DIPLOMA 10 BRIEF - 11/12

Direct Urbanism: fixed or flexible?

As we experience the city, we mediate physical and social structures that include ever-changing combinations of fixed and flexible variables.

AIM

To experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures and develop methods for designing complex spatial interventions that directly affect the live realm of the city and transform the urban fabric.

The city's reality is not made up of physical structures with fixed reference points, it is a complex reality, which is constantly articulated and activated by the live realm. Without the live realm and without situations, there is no city. The variables that govern situations and those that generate physical structures are undoubtedly different, we will question, challenge and build-on this difference.

We will devise salient ways to act within this spatial complexity.

We will concentrate on the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space and devise methods of working with them in order to generate interventions at different scales.

We will reconfigure physical and social structures to generate composite interventions that focus on the spatial overlap between the architectural and the urban scales.

We will use the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time – identified in the “London +10” book – to reveal new potentials for urban change.

We will devise ways to generate alternative catalysts for urban change.

We will question the role that the urban themes play in the making of architectural space and speculate on their direct relevance to the ‘live’ city.

We will work in London and test our ideas on the unit trip.

We will work with direct action, video, physical models, computer models, working drawings, text, animations, primary evidence and strategic documents.

PART 1 - COMPOSITE SPACE.

First experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures.

At the architectural scale, we will prepare preliminary proposals for an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions of 10 x 10 x 10 metres.

At the non-scale or direct scale, we will identify the fixed and flexible variables that make up the reality of urban space. We will also use the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time to reveal new potentials for urban change. We will

generate new catalysts for change. We will propose a preliminary constructed situation, as an immersion into an urban condition, which will include from 1 to 10 people.

- Introduction to the unit's work and the concept of Direct Urbanism.

- Speculate on the variables that make up the reality of urban space.
- Speculate on the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space.

- Introduction to the London +10 themes.

- As a starting point, investigate and analyse the space and curtilage (surrounding territory) of three specific existing buildings.
- Define the perimeter of one of the buildings and speculate on the possible overlaps that may exist between the architectural and the urban scales.
- Speculate on the fixed and flexible variables that make up the chosen architectural and urban space.

- Choose or identify an existing urban condition. This can be anything from a current development strategy to any form of current event that directly influences the city.
- Devise methods for immersing in the chosen urban condition.

- Devise ways of understanding the structure of the urban condition.
- Identify variables that make up and influence the urban condition.
- Investigate the relationship between the urban condition and the city's fabric.
- Choose a moment within the urban condition and formulate an understanding of the relationship between physical and social structures.
- Identify or define a catalyst for change.

- Choose a potential site.
- Prepare preliminary physical proposals for an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions 10 x 10 x 10 metres.
- PHYSICAL MODEL 1: Construct a physical working model.
- Build a 3D computer model of the surrounding territory and investigate different ways of transforming it into a potential territory of action.
- Identify and devise methods of working with fixed and flexible variables.
- Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.

- Direct Action workshop.
- DIRECT ACTION 1: Design and execute a constructed situation, as immersion, including 1 to 10 people.
- Develop strategies for creating interactive relationships between physical and social structures.
- Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.

- Technical Studies Workshop.
- For the TS we will concentrate on the technical role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space.

Using a composite language of structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements, we will develop a technical thesis that articulates the relations ship between physical and social structures.

- Propose a preliminary strategy for the Technical Thesis.

PART 2 - THE PERIMETER.

Second experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures.

At the architectural scale, we will develop a composite spatial language of structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements to support the design of an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions 10 x 10 x 10 metres at the scale of 1:50.

At the non-scale or direct scale and directly related to the architectural construct, we will propose a constructed that should include from 1 to 10 people.

- Speculate on the relationship between the architectural construct and its specific urban and site conditions.
- Question the role that the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time play in the making of architectural space and speculate on their direct relevance to the 'live' city.
- Define the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural space.
- Reassess the configuration of architectural construct.
- Define the perimeter of the architectural construct.

- Design the perimeter space of the architectural construct.

- If appropriate, analyse a chosen brief and adapt it as necessary.
- Define and propose the key components of the architectural construct, a public building.
- PHYSICAL MODEL 2: Construct a physical working model.
- Identify and make use of relevant agents and initiatives.

- Technical workshop.
- TS5.
- We will define and specify the technical role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space. The technical thesis, TS5, will concentrate on structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements at the architectural scale, but will also aim to contextualise this spatial scale within the technical topics that govern the urban realm.
- Design the key elements of structure and enclosure at 1:50.
- Design the interactive perimeter as an interface at 1:500.
- Design the interactive elements, rules, situations, conditions of the architectural construct and the interactive perimeter.

- Finalise the design of the architectural construct and the interactive perimeter.
- Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.

- Direct Action workshop,

- DIRECT ACTION 2: Design and execute a constructed situation that relates to the fixed and flexible variables pertaining to the architectural construct and perimeter space.
- Develop strategies for creating interactive relationships between physical and social structures.
- Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.

The unit trip will test the London proposals in a contrasting context.

PART 3 - CURTILAGE.

Third experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures.

At the urban scale, we will delineate an expanded perimeter as an interactive curtilage around the architectural construct, analyse its structure and transform it into a propositional territory of action by designing spatial and strategic interventions at the scales of 1:500 and 1:5000.

At the non-scale, we will propose a situational or direct strategy for the urban curtilage that should include 10 or more users.

- Speculate on the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of urban space.
- Explore the potential of the designed architectural construct with its interactive perimeter as an urban component and explore its relationship to rule-based urban systems.
- Define and delineate an expanded perimeter: and urban curtilage.

- Devise methods for working with and communicating the interactive elements, physical and social structures, that allow for the overlap between the internal and external spaces of the city.

- Direct Urbanism workshop.
- Propose direct interventions that create new spaces, delineate territories, require specific physical structures and deploy adaptive organisational systems.
- Prepare strategic urban proposals.
- DIRECT ACTION 3: Design a proposed situation, as insertion, to include 10 or more users.

- Identify and make use of relevant agents and initiatives.
- Adapt and appropriate any related urban initiatives.
- Define and design the expanded perimeter, urban curtilage at 1:500.
- Define the relationship between the combined proposals for the interactive perimeter and the urban curtilage with the city's infrastructure, fabric and rule-based systems.
- Integrate the proposed situation.

- Finalise the design by combining the proposals into a composite urban strategy.
- PHYSICAL MODEL 3: Model and represent its spatial configuration at 1:5000.
- Define the methods required to procure and support the proposed composite urban strategy and devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.

- Devise salient methods to insert the proposed urban strategy into the chosen London context.
- Test the architectural construct, the urban proposal and the proposed situation within the social, political, economic and physical contexts of the city.
- Reassess the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space.