‘The End of the Universe is very popular’, said Zaphod... ‘People like to dress up for it... Gives it a sense of occasion.’ – Douglas Adams, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe
INTRODUCTION

We stare out through Hubble at the light from the creation of the universe. At CERN we hurl electrons at each other looking for clues to its beginning only to set in motion our collective anxieties about our demise in black-hole oblivion. We sit in wait for the end of the world. We have always regaled ourselves with unnerving tales of a day yet to come. Tomorrow is a dark place and our culture is full of tales of a natural world out of control. Whether it be nuclear apocalypse, viral epidemic, tumbling asteroids or eco catastrophe our anxieties about our future demise chronicle the flaws and frailties of the everyday.

This year Inter 7 continues to slip suggestively between the real and the imagined, in the space where architecture enters into new relations with the territories of science and fiction. It is an experience of the present as a site of strange and extraordinary futures. Last year in the living wunderkammer of the Galapagos Islands, we explored the origin of the species and breathed life into a menagerie of architectural monsters. This year we will once again investigate our preservationist and conservationist attitudes toward the natural world but this time we embark on a voyage to bear witness to the alien landscapes of technology. We have mused on evolution and now we will flirt with extinction.

We will set forth on a psychedelic road trip, a last chance saloon tour of sites at their point of collapse. We will clamber over the wreckage of the future to visit a no-man’s land between cultivation and nature and spin a cautionary tale of a new kind of wilderness. Here the radio crackles, skies darken, the weather warms, grey goo seeps from between the cracks, mutant crops roam free – it’s a beautiful day in the strange landscapes that lie behind the scenes of modern living.

Our projects may be militant solutions or last gasp redemptions; a call to arms or a head in the sand; swan songs, manifestos or glorious celebrations in the shadow of an imminent end. We will be both visionaries and reporters, part documentary and part science fiction, we will critically engage with the conditions of today through speculation about the coming of tomorrow. Standing at the brink we will contemplate an end that is laden with fears and inconsistencies yet at the same time proves to be ripe with unknown escapes and wondrous possibilities.

"The collapse of the stellar universe will occur-- like creation-- in grandiose splendor." - Blaise Pascal
PROGRAMME

AUTUMN TERM

1. THE DOOMSDAY CULT.
Road trippers of the Apocalypse

cult: followers of an unorthodox, extremist, or false religion or sect who often live outside of conventional society; an interest followed with exaggerated zeal

We are looking for followers to join us in this world after the crash; to dance in the shadow of catastrophe and question our fears and misgivings about the future. The site for the first term will be our own bodies and a tricked out, hotted up psychedelic mobile home. As a unit will be forming a doomsday cult, we will throw open the doors of the AA, leave the school behind as we travel cross country preaching the word. We will open up the architectural practise to include the instigation of debate and the raising of questions about the social and political consequences of various environmental and technological futures. We will not go quietly into the night but in our bus we will forge an intentional community, activist architectures, eco terrorist responses and maverick manifestos.

1A. Taxonomy of fears.
2 Weeks
To begin we will document and research headlines and news reports, websites and radio broadcasts referring to fears for the future and construct a multimedia exhibition in our cult studio. It will be a travelling circus, an overwhelming assault on the senses, exploring our relationship to these messages of apocalyptic doom and the way in which they filter into the everyday ordinariness of our daily lives.

1B. Props and Paraphernalia
9 Weeks
For the major term 1 project we will breathe life into the characters and actions of our cult. We will furnish our cult home with all the belongings no cultist could be without. Across the term we will design and make Uniforms, Weaponary, Survival wear, Propoganda, forged newspaper articles, blogs, websites, street posters, megaphones, rituals, performances, treasured belongings and artefacts salvaged from the future. They will be props for films and documentaries we will make, they will instigate direct architectural actions and they will keep you warm on our field trip through the artic. The cults fictional constructions will be moulded entirely from the raw stuff of reality, your work will be superfictions, blending seamlessly with the real. Passers by and the rest of London will be unable to discern what is real and what is your project.
CHRISTMAS BREAK
FAREWELL WORLD!
A Journey to the end of the earth

We will voyage to the edge of the world, ‘the last wilderness’, We will head into the darkness of an eternal polar night. Dogs will pull us across a constantly shifting landscape of ice and water, a land of mirages, sun halos and towering icebergs. We will listen for the call of the wolverines, stalk the caribou and Arctic hare. We will pilgrimage to visit the glaciers for the last time before they melt, we will track the last of the polar bears, we will shed a tear under the electric sky of the aurora. An inhospitable place, at the precipice of the issues of today; a loaded landscape, to some the iconic register of global warming, to some romantic vision of a long lost wilderness, to some a wasteland rich in natural resources. Beneath the sleepy snowdrift it is a highly political and fiercely contested territory. We will embrace the aching beauty and sinister undercurrent of the Arctic.

We will tip our hats and farewell the world as we know it before heading home to imagine what comes next.

SPRING + SUMMER TERM
2. THE CULT COMPOUND
A village for the dammed

Your final projects will be a constellation of architectural proposals for the Doomsday Collective. The props, paraphernalia and new mythologies developed across the year will condense as the architectural fragments of our Cult compound. We will not impose typologies or prescribe programmes but your projects will be born from your own ambitions, dreams, fears and obsessions.

You will be both visionaries and reporters, part documentary and part science fiction, we will critically engage with the conditions of today through speculation about the coming of tomorrow. Our speculative projects will offer a distanced view from which to survey the consequences of various social, environmental and technological scenarios. Your projects will present alternative architectures as test sites for the deployment of wondrous possibilities or dark cautionary tales.

Standing at the brink we will contemplate an end that is laden with fears and inconsistencies yet at the same time proves to be ripe with unknown escapes and extraordinary possibilities.

‘Everything is becoming science fiction. From the margins of an almost invisible literature has sprung the intact reality of the 20th century.’
J G Ballard
SOME REFERENCES...

THINGS TO READ


THINGS TO WATCH


THINGS TO EXPLORE

Cyberpunks, Francis Bacon, Panamarenko, Illka Halso, Ant Farm, Mas Yendo, Lucy Orta, Gregoire Alexandre, Chapman Brothers, Kenji Yanobe, Hussien Chaylan, National Geographic Manmade series, Usman Hasque, Helnwein, Altor Throup, Marie Chouinard, Cyborgs, Transhumanismism, Naomi Filmer, Dunne And Raby, Matthew Barney, Stelarc, Lee Bui, Chris Cunningham, Natasha Vita More, Orlan, Tissue Culture And Art Project, Patricia Piccinni, Roman Signer, Haus Rucker, Lucy And Bart, Trentsix, Hikikomori, Internet Addiction, Computer Games Addicts, Marey, Muybridge, Biocomputation, Ubiquitous Computing, Cosmetic Surgery, Body Modification, Jules Verne, Nanotechnology, Butchery, Taxidermy, New Scientist, Wired, GE Crops, Climate change….

LIAM YOUNG studied architecture in Australia and works as an independent designer and critic. He has worked for offices including Zaha Hadid Architects and LAB Architecture Studio and teaches design studios at schools in both Europe and Australia. He is a founder the urban think tank Tomorrows Thoughts Today who explore the consequences of fantastic perverse and underrated urbanisms. Liam is a regular contributor to a number of publications as well as self publishing works of architectural fictions and futures. (www.tomorrowsthoughtstoday.com)

KATE DAVIES graduated from the Bartlett School of Architecture, London. She co-founded the multidisciplinary group Liquidfactory (liquidfactory.co.uk) in order to explore the hinterland of art, architecture and performance. Kate has taught at London Metropolitan University and Chelsea College of Art and has worked for a number of architectural practices in the UK and abroad.