NO COUNTRY
The largest state in the contiguous US, Texas is renowned for land, ranching, rodeo, guns and oil. Following our explorations of the Borscht Belt, Detroit, Salton Sea and Mississippi Delta, Intermediate 1 will this year make its final US fieldtrip through the petro-chemically indebted state whose land area is greater than any European country. Since the discovery of black gold in 1901 in the town of Beaumont, large swathes of the Texas landscape have been shaped and scarred by the oil-extraction industry, whose residual technological artefacts have interrupted the silence, heat and light of the American desert.

Starting in Dallas-Fort Worth we will travel across the Trans-Pecos desert to visit Donald Judd and Chianti Foundations in Marfa, followed by transting through the Permian Basin in west Texas, which is littered with thousands of abandoned oil derricks and ruins. We will then travel to Austin and on to Houston, where we will have as series of talks and working sessions with the School of Architecture at Rice University. The principal site-based research and investigation will take place along the southeastern Gulf, between Houston and Galveston – the largest oil-producing area in the US. Damaged by economic misanthropy and successive hurricanes, the area is now made up of dilapidated towns and farming communities, as well as derelict oil technologies. Finally we will travel inland from the ‘Carcinogenic Coast’ to return to Dallas-Forth Worth, where we will visit Dealey Plaza, the site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Acting as archaeologists of the immediate future (to paraphrase Reyner Banham), we will enquire into found architectures, speculative possibilities and spurious research in order to form an evolving critique of the temporality of architecture under such harsh physical conditions. We will question the architectural potential and cultural resonance of Texas in Robert Smithson’s ‘Monuments of the Passaic’ (1967), the writings of Cormac McCarthy, Sam Peckinpah’s The Getaway (1972), Wim Wenders’ Paris, Texas (1984), Aki Kaurismäki’s Leningrad Cowboys Go America (1989) and, of course, the Coen Brothers’ No Country for Old Men (2007). Working against convention, the unit will be charged with designing a real, surreal or entirely speculative architectural intervention set in the vastness of the Lone Star State.
Intermediate 1 is fascinated by the way architecture operates within larger systems — socio-cultural, technical, historical and aesthetic.

We consider architecture as an intervention within these systems, which we investigate in terms of both their functional (logical) operation and dysfunctional (illogical) nature. (A duality that is best expressed by the Vietnam-era abbreviation — SNAFU — Situation Normal: All Fucked Up.) These fuck-ups and occasionally successful operations leave behind residues: the architectural remnants of lost utopias and admirably persistent occupants who inhabit the often-absurd environments we visit. These inhabitants comprise the odd-balls and eccentrics — the drifters, gun-toting retirees, chain-smoking housewives, disaffected teenagers, religious maniacs and lost tourists — we encounter during our field-work.

This architectural design premise will be explored in 2014-15 in the context of England, Southern Europe and — in particular — the United States of America. If the US was the world’s greatest economic, scientific, and cultural force during the twentieth century, as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century that supremacy is indisputably waning, with America heading — if not into obsolescence — then certainly into a form of progressive redundancy. Following Sigfried Giedion’s argument that architecture manifests the unconscious will of society, architecture also exists as a kind of by-product — or residue — of these larger systemic interactions and is representative of this post-industrial demise. (In this way, the unit works in association with the themes developed by the ‘Paradise Lost’ research cluster, which is directed by Mark Campbell and supported by Steward Dodd.)

Throughout the year Intermediate 1 explores these architectural fascinations by researching, writing, talking, drawing, modeling, filmmaking, photographing and — above all — designing. We believe design is a critically engaged and iterative process, in which each stage of the design should be tested against our preconceptions, agendas, research and field-work.
BRIEF

‘A LACK OF SENTIMENT’

In 2014-15 we will work on one principal architectural proposal. This proposal will be informed by a series of field-trips: to a ruined coastal town here in the UK; the landscapes and cities of Texas in the United States of America; and the historic port city of Lisbon, Portugal.

As a precursor to our work in the US, the first part of the first term will be spent making observations, examining, exploring and evaluating the absurdity and desolate beauty of British seaside architecture. We will visit Folkestone, Kent, a “coastal town,” as Morrissey once noted with destructive intent, “that they forgot to close down. Armageddon — come Armageddon. Come, Armageddon, come.” These observations will be used to generate a series of drawings that will establish precedents for documentation that can be employed during the year. During the workshop we will discuss ideas of retreating from normalcy, passing occupations, dereliction and the relationship between landscape, exteriority and interiority — explored primarily through three dimensional views and sections. The workshop will run in conjunction with the unit’s film series and a number of invited and internal discussions that will also inform this initial stage of investigation and carry through to the research on Texas.

Jong Won Na, Liberty / Grossingers (2014)
Building on this work, the principal brief for the year asks students to design a speculative intervention, theatrical departure point, fetishistic engagement, or theoretical construct that is a temporary occupation set in the vastness of the Lone Star State. This design should be conceived in response to the ‘faked histories’, architectural potential, and cultural appropriation of such works as Robert Smithson’s ‘Monuments of the Passaic’ (1967), the writings of Cormac McCarthy, Sam Peckinpah’s The Getaway (1972), Wim Wenders’ Paris, Texas (1984), Aki Kaurismäki’s Leningrad Cowboys Go America (1989) and, of course, the Coen Brothers’ No Country for Old Men (2007). Ultimately, this design should be playful and disconsolate, a sly ruse, a deliberate falsity and a critique of our architectural intransigence, with a lifespan that conforms to the unit’s agreed definition of architectural obsolescence.

Prior to going to the United States, the unit will work collectively to assemble a research document that incorporates speculative and spurious research, anonymous histories, cultural misconceptions, and inventive possibilities. This document will explore the preconceptions we have of Texas and will be assessed against our experiences on site. During the unit field trip to the US students will be asked to select and document a site. This documentation will draw on the unit research seminars and workshops and involve drawings, maps, aerial imagery, charts, and filmic and photographic documentation. We will assemble a collective assemble taxonomy of these architectural typologies and sites. Finally, in order to refresh our imaginations, in Term 2 we will visit the historic port city of Lisbon, Portugal, to engage with ‘Old Europe’s’ conception of history.

**TECHNICAL STUDIES**

The technical studies are an integral component of the unit. During the field trip students will be asked to formulate an approach to the study in reference to their selected site and conversation with the unit tutors. This approach will then be developed, researched, tested through experimentation, and collated into the final TS report. Intermediate 1 does not stipulate a specific technical studies approach but allows students to develop their own interests within the context of the development of the design project. From the first term onwards, this approach is developed in consultation with the AA technical studies faculty and our dedicated TS consultant Damian Rogan, the Facades Group Director and a structural engineer at Eckersley O’Callahan Engineers who has worked extensively with Zaha Hadid and Kazuyo Sejima (among others).
TIMETABLE

During 2014-15 we will make three field trips in order to explore the notions of architectural temporality, fragility and exhaustion. At the beginning of Term 1 we will visit Folkstone in order to undertake our initial documentation and design explorations. Later in the term we will travel to Texas to undertake the field research for our major design project. Finally in Term 2 we will travel to Lisbon, Portugal.

‘COME ARMAGEDDON COME’

Prior to going to the United States, at the beginning of Term 1 we will visit Folkstone, Kent, which is currently hosting the ‘Folkstone 2014 Art Triennial’; an event that invites artists to use and speculate on the dilapidated architecture of the town. Artists commissioned to take part include Yoko Ono, Cornelia Parker, Tracey Emin, Jeremy Deller, Martin Creed and Alex Hartley. This visit will form the basis for the first exploratory design project and serve as a precursor to our travel to the US. During the workshop we will discuss ideas of retreating from normalcy, passing occupations, dereliction and the relationship between landscape, exteriority and interiority — explored primarily through 3D views and sections.

Tacita Dean, Amadeus (16mm silent anamorphic film, 2008)

Celebrations for the WWI Armistice, Folkestone, Kent (2018)
NO COUNTRY

Our field trip to the United States is central to the work of the unit. In 2010-11 we travelled up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, LA, through Baton Rouge, Greenville, and onto Memphis, TN. Along the way we visited the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina and the socio-economic decline of the once great Mississippi Delta. In 2011-12 we travelled across the Yuma Desert from Tucson, AZ, to the Salton Sea, CA — a derelict sea formed by accident when the Colorado River was mistakenly diverted. The ‘Californian Riviera’ not only became a tourist attraction, but also an opportunity for rampant architectural speculation, and an environmental disaster. In 2012-13 we travelled to Detroit, MI — a city that is synonymous with architectural ruin and the collapse of industrial manufacturing. Finally, in 2013-14 we travelled from New York City to the abandoned resorts of the Borscht Belt, nestled in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. If ‘America is the original version of modernity,’ as Jean Baudrillard offered, then these derelict buildings, vacant lots and ruined infrastructures have given us an insight into what the end of modernity might look like.

Following these excursions, in 2014-15 we will conclude our fieldwork in the United States by travelling through Texas, the petro-chemically indebted state whose land area is greater than any European country. Since the discovery of black gold in 1901 in the town of Beaumont, large swathes of the Texas landscape have been shaped and scarred by the oil-extraction industry, whose residual technological artefacts have interrupted the silence, heat and light of the American desert.

Day 1 — Friday 31st October 2013
Morning flight from London to Dallas/Fort Worth
Pick up rental cars and visit the Kimbel Art Museum
Stay in Fort Worth

Day 2 — Saturday 1st November 2013
Drive from Forth Worth to Marfa, Texas
Stay in Marfa

Day 3 — Sunday 2nd November 2013
Visit the Judd Foundation and Archive, Chinati Foundation, Building 98, Prada Marfa, and the Marfa Lights
Stay in Marfa
Day 4 — Monday 3rd November 2013
Visit the abandoned oil fields of the Permian Basin
Drive to Austin, Texas
Stay in Austin
Day 5 — Tuesday 4th November 2013
Drive to Houston, Texas, and meet with the Faculty of the School of Architecture, Rice University
Stay in Houston

Day 6 — Wednesday 5th November 2013
Joint Review with Graduate Design students and attend talks on Texas architecture
Stay in Houston

Day 7 — Thursday 6th November 2013
Drive to Galveston and visit the main terminals and off-shore facilities of the US oil industry
Site Investigations
Stay on Galveston Island
Refining Plant, Galveston (2014)

Gilchrist, Galveston Island, post-Hurricane Ike (September, 2008)
Day 8 — Friday 8th November 2013
Drive to Beaumont and visit the site where oil was first discovered in the USA
Site Investigations
Stay on Galveston Island
Day 9 — Saturday 9th November 2013
Drive to Dallas and visit Dealey Plaza
Evening flight from Dallas / Fort Worth Airport to London

Day 10 — Sunday 10th November 2013
Arrive London

‘OLD EUROPE’ — LISBON, PORTUGAL

Finally, in stark contrast to the New World of the Americas, during Term 2 we will visit the historic port city of Lisbon, Portugal. Lisbon is one of the oldest cities in the world: with existent architecture stretching from the pre-Roman Phoenician era, through the Roman and Middle Ages, onto the pre-Modern and Modern eras. We will view these architectural remnants as a counterpoint to Texas and a means to refresh our imaginations, reconsider the historicity of architecture, and engage with ‘Old Europe’s’ conception of history.
CALENDAR

AUTUMN TERM 2014
Monday 29th September to Friday 19th December 2014

• WK.01-03 ABANDONED BRITAIN
  WK.01 Field-trip to Folkestone, Kent
  WK.02-03 Drawing Workshop
  WK.03 REVIEW 01
• WK.04-05 TEXAS RESEARCH PROJECT
  WK.05 REVIEW 02 — RESEARCH PRESENTATION
• WK.06 FIELD TRIP — NO COUNTRY: TEXAS
• WK.07-12 TEXAS FIELD TRIP DOCUMENTATION
  Site Proposals and Project Proposals
  WK.09 REVIEW 03 / Technical Studies Introduction (3rd YR)
• WK.10 Drawing Workshop with CJ Lim
• WK.11 Project Proposition
• WK.12 END OF TERM JURY

In addition to the Intermediate 1 Film Series, a program of research & theory seminars will run throughout the Autumn Term.

WINTER TERM 2014-15
Monday 12th January to Friday 27th March 2015

• WK.01-04 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
  TS Proposition (3rd Year)
  WK.04 REVIEW 04
• WK.05 FIELD TRIP — LISBON
• WK.05-10 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
  WK.08 REVIEW 05
  WK.09 TS Review (3rd Year)
• WK.11 END OF TERM JURY

SPRING TERM 2015
Monday 27th April to Friday 26th June 2015

• WK.01 TS Hand-In (3rd Year)
  Design Finalization
• WK.02 REVIEW 06
• WK.03-04 Design Finalization + Presentation
• WK.05 REVIEW 07 — END OF YEAR REVIEW
• WK.06 2rd YR PRACTICE TABLES
  3rd YR PRACTICE TABLES
• WK.07 2nd YEAR TABLES
• WK.08 3rd YEAR TABLES
• WK.09 RIBA Part I Examination
  End of Year Show
REFERENCES

Robert Smithson, Monuments of the Passaic (1967)

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—Roland Barthes, Mythologies (1957)
—Jean Baudrillard, System of Objects (1968); For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (1972); America (1988)
—Victor Burgin, In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture (1996)
—Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle (1967)
—Don DeLillo, Americana (1971); White Noise (1985); Libra (1988); Underworld (1997)
—Joan Didion, The White Album (1979)
—Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics’ (1964)
—Jack Kerouac, On the Road (1956)
—Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, Ruins of Detroit (2010)
—Scott Martelle, Detroit: A Biography (2012)
—Esther McCoy, Five California Architects (1960); Richard Neutra (1960); Modern California Houses: Case Study Houses (1962)
—Felicity Scott, Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism (2007)
—Michael Sorkin, Variations on a Theme Park: Scenes from the New American City (1992)
—Hunter S. Thompson, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream (1972)
—Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown, Steven Izenour, Learning from Las Vegas (1972); Learning from Levittown (1970); Signs of Life Show (1976)
—Anthony Vidler, Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture (2002)
FILM SERIES

—*Giant* (1956), dir. George Stevens
—*The Searchers* (1956), dir. John Ford
—*The Magnificent Seven* (1960), dir. John Sturges
—*Hud* (1963), dir. Marvin Ritt
—*Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), dir. Stanley Kubrick,
—*The Getaway* (1972), dir. Sam Peckinpah
—*Days of Heaven* (1978), dir. Terrence Malick
—*Blood Simple* (1984), dir. Coen Brothers
—*Paris, Texas* (1984), dir. Wim Wenders
—*Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (1989), dir. Aki Kaurismäki
—*Bottle Rocket* (1996), dir. Wes Anderson
—*Kill Bill I* (2003), *Kill Bill II* (2004), dir. Quentin Tarrantino
—*No Country for Old Men* (2007), dir. Coen Brothers
—*Zombieland* (2009), dir. Ruben Fleischer

FILMOGRAPHY

—*Alphaville* (1965), dir. Jean-Luc Godard
—*Badlands* (1973), dir. Terrence Malick
—*Battle Royale* (2000), dir. Kinji Fukasaku
—*Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), dir. Arthur Penn
—*Chinatown* (1974), dir. Roman Polanski
—*The Conversation* (1974), dir. Francis Ford Coppola
—*Dawn of the Dead* (1978), dir. George A. Romero
—*Evil Dead* (1981), dir. Sam Rami
—*Five Easy Pieces* (1970), dir. Bob Rafelson
—*Gun Crazy* (1949), dir. Lewis H. Lewis
—*Killing Them Softly* (2012), dir. Andrew Dominick
—*The Last Detail* (1973), *Shampoo* (1975), dir. Hal Ashby
—*La Jetée* (1962), dir. Chris Marker
—*The Master* (2012), dir. Paul Thomas Anderson
—*Stalker* (1979), dir. Andrei Tarkovsky
—*Vanishing Point* (1971), dir. Richard Sarafian
—*Zabriskie Point* (1970), dir. Michelangelo Antonioni
PHOTOGRAPHY

—Burtynsky, Edward. Manufactured Landscapes (2009)
—Clark, Larry. Tulsa (1971)
—Duchamp, Marcel. Portable Museum (1936)
  The Democratic Forest (1989), Ancient and Modern (1992)
—Evans, Walker. American Photographs (1938)
—de Keyzer, Carl. God Inc. (1992)
—Frank, Robert. The Americans (1958)
—Klein, William. New York: Life is Good & Good for You in New York! (1956)
—Marchand, Yves and Romain Meffre, Ruins of Detroit (2010)
—Owens, Bill. Suburbia (1973)
—Polidori, Robert. Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis (2001);
  After the Flood (2006)
—Ruscha, Ed. Twentysix Gasoline Stations (1963); Some Los Angeles Apartments (1965);
  Every Building on the Sunset Strip (1966); Thirtyfour Parking Lots (1967)
—Soth, Alec. Sleeping by the Mississippi (2004); Niagara (2006); Last Days of W. (2008);
  From Here to There: Alec Soth’s America (2010)
—Sternfeld, Joel. American Prospects (1987); On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam (1997); Stranger Passing (2001);
  Walking the High Line (2002); Sweet Earth: Experimental Utopias in America (2006)
BIOGRAPHIES

UNIT MASTERS

Mark Campbell has taught history and design at the AA since 2005. He received his PhD and MA as a Fulbright Scholar from Princeton University and undergraduate BArch (Hons) and BA at Auckland University. He is a Visiting Professor of Architecture at South-East University, Nanjing, an external examiner at Cambridge University and Cardiff University, and has also taught at the Cooper Union, Princeton University and Auckland University. He is the founding director of Unreal Estates and has worked in practice in Auckland, New York and London and served as the Managing Editor of Grey Room and the Cooper Union Archive, in addition to publishing extensively. He is the Director of the ‘Paradise Lost’ AA Research Cluster.

Stewart Dodd is founding director of Satellite Architects Limited. He studied architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture and worked for several architects in the UK, USA and Europe prior to founding Satellite. He has taught extensively at schools including the AA, the Bartlett and Brighton University, as well as being a visiting critic at a number of schools worldwide. He is presently an external examiner at the Bartlett School of Architecture and sits on the RIBA Validation board for education. Satellite has been the recipient of numerous architectural awards, most recently, the Schuco/RIBA Design Excellence award for its recent River Cottage HQ, and the Green Apple, Gold Award for Sustainable Architecture. In addition to Unit master in Intermediate 1 Stewart is co-director of the AAVS Oregon, an annual visiting school held in Eugene, Oregon, USA.

CONSULTANTS

CJ Lim is Professor of Architecture and Cultural Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture UCL. He is the Founding Director of Studio 8 Architects and his projects and works have been published and exhibited internationally. http://www.cjlim-studio8.com

Damian Rogan is the Facades Group Director and a structural engineer at Eckersley O’Callahan Engineers who has worked extensively with Zaha Hadid and Kazuyo Seijima (among others).
‘IN THE END
WE ALL COME TO BE CURED OF OUR SENTIMENTS’
— Cormac McCarthy