

## DIRECT URBANISM: DIVISION AND ENGAGEMENT

Last year, Diploma 10 used Hawkmoor's seven churches as starting points to scan different parts of the city. By reassessing their architectural, religious, social and political roles, we developed twelve new foci for London. We will now reverse the process and start by questioning how political and religious divisions influence the makeup of space. An initial workshop in Belfast will allow us to witness and work with an ongoing political and religious divide that has now come to a head and become the diplomatic, territorial and physical sticking point of the Brexit process. Learning from this discordant situation, we will concentrate on London where we will use a chosen division, an architectural focus and a borough to reassess the relationship that exists between physical structures and situations and to articulate the reciprocal nature of division and engagement.

In order to counteract the pitfalls of topicality, we will scan an arbitrary area of the city, identify the relevant physical and social variables and create an abstraction of it in the form of a multilayered 3D construct. We will immerse ourselves in the real context of the city, work with its abstraction and experiment with alternative ways of inserting new interventions that will have direct effect on the future of London. The emphasis will be on the making of spaces that exploit the intricacies identified in the scan.

Can we blur the distinction between the space of architecture and that of the city?

What roles do division and engagement play in the construction, perception and experience of space?

Using the construct as a working tool, we will oscillate between the political and the social, between the territorial and the experiential, to carry out frequent spatial experiments, design a contemporary focus and devise strategies to influence the policies of the relevant borough.

### 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

We will continue to explore the influence that municipal power has, or should have, on the transformation of the city. Last year we used Hawkmoor's

seven churches as starting points, which spanned four boroughs and the City of London, to reassess their architectural, religious and political roles. We started with the architectural scale and expanded our experiments to the scale of the borough. We will now reverse this process and start by questioning how political and social divisions influence the makeup of space. Our spatial experiments will oscillate between the scale of architecture (the insertion), an intermediary urban scale (the construct) and the scale of the borough (the strategy). 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 redefine the very makeup 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 through the construct (as part of a set of working drawings), through the city, through situations and through our insertions, we will be able to interpret, propose and represent how physical and social structures interact in space.

## PART 1

We will use a chosen division, an architectural focus and a related borough, as starting points, to reassess the relationship that exists between physical structures and situations and to articulate the reciprocal nature of division and engagement. An initial workshop in Belfast will allow us to witness and work with an ongoing political and religious divide that has now come to a head and become the diplomatic, territorial and physical sticking point of the Brexit process. In London, 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 one of your chosen starting points. 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 - Division and Engagement - (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 Brexit, 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 the following:

- 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

What roles do division and engagement play in the construction, perception and experience of space?

Using the construct as a working tool, we will oscillate between the political and the social, between the territorial and the experiential, to design a contemporary focus for London.

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 design into the city's context in a manner that experiments with 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 - Division and Engagement - (we will experiment with integrating situations into our proposed architectural spaces).
- Sections and working drawings 2.
- Physical models.
- Thesis 2 (preliminary design thesis).

*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, which defines and specifies 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 Insertion 2 and it will aim to develop a selection of the design 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 (technical thesis).

- Working physical models.
- TS5 - Book.

## PART 2A

Unit Trip to Belfast or Hong Kong (TBC).

## PART 3

What roles do division and engagement play in the construction, perception and experience of space?

Using the construct as a working tool, we will oscillate between the political and the social, between the territorial and the experiential, to devise strategies that influence the policies of the relevant borough.

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 - strategies that will aim to influence the policies of the relevant borough).
- Situations 3 - Division and Engagement - (we will experiment with integrating situations into our chosen urban territories).
- Sections and working drawings 3.
- Conclusion (final 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.
- The Most Radical Gesture, Sadie Plant, Routledge. \*
- Theories and History of Architecture, Manfredo Tafuri, Granada. \*
- Rethinking Architecture, Edited by Neil Leach, Routledge.
- Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Robert Venturi, The Architectural Press.
  
- Magnum Ireland, Edited by Brigitte Lardinois and Val Williams, Thames & Hudson. \*
- Modern Ulster Architecture, David Evans and others, UAHS. \*
  
- 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.
  
- Milkman, Anna Burns, Faber and Faber. \*
- 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,
- New National Gallery Berlin, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Maritz Vandenberg, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon. \*
- Igualada Cemetery – Enric Miralles and Carmen Pinós, Anatxu Zabalbeascoa, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon.
  
- Mitchell's Building Series, Routledge.