

THE PRINCIPLES OF NEW ORNAMENT



ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION, LONDON 20/09/10 ☘ BRIEF DIPLOMA UNIT 13 2010/11
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THE TOPIC

THE CURRENT RENAISSANCE OF ORNAMENT IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IS SUFFUSED WITH MISCONCEPTIONS, MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND IGNORANCE. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF A 'MISSED OPPORTUNITY' THAT ONCE AGAIN DIP 13 WILL PRODUCE THOUGHTFUL AND KNOWLEDGEABLE LANGUAGES OF ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. ☘ THROUGH A STRUCTURED DESIGN PROCESS STUDENTS WILL PRODUCE AN IDIOSYNCRATIC ORNAMENTAL VOCABULARY THAT LENDS A VOICE TO THEIR PROPOSAL, WHICH WILL SPEAK ELOQUENTLY ABOUT TODAY'S MATERIAL (TECHNOLOGY), VISUAL (PERCEPTION) AND CULTURAL (MEANING) FRAMEWORKS. ☘ TO ACHIEVE THIS STUDENTS WILL FIRST IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ORNAMENT IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND ITS TRUE MEANING, ITS RICHNESS AND ITS POWERS. SECONDLY THEY WILL DEVELOP ORNAMENTAL TROPES SUBJECT TO THE REALITIES OF CONTEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION METHODS/BUILDING TECTONICS AND TO THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESTRICTIONS PROVIDED BY THE SITE (CENTRAL LONDON), THE CLIENT (A LEADING ART COLLECTOR) AND THE PROGRAMME OF THE BUILDING (A PRIVATE RESIDENCE). THIRDLY THEY WILL DEVELOP UNIQUE METHODS OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION THAT DO JUSTICE TO THE BEAUTY, INTRICACY AND PRECISION OF THEIR ORNAMENTAL ARCHITECTURE. ☘ THE UNIT'S THREE MAIN TOPICS ARE: ORNAMENT, ARCHITECTURE AS ARTISTIC PRACTICE, FORMS OF REPRESENTATION.



FREDRIK HELLBERG: TOWER OF THE FOLDING STONES (4TH YEAR; DIP 13 2009/10. WINNER NICOLAS POZNER AWARD 2010)

THE THESIS

EACH STUDENT WILL PRODUCE A THESIS THAT ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- ✎ BASED ON ITS HISTORY AND THEORY, HOW CAN *ORNAMENTAL PRACTICE* BE RE-DEFINED AS AN ARCHITECTURAL METIER OF THE 21ST CENTURY ?
- ✎ WHAT AND HOW SHOULD RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE *COMMUNICATE* THROUGH THE USE OF ORNAMENT ?
- ✎ WHAT ARE THE *METHODS OF COMMUNICATION* THAT WILL ENABLE THE ARCHITECT TO REGAIN RELEVANCE WITHIN CONTEMPORARY BUILDING PROCESSES AS A PURVEYOR OF RAREFIED EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE?



ORNAMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY: N.F.BLONDEL (1770), J.RUSKIN (1849), J.A.BADER (1764), L.H.SULLIVAN (1922), HERZOG & DE MEURON (2007)

THE METHOD

HISTORY AND THEORY ✎ SEMINAL TEXTS ON ORNAMENT WILL BE READ, DISCUSSED AND APPLIED AS INTERPRETATIVE TOOLS TO THE READING OF CONTEMPORARY BUILDINGS AS PART OF A DIPLOMA HTS COURSE (SEE COURSE BOOKLET: *ORNAMENT: BETWEEN VIRTUE AND INIQUITY*). IN ADDITION DIP 13 WILL INVITE EXPERTS IN THE FIELD FOR TALKS ON ORNAMENTAL TOPICS. EACH STUDENT WILL SELECT A SPECIFIC STRAND OF ORNAMENT-RELATED HISTORY AND THEORY, WHICH THEY THEN INTERPRET IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS TO FORM THE BASIS OF THEIR PROJECT. DIP 13 SEEKS STUDENTS WITH A NATURAL PREDILECTION FOR THE WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORD.

DESIGN ✎ IN A REVERSAL OF TRADITIONAL DESIGN METHODS STUDENTS WILL START AT A DETAIL SCALE AND GRADUALLY WORK TOWARDS THE SCALE OF A BUILDING. LIKE MIES VAN DER ROHE DIP 13 BELIEVES THAT *GOD (AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THE DEVIL) IS IN THE DETAIL*. AS A RE-ENVISIONING OF J. WARD'S *PRINCIPLES OF ORNAMENT* (1892) EACH STUDENT WILL A NUMBER OF ORNAMENTAL PLATES THAT, PUT TOGETHER, WILL PRODUCE *PRINCIPLES OF NEW ORNAMENT*. THESE PLATES WILL CONSTITUTE A CATALOGUE OF MATERIALIST, NATURALIST, GEOMETRIC AND ICONOGRAPHIC ITERATIONS OF MOTIFS ACCORDING TO STANDARD ORNAMENTAL TYPES (OBJECT, LINE, SURFACE ETC.). TOWARDS THE END OF TERM 1 THE ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS WILL BE TRANSLATED TO BECOME AN INVENTORY OF ORNAMENTAL MOMENTS WITHIN THE EVOLVING BUILDING PERTAINING TO STRUCTURE, CIRCULATION, SURFACES, JOINTS, OPENINGS AND SERVICES. FINALLY A LONDON HOME FOR A PRIVATE CLIENT AND HIS ART COLLECTION WILL BE DESIGNED USING YOUR *PRINCIPLES OF NEW ORNAMENT*, BY RECONFIGURING AND ADAPTING THE NOW EXPANDED VOCABULARY ACCORDING TO CONTEXTUAL FACTORS (CONSTRUCTION METHODS, SITE).

THE ENTIRE DESIGN PROCESS WILL BE ONE OF GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION, HYBRIDISATION, METAMORPHOSIS AND LAYERING; EVENTUALLY PRODUCING A MEDIUM-SCALE BUILDING THAT IS VISUALLY, TACTUALLY AND SYMBOLICALLY RICH, ELOQUENT AND CONTEMPORARY.

DRAWING ✎ DIP 13 REGARDS THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PROCESS AS A FORM OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION, RATHER THAN THE MERE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY. THE ARCHITECT IS NOT THE BUILDER OF BUILDINGS, BUT THE ILLUSTRATOR OF IDEAS FOR BUILDINGS. CONSEQUENTIALLY WE ENCOURAGE THE FOLLOWING: ✎ AS THE AUTHOR OF ARTEFACTS THE ARCHITECT SHOULD AIM FOR **UNIQUE (RECOGNISABLE) FORMS OF EXPRESSION**, WHICH DISTINGUISH HIS WORK FROM THAT OF HIS COMPETITORS. THE AESTHETICS OF DRAWINGS AND MODELS SHOULD PRIMARILY REFLECT THE ARCHITECT'S IDIOSYNCRATIC APPROACH TOWARDS A PROJECT AND NOT THE PREDICTABLE AESTHETICS OF EXISTING SOFTWARE PACKAGES. ✎ WHILE A CONSOLIDATED KNOWLEDGE OF 2D AND 3D DIGITAL MODELLING IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A DESIGN, WE PROMOTE THE EXPERIMENTAL HYBRIDISATION OF VARIOUS DRAWING AND MODEL-MAKING TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUAL FORM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION. FORMER DIP 13 STUDENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ADVICE AND TIPS WHILE FORMER DIP 13 GRADUATE ALEX KAISER WILL OFFER A MEDIA STUDIES COURSE ON DIGITAL PAINTING AND IMAGE COMPOSITION. ✎ IN DIP 13 THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A PORTFOLIO/PROJECT NARRATIVE IS CONDUCTED WITH THE SAME DEGREE OF CARE AND ATTENTION THAT IS BESTOWED UPON THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT ITSELF, ESPECIALLY THIS YEAR AS WE EXPLORE THE CONFLUENCE OF ARTISTIC- AND ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE.

TECHNICAL STUDIES ✎ THE WORK OF DIP 13 IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE MATERIAL REALITY OF ARCHITECTURE, THEREFORE THE TECHNICAL AND DESIGN ASPECTS OF THE PROJECTS FORM AN INDIVISIBLE WHOLE. WE EMBRACE THE POSSIBILITIES OF UP-TO-DATE MANUFACTURING- AND CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES, AS WELL AS EMERGING MATERIAL POSSIBILITIES. DURING TERM 1 STUDENTS WILL SELECT A **PALETTE OF MATERIALS**, VARIATIONS OF WHICH WILL INFORM ALL OF THEIR SUBSEQUENT DESIGNS. WITH THE HELP OF **TRISTAN SIMMONDS** (ARUP AGU FOUNDING MEMBER, CONSULTANT STUDIO ANTONY GORMLEY) STUDENTS (4TH & 5TH YEAR) WILL DEVELOP CUSTOMISED PRODUCTION PROCESSES AND MATERIAL PROTOTYPES. THESE WILL LEND CREDIBILITY TO THE PROPOSAL AND CONVEY THE SEDUCTIVE BEAUTY AND TACTILITY OF THE ORNAMENTS' MATERIAL REALITY. DUE TO THEIR PRE-EMINENT ROLE IN THE RE-EMERGENCE OF ORNAMENT, METHODS OF DIGITAL MASS-CUSTOMISATION WILL BE FAVOURED OVER THOSE OF REPETITIVE MASS-PRODUCTION. THE UNIT ALSO HAS A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE **LAYERING AND SEQUENCING OF VARIOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES** TO GENERATE UNEXPECTED EFFECTS. FIRST AND FOREMOST DIP 13 IS INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF SCALING DIGITAL CRAFT AND MANUFACTURING METHODS TO BECOME VIABLE COMPONENTS WITHIN BUILDING PROCESSES.



ORNAMENTAL PROTOTYPE BY ADAM JOHNSTON (5TH YEAR. AA DIPLOMA HONOURS; DIP 13 2008/09)

THE PROJECT

THE SITE/CLIENT ∞ IN WEEK 1 OF TERM 1 STUDENTS WILL CHOOSE FROM A SELECTION OF THREE AVAILABLE CENTRAL LONDON SITES (10 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS; WEST MEADOW - HAMPSTEAD HEATH; ONE HYDE PARK). THE SITES EMBODY THREE TYPES OF DWELLING: THE COUNTRY HOUSE, THE TOWNHOUSE AND THE PENTHOUSE. EACH STUDENT WILL ALSO INDIVIDUALLY SELECT AN ART COLLECTOR AS THEIR CLIENT FROM A GIVEN SHORTLIST. THE PROJECTS WILL FULFIL THE NECESSARY DOMESTIC AND REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTIONS CHARACTERISTIC OF AN AFFLUENT RESIDENCE. ∞ FIRMLY ROOTED WITHIN THE ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION OF **THE HOUSE AS MANIFESTO** YOUR BUILDING WILL BECOME AN EXPERIMENTAL *GESAMTKUNSTWERK* (TOTAL WORK OF ART). AS SUCH IT WILL TEST THE CONVERGENCE OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN TERMS OF TECHNIQUES, PRACTICES AND OBJECTS. THE DESIGN WILL ALSO QUESTION CURRENT TENDENCIES IN THE TOP-SEGMENT OF THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET TOWARDS 'MCMANSIONS' AND 'GREIGE' (GREY & BEIGE) NEUTRALITY. MOST IMPORTANTLY THE PROJECTS WILL REVEAL NEW AND EXCITING POSSIBILITIES FOR AN ARCHITECTURE, WHOSE PRIMARY FUNCTION IT IS TO HOUSE ART. YOUR PROPOSAL WILL REUNIFY ART AND ARCHITECTURE THROUGH ORNAMENT, THUS SUBVERTING THE TYRANNY OF THE *WHITE CUBE*. YOUR ORNAMENTAL GRAMMAR WILL NEGOTIATE THE OBSSIVE PSYCHE OF THE COLLECTOR WITH THE INHERENT AESTHETIC AND SYMBOLIC QUALITIES OF ARTWORKS, ALL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DEMANDING SITES THAT BRING WITH THEM THEIR OWN SETS OF REFERENCES AND OCCASIONALLY A DIFFICULT NEIGHBOUR. YOUR PROPOSAL WILL BE AN ICONIC BUILDING THAT POINTS TOWARDS A STYLISTIC FUTURE BEYOND HISTORICIST PASTICHE OR AUTISTIC NEUTRALITY. ∞ THE RESEARCH INTO THE CHOSEN SITE AND CLIENT (SURVEY) WILL BE CONDUCTED IN GROUPS, WHEREAS ALL DESIGN WORK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. THE SITES ARE CONTENTIOUS AND CHALLENGING – THEY REQUIRE INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE BOLD AND INNOVATIVE RATHER THAN OBVIOUS AND DETERMINISTIC.

THE PROPOSAL ∞ STUDENTS WILL EVENTUALLY PRODUCE PROPOSALS FOR MEDIUM-SCALE BUILDINGS THAT ARE RESOLVED IN DETAIL (TRADITIONALLY **THE SCALE OF ORNAMENT**). PROPOSALS WILL BE DRAWN TO COMMUNICATE THE RATIONALE AND EFFECTS OF THE ORNAMENTAL LANGUAGE. SECTION- AND PLAN DRAWINGS WILL ONLY FEATURE IF RELEVANT TO THE ORNAMENTAL DESIGN (WE ENCOURAGE THE TRANS-SCALAR POTENTIAL OF ORNAMENTAL STRATEGIES). DUE TO THE GEOMETRIC COMPLEXITY AND MATERIAL CONCERNS CHARACTERISTIC OF ORNAMENT AN AFFINITY TO, AND REASONABLE DEXTERITY IN DRAWING IS REQUIRED.



ALEX KAISER: WHISPERS OF INTRICACY (5TH YEAR; DIP 13 2007/08. WINNER WILLIAM GLOVER BEQUEST 2008)

OUTPUT

THIS YEAR STUDENTS WILL PRODUCE THE FOLLOWING

- ∞ **PRINCIPLES OF NEW ORNAMENT:** FOLIO OF 20 PLATES (ILLUSTRATIONS)
- ∞ **PRINCIPLES OF NEW ORNAMENT:** BOUND HARDCOVER (DESIGN PROCESS)
- ∞ **THE TOTAL WORK OF ART:** SINGLE (LARGE) FRAMED ARTWORK CONTAINING MIN. 5 DETAILS AND VARIOUS VIEWS.
- ∞ **TS BOOK:** BOUND HARDCOVER (TECHNICAL STUDIES SUBMISSION, 5TH YEARS ONLY)
- ∞ **MATERIAL PROTOTYPE(S)**

UNIT TRIPS

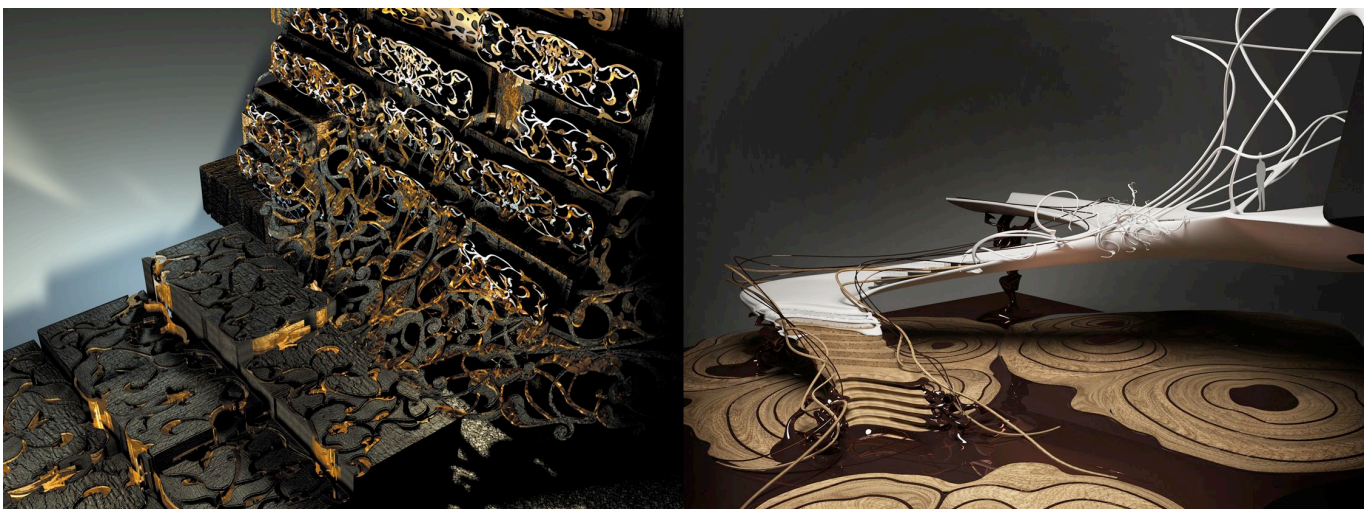
DIP 13 BELIEVES THAT A UNIT TRIP SHOULD PROVIDE FIRST-HAND ENCOUNTERS WITH EXEMPLARY ARCHITECTURE (AND DECENT FOOD). IN TERM 1 WE WILL GO ON AN **ORNAMENT HUNT IN LONDON**, WE PLAN TO VISIT THE RENOVATION OF **CHATSWORTH CASTLE** WHERE WE WILL ENCOUNTER TRADITIONAL CRAFT AT FIRST HAND, AND WE WILL VISIT THE ROCOCO JEWEL **EINSIEDELN** IN SWITZERLAND BEFORE DELVING INTO A TREASURE OF BOOKS ON ORNAMENT AT THE COLLECTOR **WERNER OECHSLIN'S FOUNDATION**. 🦉 IN TERM 2 WE WILL EMBARK ON A **ROAD TRIP ACROSS SPAIN** (MADRID, BARCELONA AND THE SOUTH) WHERE WE WILL VISIT HISTORIC MASTERPIECES, SUCH AS THE ALHAMBRA, AS WELL AS CHURRIGUERESQUE, GOTHIC AND BAROQUE RARITIES; NOT FORGETTING THE *TOTAL WORKS OF ART* BY GAUDI AND JUJOL, AS WELL AS MORE RECENT WORK BY HERZOG & DEMEURON OR EMBT.

UNIT CULTURE

DIP 13 ENCOURAGES THE **EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE** WITHIN THE UNIT. GROUP SESSIONS, PIN-UPS AND PRESENTATIONS ARE THEREFORE AS MUCH PART OF THE CURRICULUM AS INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS. 🦉 AT THE SAME TIME WE WOULD LIKE TO CULTIVATE LESS PREDICTABILITY AND MORE RECOGNISABLY INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROJECTS IN DIPLOMA SCHOOL. HERE THE STUDENT IS VERY MUCH THE AUTHOR OF HIS OWN WORK, AND NOT THE IMITATOR OF THE UNIT MASTER'S STYLE. WE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE YOU TO COMPOUND, DEEPEN AND ADD TO EXISTING SKILLS AND INTERESTS.

ART IS WITH US THAT WE NOT PERISH FROM TRUTH. (F. NIETZSCHE)

DIP 13 REGARDS ARCHITECTURE AS AN ARTISTIC DISCIPLINE. THIS MEANS THAT – LIKE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING OR SCULPTURE – A MEANINGFUL PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE CAN ONLY BE PRODUCED IF IT IS BASED ON A PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND OTHER QUANTITATIVE PARAMETERS, WHILE CONSTITUENT ASPECTS OF EVERY PROJECT (MUCH LIKE STATIC LOADS OR ECONOMIC VARIABLES), ON THEIR OWN WILL NEVER PRODUCE MEANINGFUL ARCHITECTURE, BUT ONLY BUILDINGS. BEYOND THE QUANTITATIVELY OPTIMISED SKELETON OF BUILDING LIES THE SEDUCTIVE FLESH OF ARCHITECTURE, SUBJECT TO QUALITIES SUCH AS BEAUTY, ELOQUENCE AND TACTILITY. DIP 13 WILL UNCOVER THE DISCUSSION OF THOSE QUALITIES BY BLOWING AWAY THE MODERNIST SMOKESCREEN OF FUNCTIONALISM THAT HAS CLOUDED OUR VIEW FOR FAR TOO LONG.



LEFT: ALMA WANG: RUSTICATION (4TH YEAR; DIP 13 2009/10. WINNER HOWARD COLLS STUDENTSHIP 2010)
RIGHT: DAVID NIGHTINGALE: GRAND STAIRCASE (4TH YEAR; DIP 13 2009/10)