

CONSTRUCTING INTERACTIVE SPACE

Diploma 10 will start by focusing on seven specific points in the city, anchor buildings, which were key to an earlier transformation of London: Hawkmoor's seven churches.

We will work directly with the urban fabric around these points by means of a continuous process of disentangling and constructing space. The disentangling will allow us to reassess the makeup of true space and the constructing will enable us to experiment with new types and configurations of space.

After choosing one of the seven starting points, you will arbitrarily scan the surrounding area to create a construct (a multilayered 3D model) that includes the salient physical and social variables that make up the spatial complexity of this fragment of the city and, at a larger scale, the economic, social and political realities of the relevant borough .

The intention is to work simultaneously with the reality of the city: the context, and its abstraction: the construct.

For the initial proposals, we will use the construct to design some abstract spatial experiments and then combine it with the context to experiment with different ways of tweaking the scanned area.

Can architecture provoke engagement? We will consider how narratives and situations influence or inform architectural spaces and urban territories.

If we accept that each of the seven starting points was a focal point for urban transformation, then what would be a contemporary focus point for London? Using our spatial experiments and by adapting a relevant brief we shall have to invent one.

Within the area of the construct, you will develop a detailed architectural design for a contemporary focus that combines physical structures and situations to make a configuration of interactive spaces.

Finally, we will question architecture's urban role. Can it be transformative? Can it be direct and form an integral part of the city's live realm?

AIM

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

GENERALLY

After concentrating on the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Lambeth to explore the influence that municipal power has, or should have, on the transformation of the city, we will this year focus on seven points, Hawksmoor's seven churches, that lie across different boroughs. St Alfege's is in Greenwich; St Anne's Limehouse, Christ Church Spitafields and St George's in the East are in Tower Hamlets; St Mary's Woolnoth is in the City of London; St George's Bloombury is in Camden; and St Luke's Old Street is in Islington. Starting at these points, our spatial experiments will oscillate between the architectural scale, an arbitrary urban scale and the scale of the relevant borough. In order to invent and design contemporary focus points for London, we will reassess the composition of space, work with situations and redefine context.

Why redefine context? By scanning context in a random area, identifying the variables that make up its space and putting together a construct, we will set out to establish and define the very make-up of space in order to generate salient insertions at the architectural and urban scales.

Why look at situations? Because situations form an integral, but underexploited, part of the composition of space.

Why use sections? By cutting sections, as part of a set of working drawings, through the city, through situations, through the construct and through our insertions, we will be able to interpret, propose and represent how physical and social structures interact in space.

PART 1

After choosing one of Hawksmoor's seven churches and modeling it, you will investigate the relationship that it has with its curtilage and context. We will question and change our understanding of what makes up the context of the city. Adopting a random approach, we will focus on an arbitrary territory centered on your chosen starting point.

Using the 'scan', a process developed over the last few years, we will identify the urban, architectural and live variables that make up the reality of the city's spatial experience. Once identified, variables such as structures, mechanisms of control, instances of conflict, amongst others, will be used to generate a digital construct that will form, in parallel to the real site, the revised context for our 'insertions'. This duality of context will enable us to juggle between the abstract and the real and to experiment more freely with the production of space.

We will propose the following:

- Scan and variables.

- Construct 1 (a multilayered, interactive, live, 3D computer model).
- Situations 1 (we will consider how narratives and situations influence or inform architectural spaces and urban territories).
- Sections and working drawings 1.

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include the construct, videos, animations, working drawings, presentations and text.

PART 1A

In the current climate of political uncertainty, of uncreative commodity-led developments and of one-liner vanity projects, we will concentrate on designing a relevant contemporary focus point for London.

Using the construct and the redefined variables that make up context, we will make preliminary and experimental spatial proposals that will aim to have a transformational influence on the scanned areas of the city.

We will propose:

- Insertion 1 (abstract spatial experiments).
- Insertion 1A (experiments with different ways of tweaking the scanned area).
- Sections and working drawings 1A.

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include the construct, videos, animations, working drawings, presentations and text.

PART 2

Experienced city space, with its formal, social, cultural, economic and political factors (variables), undoubtedly, encompasses physical and social structures, built forms and situations, but can these qualities be adopted in the making of architectural space? We will try.

Responding to context and exploiting the complex nature of city space, we will design an architecture that addresses the civic and the political, delineates the territories of architectural space, creates spatial configurations that combine physical and social structures and develops an architectural language that embraces spatial complexity and encompasses multiple structures, materials, layers, geometries and components. We will then insert our detailed spatial, architectural, design into the city's context in a manner that experiments with and proposes ways of blurring the boundary that separates the city's space from that of architecture.

We will aim to generate an architecture that matches the complexity of the city.

We will propose the following:

- Construct 2.
- Insertion 2 (detailed architectural design for a contemporary focus that combines physical structures and situations to make a configuration of interactive spaces).
- Situations 2 (we will experiment with integrating situations into our proposed architectural spaces).
- Sections and working drawings 2.

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include the construct, videos, animations, working drawings, presentations and text.

TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

In considering detailed design, production and construction, we will experiment with research ideas that range from geometry to materials, from structural principles to cladding patterns, from computational fabrication to methods of assembly and from the environmental to the sustainable.

Using a composite architectural language that integrates combinations of spaces, situations and strategies, we will develop a technical thesis.

We will define and specify the technical role that physical and social variables play in the making of architectural and urban space. The technical thesis, TS5, will form an integral part of the detailed design and develop a selection of the research ideas in detail. It will concentrate on the architectural scale, but will also aim to contextualise this spatial scale within the technical topics that govern the urban realm.

We will propose the following (5th Years):

- Thesis.
- Working physical models.
- TS5.

PART 2A

Unit Trip to Cairo (TBC).

PART 3

If we accept that each of Hawkmoor's seven churches was a focal point for urban transformation after the Great Fire of 1666 and the Fifty New Churches Act of 1711, then what would be a contemporary focus point for London?

After the spatial experiments of Insertion 1 and the architectural experiments of Insertion 2, we will expand our focus to the scale of the contextual scan and the scale of the borough. Can spatial interventions influence their surrounding area or form an integral part of it? Is there a perimeter, a curtilage, to a spatial intervention that is part-and-parcel of an architectural insertion? Responding to the redefinition of context, the emphasis will be on the civic, on the political and, particularly on the 'direct', which acknowledges and exploits the fact that the city's space is made up of the fabric of the city and the situations that take place within it.

We will continue to speculate on the future of London, on its physical and social transformation. At the urban scale, we will delineate, around our architectural proposal, a propositional territory of action. By tweaking the digital construct and reconfiguring the variables, we will reassess the city's mechanisms of transformation and generate, at various scales, new transformative structures, situations and strategies.

We will propose the following:

- Construct 3.
- Insertion 3 (urban insertion).
- Situations 3 (we will experiment with integrating situations into our chosen urban territories).
- Sections and working drawings 3.
- Conclusion (design thesis).

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include the construct, videos, animations, working drawings, presentations and text.

BOOK LIST:

- London +10, Edited by Carlos Villanueva Brandt, AA Publications.
- Occupying Architecture, Edited by Jonathan Hill, Routledge - (Chapter 6, Space Within by Carlos Villanueva Brandt).
- NATØ: Narrative Architecture in Postmodern London, Claire Jameson, Routledge.
- The Discourse of Events, Architectural Association.

- The Manhattan Transcripts, Bernard Tschumi, Academy Editions.
- The Production of Space, Henri Lefebvre, Blackwell.
- Rethinking Architecture, Edited by Neil Leach, Routledge.
- Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Robert Venturi, The Architectural Press.
- Nicholas Hawksmoor, London Churches, Mohsen Mostafavi, Helene Binet, Lars Muller Publishers.
- Hawksmoor, Kerry Downes, World of Art, Thames and Hudson.
- Ground Control, Anna Minton, Penguin.
- Slow Burn City, London in the Twenty-First Century, Rowan Moore, Picador.
- Restless Cities, Edited by Matthew Beaumont and Gregory Dart, Verso.
- Hawksmoor, Peter Ackroyd, Penguin.
- The Sellout, Paul Beatty, Oneworld Publications.
- Ulysses, James Joyce, Penguin.
- Royal Festival Hall - London County Council, Leslie Martin and Peter Moro, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon,
- Schlumberger Cambridge Research Centre - Michael Hopkins and Partners, David Jenkins, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon.
- Igualada Cemetery – Enric Miralles and Carmen Pinós, Anatxu Zabalbeascoa, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon.
- Mitchell's Building Series, Routledge.