofia Da Silva Teixeira Aleixo, Susanne Dahm, Joaquim De Moura Flores, Simon Fisher, Ahmadreza Foruzanmehr, Harriet Harris, Michael Hill, Robert Irving, Martin Johns, Kenneth Kwarteng, Jong Hyun Lim, Morag Lindsay, Célia Macedo, Lenka McAlinden, Aliye Mentesh, Iliana Miranda-Zacarias, Lynne Mitchell, Paula Maukkarinen, Pratima Nimsamer, Makkule Oktay, Barry O'Reilly, Anna Rita Petrungaro, Andrea Placidi, Jaturong Pokharatsiri, Chaovalid Saicharoen, Sambasiva Rao Sajja, Chulawadee Santad, Daniel Sant'Ana, Sudita Sattayakorn, Julia Wedel, Donia Zhang

There are currently 33 full and part-time UK, EU and international students registered on the programme, working to complete one of four routes offered: MPhil; MPhil transferring to PhD; PhD Direct; and PhD by Published Works.

Students undertake research in a variety of specialist fields, including low carbon technologies, architectural humanities, technology and vernacular architecture. Their work forms a vital part of the dynamic and thriving research environment of the Department.

Recent completions include:
Dr Lynne Mitchell, Understanding an altered reality: researching the design needs of older people with dementia.

As capabilities decline and frailty increases, older people with dementia often find their independence restricted by the built environment. Yet the provision of dementia-friendly environments had been constrained by a societal view of dementia as a medical problem. This thesis, a PhD by published works, presents the first research to investigate the design needs of older people with dementia at the neighbourhood level. It also conducts a critique of design practice for care settings and develops a conceptual framework for the principles and recommendations considered necessary for dementia-friendly indoor environments.

Dr Mariana Correia, Conservation Intervention in Earthen Heritage: Assessment and Significance of Failure, Criteria, Conservation Theory and Strategies.

Worldwide, a vast fragile earthen heritage is barely surviving due to serious damage and decay of the fabric. It is believed that natural agents are the overall cause for failure of this earthen heritage. However, when thoroughly evaluating causes of decay, it is discerned that the interventions of conservators also have a major impact.

Using qualitative methods and a case study strategy analysing three World Heritage earthen sites (Chan Chan in Peru, Aït Ben Haddou in Morocco and Arg-e Bam in Iran), findings were produced to understand why intervention mistakes are repeated and why successful conservation results are still scarce.
Examiners: Charles Darby, Matt Gaskin, Mary Hancock, Nick Hardy, Harriet Harris, Maita Kessler, Ronnie MacLellan, Peter Norman, Martin Pearce, Steve Race, Sarah Stevens, John Stevenson

The RIBA Examination in Architecture for Office-based candidates, provides an alternative work-based route to qualification at Part 1 and Part 2. It is a unique programme of self-directed study, which is managed by the Department of Architecture on behalf of the RIBA. It attracts candidates from all over the UK, Eire and other European countries.

Part 1: The Mourne Interpretive Centre, Northern Ireland, submitted by Rory Pepper

“Two voices are there, one of the mountains and one of the sea, both a mighty voice” William Wordsworth.

Three white models describe the concept of bridging between the compact granite mountains, the Mournes, and the exposed coastline of Dundrum Bay. The interpretive centre seeks to re-engage the community and its visitors with the previously active fishing and granite industries, long since disappeared.

Part 2: Jack Butler Yeats Art Gallery, Trinity College Dublin, submitted by Emma Cousins

Removing: Regenerating: Introducing: Urban Stitching

The art gallery is a film strip of the art, work and life of Yeats. The key objective is to establish a relationship with Europe by enhancing Dublin’s cultural quarter, and regenerating pockets of the city, to provide new social spaces. The relationship between the landscape and the building fabric is one that forms a continuous carpet forming an architectural promenade.

Left: Elizabeth Smith (Pt2); Right: Rory Pepper (Pt1)
**Prizes**

**BA First year:** RIBA Oxfordshire prize for best portfolio, Rodolfo Ava Richardson; school fund prize for best overall performance, Joseph Giddings.

**BA Second year:** School fund prize for greatest ability in environmental science and technology in comprehensive design, Edmund Drury; Doric Club Oxford prize for the best portfolio, Jason Fowler; Berman Guedes Stretton prizes for creative originality in design, Anna Beer and Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez; Riach Architects prize for best progress in sustainability, Stefanie Kuhn; Leslie Jones prize for best overall performance, Rodolfo Acevedo Rodriguez; Tom Lethbridge memorial travel award, Joshua Thomas; BA Third year: Doric Club Oxford prize for best portfolio, Francis Hunt and Matthew Townsend; Riach Architects prize for best dissertation, Ben Northover; Leslie Jones construction prize, Kathrine Thoen; Leslie Jones Memorial Prize awarded by the RIBA for most progress in building construction, Kyle Bush; Sponsored prize for interior architecture, Emily Falcon; Ramboll UK prize awarded for originality in sustainability, Misha King; Scott Brownrigg prize for best hand-drawn 3D visualization, Astrid Bois d’Enghien; RIBA Bronze Medal nominations, Michael Bell and Astrid Bois d’Enghien.

**Diploma:** Energy Efficient Architecture prize, Hannah Smart; Reginald W Cave prize for best major study, Tamsin Adams and George Wilson; Fielding Dodd prize for outstanding work, Nicholas Zammit; RIBA South student award for highest standard of all-round excellence, Lewis Critchley; Graphics prize, Fiona McLellan; Hunter Johnston Doric Prize for contribution to the Department, Greg Andrews, Natalie Daniels, Fiona Kelling; PRP Architects bursary awarded for the best demonstration of sustainable design, Tara Hipwood; Scott Brownrigg prize for the best perspective, Richard Phillips; West Waddy ADP prize, Diana Phiri; RIBA Silver Medal nominations, Lewis Critchley, Zoe Webber; RIBA President’s Dissertation Certificate for the best dissertation, George Wilson.

**Events**

This year, OB1 LIVE the voluntary design and build summer programme for year one architects were commissioned by Oxford City Council to design an Info_Bench for an underused public space in Jericho. The prototype was made from recycled materials sourced locally and temporarily installed for public consultation with a view to production in the near future. In parallel as a part of the International Architecture Student Festival alongside the London Festival of Architecture 2010 in Stratford the prototype was installed to successfully activate a similar public space.