VISIT

SCHOOL

SPRING SEMESTER PROGRAMME 2023

AA VISITING SCHOOL

AA

Autumn Semester Programme Exhibition, 2015. Photograph by Valerie Bennett.

The Architectural Association (AA) Visiting School Semester Programme is a full-time, studio-based course open to undergraduate and graduate students, architects and other creative individuals from around the world who wish to further their knowledge, practice and skills in architecture.

Mark Fisher Scholarship, *Right to Host* project at Bedford Square. Photograph by Byron Blakley.

Honours Presentations preparation in the AA Lecture Hall. Photograph by Byron Blakley.

INTRODUCTION

The Visiting School Semester Programme offers students a unique opportunity to study alongside full-time AA students and our acclaimed unit system for 15 weeks in the heart of London, one of the most architecturally diverse cities in the world. Based in Bloomsbury's historic Bedford Square, the AA is recognised as an influential world leader in architectural education, with full-time students enrolling from more than 60 countries each year. AA graduates are the recipients of numerous prizes including Pritzker Prizes, RIBA Gold Medals and Stirling Awards.

The Semester Programme is part of the AA Visiting School, which offers a worldwide network of part-time courses that encompasses myriad forms and agendas, with over 60 workshops in 40 different countries. The AA also presents one of the world's largest public programmes dedicated to contemporary architectural culture, including lectures by visiting architects and artists as well as exhibitions and symposia. These events offer students the prospect of engaging with the world's leading architects and discovering more about their practice, whilst gaining an insight into the benefits of showcasing their own work.

Spring Semester Programme 2020, introduction day at the AA. Photograph by Naiara Vegara.

SEMESTER PROGRAMME

The Semester Programme provides an insight into the renowned unit system at the AA, which provides one-to-one conversations with tutors to guide and develop students' work. Pin-ups, workshops, lectures and juries complement these interactions, wherein AA tutors and external experts are invited to discuss projects and provide personal feedback to students throughout the course.

The Semester Programme studio space is located at the AA, whose buildings encompass 32–39 Bedford Square and 16 Morwell Street, just behind Bedford Square. The programme is integrated with the AA's undergraduate History and Theory Studies and Communication and Media Studies courses, designed to allow transferable study credits. The AA Visiting School offers reports and transcripts to all participating students within the Semester Programme.

A unit trip is organised in relation to the main unit brief, allowing students to experience live project sites for themselves and engage in dialogues with local professionals. The group trip focuses on architecture, landscapes and workspaces with the potential to inspire and inform the theme of study.

Autumn Semester Programme 2019, mid-term jury presentation by Nutthida Tantivanich.
Photograph by Marie-Isabel de Monseignat-Lavrov.

Spring Semester Programme 2020, unit trip group photo.
Photograph by Naiara Vegara.

SPRING SEMESTER 2023
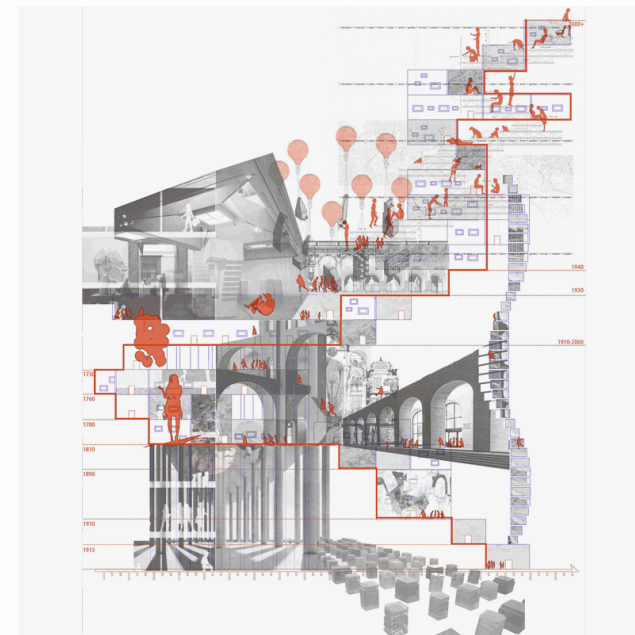# PROGRAMME BRIEF

• Spring 2023
  Coquinbo. IronBelt

The port city of Coquinbo is part of the Chilean Iron Belt – a geological province in northern Chile that extends along the Atacama Fault System, approximately 600km long and 25km wide, and rich in iron deposits. El Romeral is one of the biggest mines in Chile, located in the north of Coquinbo and connected by rail infrastructure to the port so that iron can be shipped to national and international markets. As a centre of industry and a sea freight hub, the city of Coquinbo sits between the ocean and a mountain range on the Pan-American Highway.

The ongoing debate as to whether the El Romeral mine will still be operative beyond the next decade opens up opportunities to rethink the relationship between its logistics infrastructure and the urbanity of the city. Participants in the Spring Semester Programme 2023 will investigate urban challenges in this context to discover opportunities for projects that can foster further integration of rail infrastructure into the urban fabric, or provide a new vocation for the waterfront.

Students will examine the environmental and functional conditions of the site, as well as the architectural typologies and socioeconomic profiles present in this context, by analysing both tangible and intangible conditions. Each student will develop their own brief to target specific design challenges relating to the insertion of new developments within the existing urban fabric. The city will be understood as layers of information that together reveal drawing and mapping qualities, which will inform students' own design narratives.
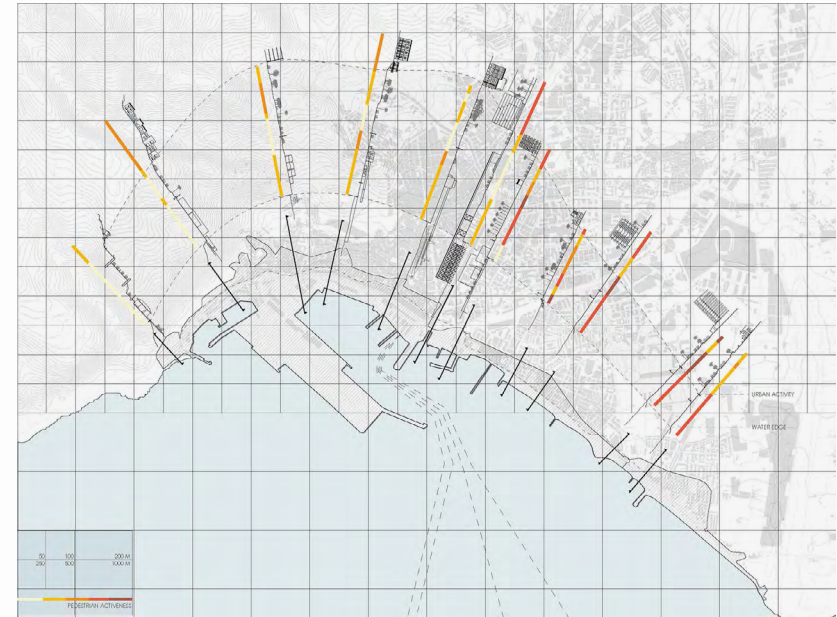
Autumn Semester Programme 2017, Almeria. Seaport. Drawing by Yirui Wang.

Spring Semester Programme 2018, Morelia. PinkQuarry; first London exercise. Explorations of Tate Britain by Yuxuan Lei.

PREVIOUS SEMESTER PROGRAMME THEMES

• Spring 2022
  Riga. Baltic Network

The Spring Semester 2022 brief addressed the greenfield high-speed rail infrastructure project Rail Baltica in Riga. Rail Baltica aims to integrate the Baltic states of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and indirectly also Finland into the European rail network. As a result, city nodes along this transportation corridor will become engines for urban development. This semester, participants will focus on one of those nodes: Riga in Latvia. This section of the line (Upeslejas–Riga–Misa, 56km long) is not only one of its most complex, crossing densely populated urban areas, but also links the Rail Baltica international passenger stations to Riga Central Station and Riga International Airport — the largest airport in the Baltic states.

During the programme, we investigated the city around Riga Central Station and Tornakalns to envision the urban impact and emergence of new projects in the core of Latvia. Addressing two neighbourhoods on either side of Daugava River, participants explored other is within green landscapes in proximity to the city's university campus and industrial areas.

• Autumn 2022
  Copenhagen. Island District

The Danish capital, Copenhagen, has historically grown by leveraging and connecting islets to expand the available land on which to build the city. The Autumn Semester Programme 2022 will focus on exploring the artificial islet of Refshaleøen in Copenhagen, addressing plans for its expansion to create a new neighbourhood. The future impact of climate change in Copenhagen is likely to be serious, and significant increases in the severity and frequency of flooding in the area have been predicted. With this in mind, our programme will explore the dialogue between water and land and between landscape and urban design in this context.

Refshaleøen faces the sea forts of Trekroner to the north and Flakfortet to the west; the expansion of the site, which is set to transform Copenhagen's industrial north harbour into a new city, will be the largest metropolitan development in northern Europe. Participants in the Autumn Semester Programme 2022 will explore urban scale to understand the different conditions within the site and suggest new vocations for the neighbourhood. We will examine the existing architectural typologies and socioeconomic profiles present in this context by analysing both tangible and intangible conditions at the water's edge. Each student will develop their own brief to target specific design challenges relating to the insertion of new developments within the existing urban fabric. The city will be understood as layers of information that together reveal drawing and mapping qualities, which will inform students' own design narratives.

Participants will be invited to develop their own aesthetic style throughout the programme, creating an ongoing dialogue between two- and three-dimensional explorations that reveal unpredictable qualities and inspire their design narratives. Students' proposals will be multi-scalar in scope, enabling their architectural propositions to respond to larger narratives relating to the aesthetic, programmatic and socioeconomic capacities of the city and its infrastructure.

CORE STUDIES

Two complementary courses are part of the Core Studies programme, which sees students from the Semester Programme grouped with current AA third year students. This is an important experience within the Semester Programme, as it directly exposes students to life at the AA and to current work, debates and experimentation taking place within units throughout the school.

• History and Theory Studies

Students are automatically enrolled in the undergraduate History and Theory Studies (HTS) programme, which is designed to introduce them to the nature of architecture – not only through design, but also the wider context of the discipline's relation to the past, present and future and to diverse cultures. Writing is a central skill for the developing architect; at a professional level, architects are increasingly expected to describe and analyse designs and buildings in written form. Students are expected to independently research a topic of interest, form a definitive argument and articulate their findings and arguments clearly.
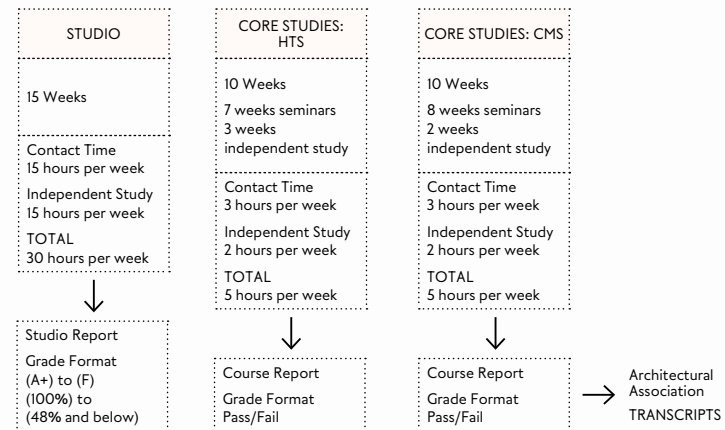
• Media Studies

Students can enrol for one Media Studies (MS) course from the wide selection on offer at the AA. MS exposes students to the work of architects, artists and other practitioners. It introduces participants to the innovative skills associated with traditional forms of architectural media and representation, familiarising them with the most experimental information, communication and fabrication technologies available today. Courses within MS emphasise the integration of established techniques in design with the potential of progressive, experimental modes in media and production.

A full account of the available courses can be found in the Core Studies Course Booklet, downloadable from the 'Documents' section at the bottom of the AA's Academic Programmes webpage.

• Studio-Only Option

The Semester Programme also offers a Studio-Only option, which excludes Core Studies (History and Theory Studies and Media Studies). The tuition fee for this option can be found at the end of this booklet, under Applications.

• Semester Programme Structure

STUDIO	CORE STUDIES: HTS	CORE STUDIES: CMS
15 Weeks	10 Weeks 7 weeks seminars 3 weeks independent study	10 Weeks 8 weeks seminars 2 weeks independent study
Contact Time 15 hours per week Independent Study 15 hours per week TOTAL 30 hours per week	Contact Time 3 hours per week Independent Study 2 hours per week TOTAL 5 hours per week	Contact Time 3 hours per week Independent Study 2 hours per week TOTAL 5 hours per week
↓	↓	↓
Studio Report Grade Format (A+) to (F) (100%) to (48% and below)	Course Report Grade Format Pass/Fail	Course Report Grade Format Pass/Fail

→ Architectural Association TRANSCRIPTS

AA FACILITIES

Students are encouraged to use the AA's extensive facilities to gain as many skills as possible during their experience of studying abroad.

• Digital Prototyping Lab

Located at 39 Bedford Square, the Digital Prototyping Lab contains various prototyping machines, including several 3D printers, three-axis CNC milling machines, laser cutters, 3D scanning equipment and industrial robotic arms, and a teaching space designed to evolve with the latest developments in digital fabrication technologies. The Lab intends to raise awareness of the potential of digital fabrication as a technique for producing final proposals and to highlight its capacity for use as a design tool.

• Wood and Metal Workshop

The Wood and Metal Workshop is equipped with standing machines, power tools and hand tools to facilitate the cutting, welding and shaping of steel, and to enable precise work with hardwoods, softwoods and panels. The permanent members of staff and assistants have extensive experience in model-making and fabrication, and are available to support and assist students in their work.

• Model Workshop

The Model Workshop provides indoor and outdoor working space for a wide variety of exploration, including mould-making, casting, glass and vacuum-forming, and kiln work in ceramics. Ideas can be realised using a broad spectrum of materials, techniques and scales, from traditional model-making to full-sized prototypes.

• Digital Photo Studio

The Digital Photo Studio provides a space for professional photography. Equipped with lighting, backgrounds, cameras and tripods, it is often used for photographing or filming models. The studio also stocks a range of digital photographic equipment that is available for loan as required.

• Audio-Visual Department

Acknowledging the extensive use of video and film across all of the academic programmes on offer at the AA, the Audio-Visual department supports teaching and learning throughout the school. In addition to maintaining an editing suite and chromakey studio for use by students and staff, it stocks a large range of sound and video equipment that is available to loan as required.

• Computer Department

The AA equips students to use current design systems and software packages to their fullest extent. Students can access the Adobe CC Suite, AutoCAD, Microstation, Rhino, 3D, Studio Max and Maya, as well as Unreal, Twinmotion and Cinema 4D via the school's dedicated computer labs. In addition, the AA has A0, A3 and A4 printers and scanners available for student use, and specialist print knowledge and help can be gained from our Print Centre.

• Library and Archives

The combined collections of the AA Library and Archives represent a globally significant and specialised research resource in the field of architecture. Founded in 1862, the Library houses almost 46,000 volumes including rare and early texts, periodicals and journals, as well as access to online indexes and digital resources. The Archives hold over 10,000 historic student drawings, models, posters and digital portfolios, as well as records of the AA and its activities dating back to 1847. The school also holds an extensive collection of photographic and film material, consisting of approximately 280,000 images in a range of formats and several hundred recorded lectures, conferences, symposia and other events from throughout the history of the AA. The Library's online resources and databases are extensive, with constantly growing collections of e-journals and e-books.

DPL Open Week Workshop.
Photograph by Byron Blakley.

Spring Semester Programme 2020, Utrecht. Connect. *Stations, Victoria, Pattern Rhythm* by Portia Malik.
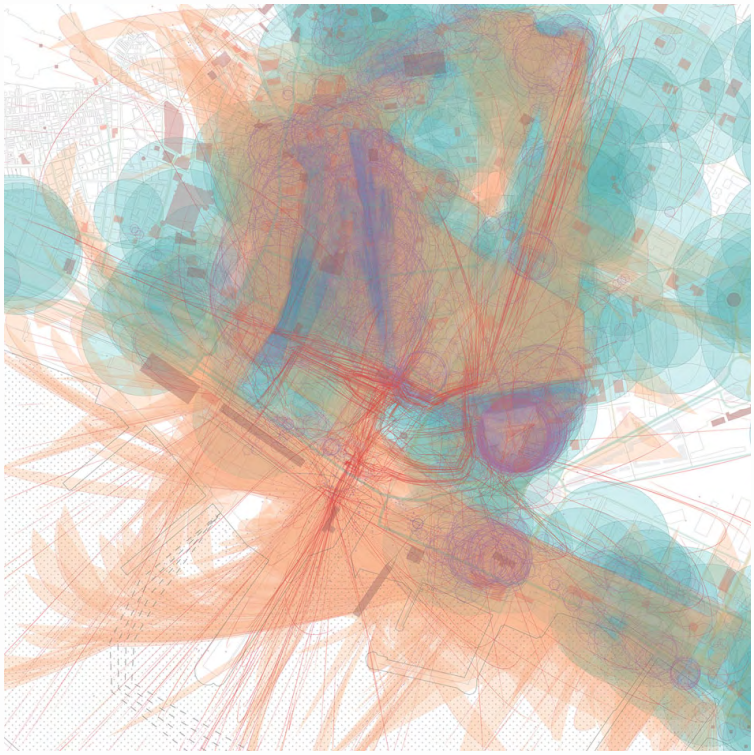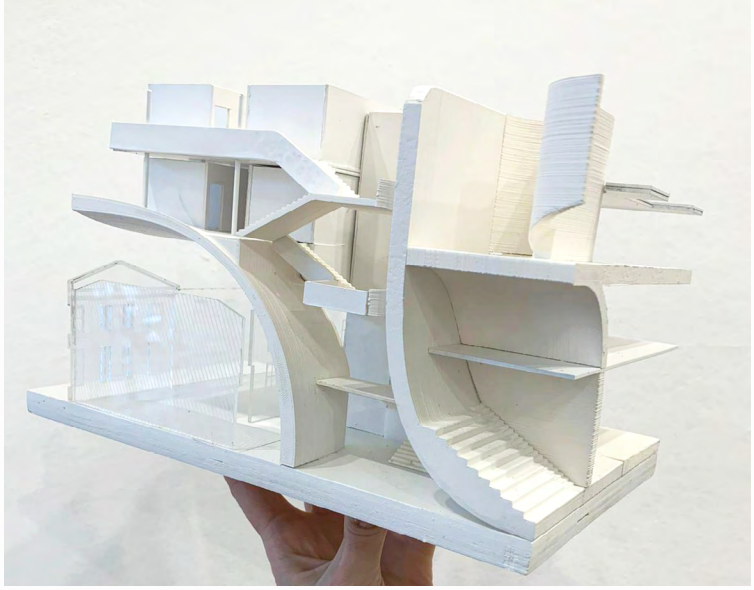
EXPERIENCE
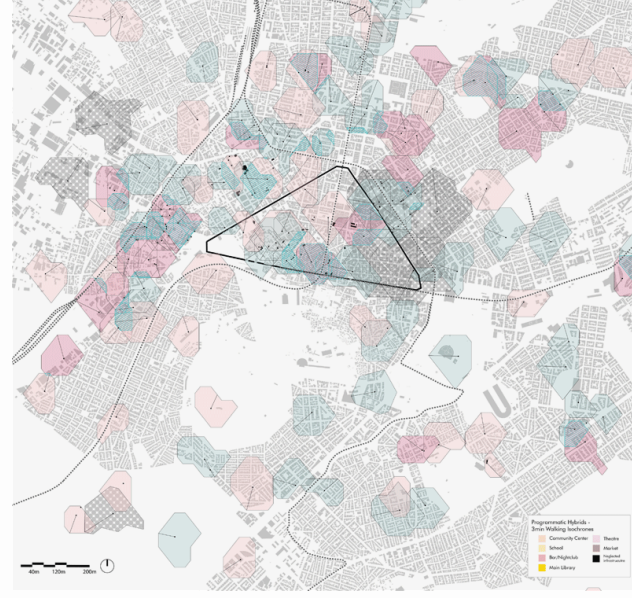
Autumn Semester Programme 2019, Athens. Polis.
Mapping by Joseph Fujinami.

Spring Semester Programme 2020, Utrecht. Connect.
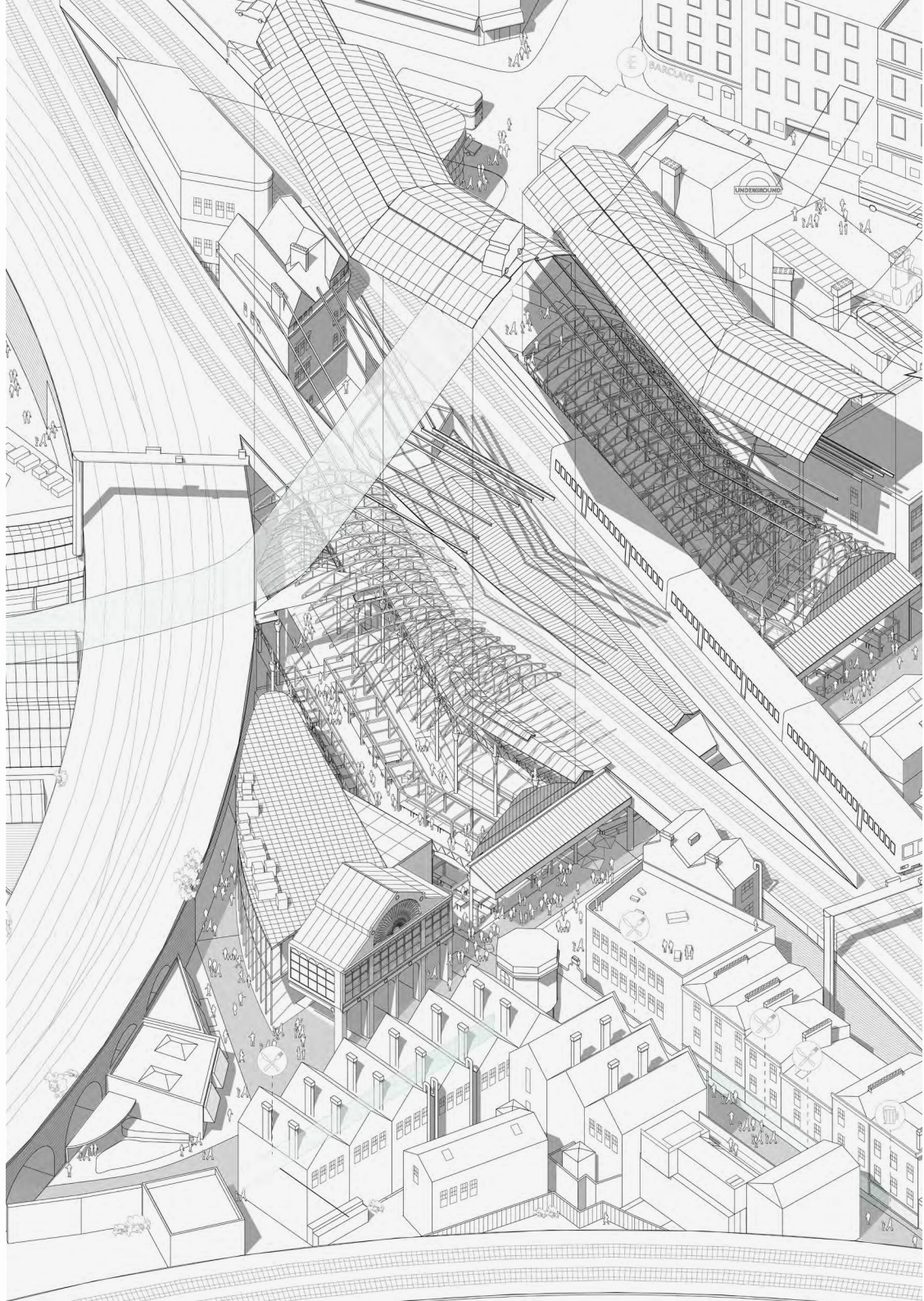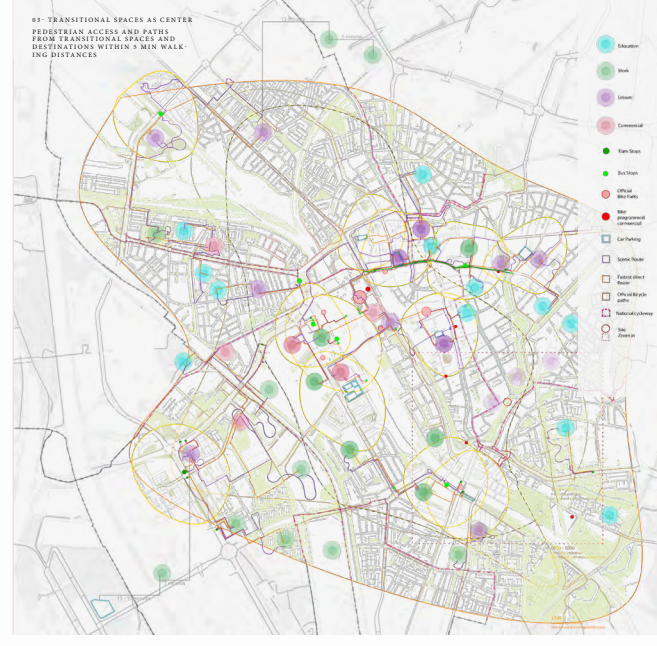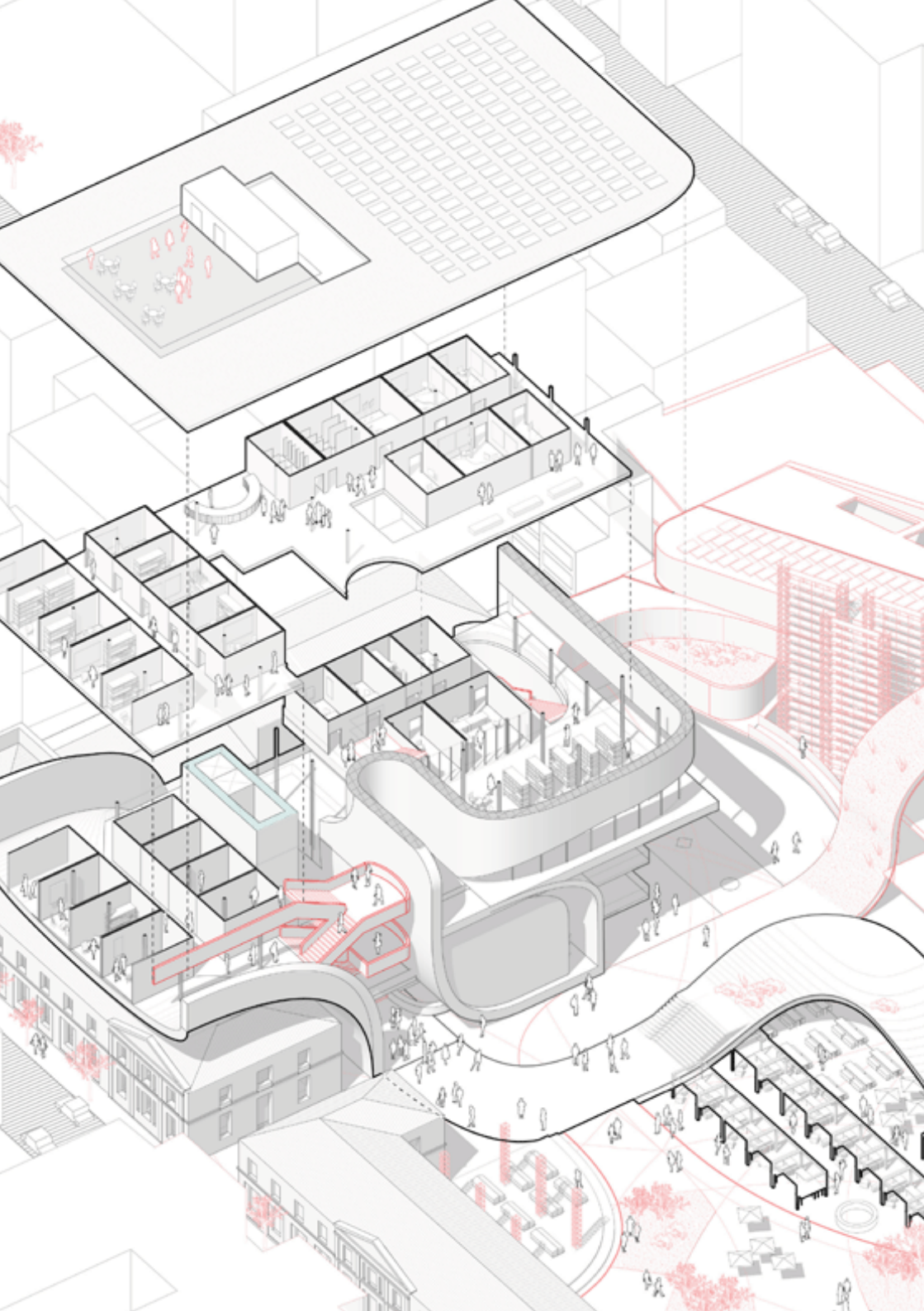Proposal for mixed-use building by Duy Nguyen.

Autumn Semester Programme 2017, Almeria. Seaport. Analysis on activity time by Yang Gao.

Autumn Semester Programme 2019, Athens. Polis. Model by Joseph Fujinami.

Autumn Semester Programme 2019, Athens. Polis. Drawing by Joseph Fujinami.

Autumn Semester Programme 2019, Athens. Polis. Axonometric drawing by Joseph Fujinami.

03- TRANSITIONAL SPACES AS CENTER
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND PATHS
FROM TRANSITIONAL SPACES AND
DESTINATIONS WITHIN 5 MIN WALK-
ING DISTANCES

Spring Semester Programme 2020, Utrecht.
Connect. Urban mapping by Chin Ching Siu Ginny.

Spring Semester Programme 2020, Utrecht. Connect.
Proposal rendering by Chin Ching Siu Ginny.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The AA Semester Programme is open to qualified undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in an architecture school. A minimum of two years of study in architecture or urban design is required. All candidates are required to show proficiency in the English language.

To meet both the AA and the Home Office/UKVI English language requirements, you will need to have one of the acceptable language qualifications listed below, unless you are from one of the following groups:

• You are a national of a majority English-speaking country (all countries listed below excluding Ireland).

• You have successfully completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree or above, which was taught in a majority English-speaking country (listed below) excluding Canada. In order to assess the equivalency of an overseas qualification, the student should provide official documentation produced by UK ENIC which confirms the translation. Please go to the UK ENIC website, navigate to the English language assessment section for individuals, apply online and send us your ENIC certificate.

• Majority English-speaking countries:
  Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America.

We also accept if you have successfully completed a course of study in the UK as a Tier 4 (Child) student or as a student under rules in force before 31 March 2009, where you were under 18 when granted leave, provided your course was at least six months long and it was completed no more than two years before your CAS was assigned. If your place is conditional on providing an English language qualification, the following qualifications satisfy both the requirements of the Home Office/UKVI and the entry requirements of the AA:

• International applicants: IELTS for UKVI (Academic) 6.5 overall with at least 6.0 in each category. IELTS reports have a two-year validity period; therefore, the certificate must bear a date of no more than two years before the date of your visa application. The AA requires a scan of the original certificate. Please check Appendix O and the approved secure English language tests and test centres issued by the UKVI to ensure you book a test with an approved SELT provider.

• EU Applicants: IELTS (Academic) 6.5 overall with at least 6.0 in each category. IELTS reports have a two-year validity period; therefore, the certificate must bear a date of no more than two years before the date of application to the AA. The AA requires a scan of the original certificate.

• Trinity College SELT test (ISE II (B2) or ISE III (C1)) with a minimum pass in each category. Trinity reports have a two-year validity period; therefore, the certificate must bear a date of no more than two years before the date of the visa application. The AA requires a copy of the original certificate.

Applicants must meet the required scores in each category and overall – we cannot accept lower scores. In addition, your certificate must show that you have achieved the required scores during a single sitting of the examination.

APPLICATIONS

If you meet the requirements you can apply to the programme by submitting the following:

• Completed online registration form
  (this can be found on the Semester Programme webpage; a copy of your passport and an image for your Digital Membership are required for this)
• Completed PDF application form (available to download from the Semester Programme webpage)
• A4 Portfolio, consisting of 20 pages, that demonstrates your range of skills
• University transcripts in English
• Academic Recommendation of Studies letter
• Original letter of reference on headed paper, confirming your enrolment and leave of absence
• Certificate showing proficiency in English language. Refer to English language requirements listed on the previous page. If you do not have the certificate and are planning to take an English language test, you can still make an application with the above documents and submit your results when you receive them

All documents should be submitted as digital copies with a completed application form to visitingschool@aaschool.ac.uk by email or other file transfer methods such as WeTransfer; original documents or certified true copies of certificates may be required prior to enrolment.

Applicants will be notified of results by email no later than two weeks following the admissions deadline. If applications are received before the deadline, applicants will be notified of their results sooner. Applications received after the official deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the school, space permitting.

FEES

The tuition fee for the Spring Semester programme is £9,920, which includes AA Digital Membership. The tuition fees can be settled in full by 9 December 2022 or in two instalments: £3,920 to be paid by 25 November and £6,000 to be paid by 9 December 2022.

Studio-Only Option
The tuition fee for the Studio-Only option is £4,400 which includes an AA Digital Membership fee.

Further details can be found on the Semester Programme webpage.

To explore previous AA Semester Programme work and unit life please visit our AA exchange microsite.

TESTIMONIALS

"During my enriching experience on the AA Semester Programme, I primarily investigated the dichotomy between 'heavy' and 'light' aspects of spatial expression and combined poetic schematics with technical diagrams. This experience was a catalyst in developing my knowledge of how architectural drawing is not only a tool for understanding design, but also a means to bridge the gap between reality and architectural dreams."

— Alex Sassine, American University of Beirut. Attended the Spring Semester Programme 2018 (Morelia. PinkQuarry).

"The AA Semester Programme was very rewarding in many ways. From conceptual urban analysis to concrete architectural proposals, the focus on creating a multi-scalar design narrative was an enriching experience, and I have been applying the knowledge that I developed during the programme within my professional career ever since."

— Pablo Guijarro Eguinoa, Universidad San Pablo CEU (Madrid). Attended the Autumn Semester Programme 2013 (Coruna. OnTheEdge) and the Spring Semester Programme 2014 (Moscow. Microrayons).

"The AA Semester Programme was the best moment in my architectural journey so far, and one of the happiest semesters I spent during my studies. I learned a lot, particularly about architectural drawing, and my time at the AA in London was where my passion really started; it was the first step in my exploration of architectural practice around the world, and the career I have enjoyed in Japan, Sweden and New York would not have happened had I not spent a semester at the AA."

— Pimchanok Wangveeramit, Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok). Attended the Spring Semester Programme 2013.

STAFF

• Programme Head
NAIARA VEGARA

Naiara Vegara, PhD Cum Laude, studied at the AA and is an ARB Part 3 architect. She is currently the Director of Metropoli CITIESLAB London (Laboratory of Advance Architecture and Bioclimatism), working at the intersection of urban design, landscape and architecture. She also serves as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Metropoli Foundation. Naiara has been Programme Head of the Visiting School Semester Programme since 2012, and she previously taught on the Housing and Urbanism MA/MArch programme at the AA. Her research addresses contemporary urban challenges in cities such as Benidorm, Bilbao, Cartagena de Indias, Liverpool, London, Milan, Monaco, Morelia, Moscow, Paris and Valencia.

• Course Master
MARIE-ISABEL DE MONSEIGNAT-LAVROV

Marie-Isabel de Monseignat-Lavrov has an AA Diploma, is a registered ARB/RIBA Part 3 architect and is currently director of M de M. Marie-Isabel is a regular visiting critic at architectural schools including Central Saint Martins, the University of Westminster, the Bartlett School of Architecture, the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts and the AA. She has worked in the fields of urban masterplanning, architecture and interior design in various firms in London, Paris, Amsterdam, New York and Buenos Aires. During her time at Acme, she led a team of four architects on the retail extension of Westquay in Southampton, UK, which was awarded the Prix Versaille in 2018.