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TRACE

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Editorial address

Paperspace
Room 4ES 4.1
Claverton Down
Bath, BA2 7AY

Editors in Chief
Julia Korpaska
Michael Tsang

Cover
Matt Dodd

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Translucent paper. Remnants of history. Backtracking one's journey. In this 14th issue of PaperspACE we follow trails through the city, highlighting often forgotten signposts. We explore the marks left behind by those before us and their continued influence in the present. We reflect on the consequences of our lifestyles and question how we might alter the destination set upon by our current path. With great pleasure we introduce you to TRACE.

Whilst our initial conceptions of this theme had very much been within the realms of the abstract, little did we know that TRACE would soon come to hold a much more literal definition brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. This period of uncertainty that we are living through - of social distancing and lockdown - has challenged the standard model of our daily lives. It has necessitated restraint in 'stay-at-home orders', yet simultaneously seen calls for action by the Black Lives Matter Movement. It has us tracing both the physical movements we make when venturing beyond our homes and the wider movements that may yet bring meaningful change to society.

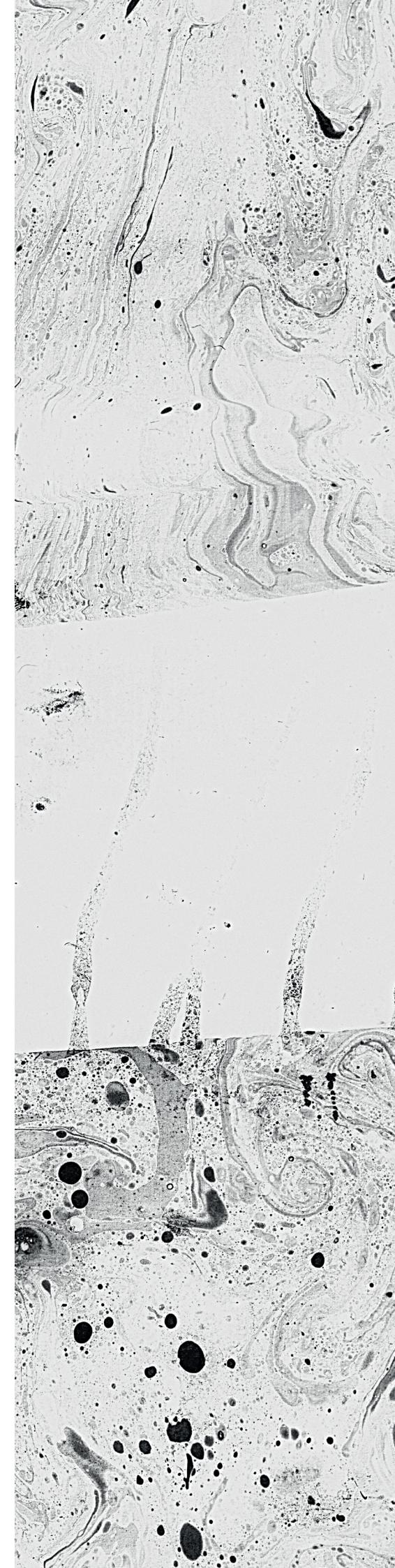
Such movements have no doubt influenced this issue, from the calls of our student body to **Decolonise Architecture** in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement, to walks in the countryside under lockdown in **(National) Parklife**.

In this issue we TRACE **Urban Markers** as we walk through the city. We can be found **Learning to Walk** through the streets of Liverpool and Cambridge, or **tracing the 'Original Idea'** as we endeavour to create 'something new'. Perhaps pay a visit to the theatre in **The Storytellers of Bristol** or explore the **Dark Pasts** of homes throughout the architectural canon? Take the lead as we dance in **Form follows Motion** and if you really cannot wait just skip to **Potty Talk**.

A TRACE can be a mark or indication of something left behind. To TRACE can mean to draw or follow. It has many meanings but we hope that our exploration of the word leaves you with something to pass the time, whether you find yourself in isolation or socially-distanced company.

Michael Tsang

Editor in Chief of PaperspACE

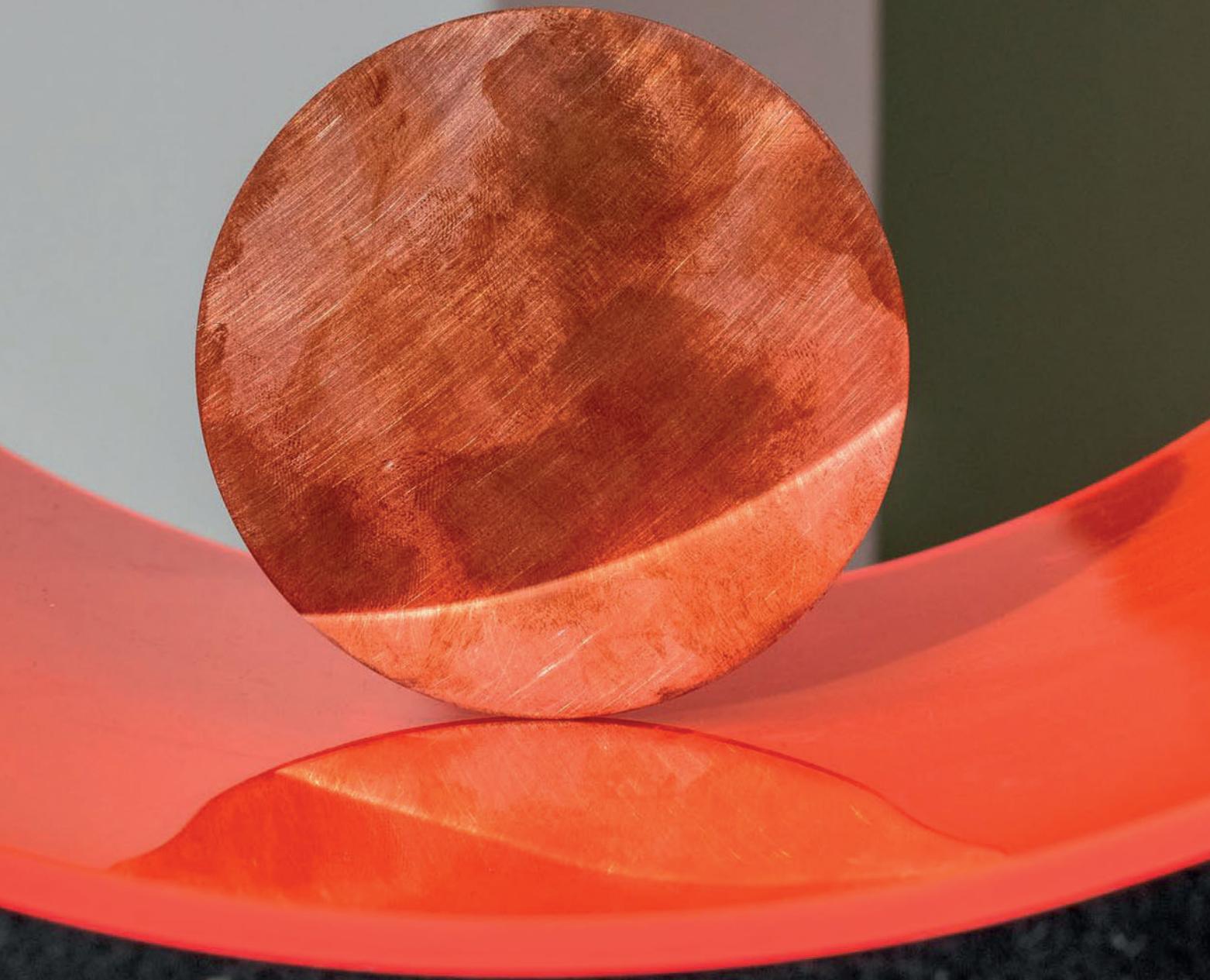


[re]tracing the elusive path to our subconscious

By Maddi Gomez-Iradi (2020)
marbling inks and acrylics on paper

As founding members of Architects Declare, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios are happy to be able to support Bath University School of Architecture students in their recognition of the global climate emergency.

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This issue would not be possible without the donations that have been supporting the magazine this year. They help us to continue providing PaperspACE as a platform for us to express our opinions and views, allowing our voices to reach further.

Hence, as a team of PaperspACE we would like to express gratitude to **Prof. Peter Clegg** and **FCB Studios, DKA, and Jestico + Whiles**.

Thank you!

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Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge

We would like to express particular thanks to Director of Studies **Daniel Wong** whose enthusiasm for extracurricular student activity has been a guiding light in the production of PaperspACE - even during lockdown!

Thank you!



a map of our influences

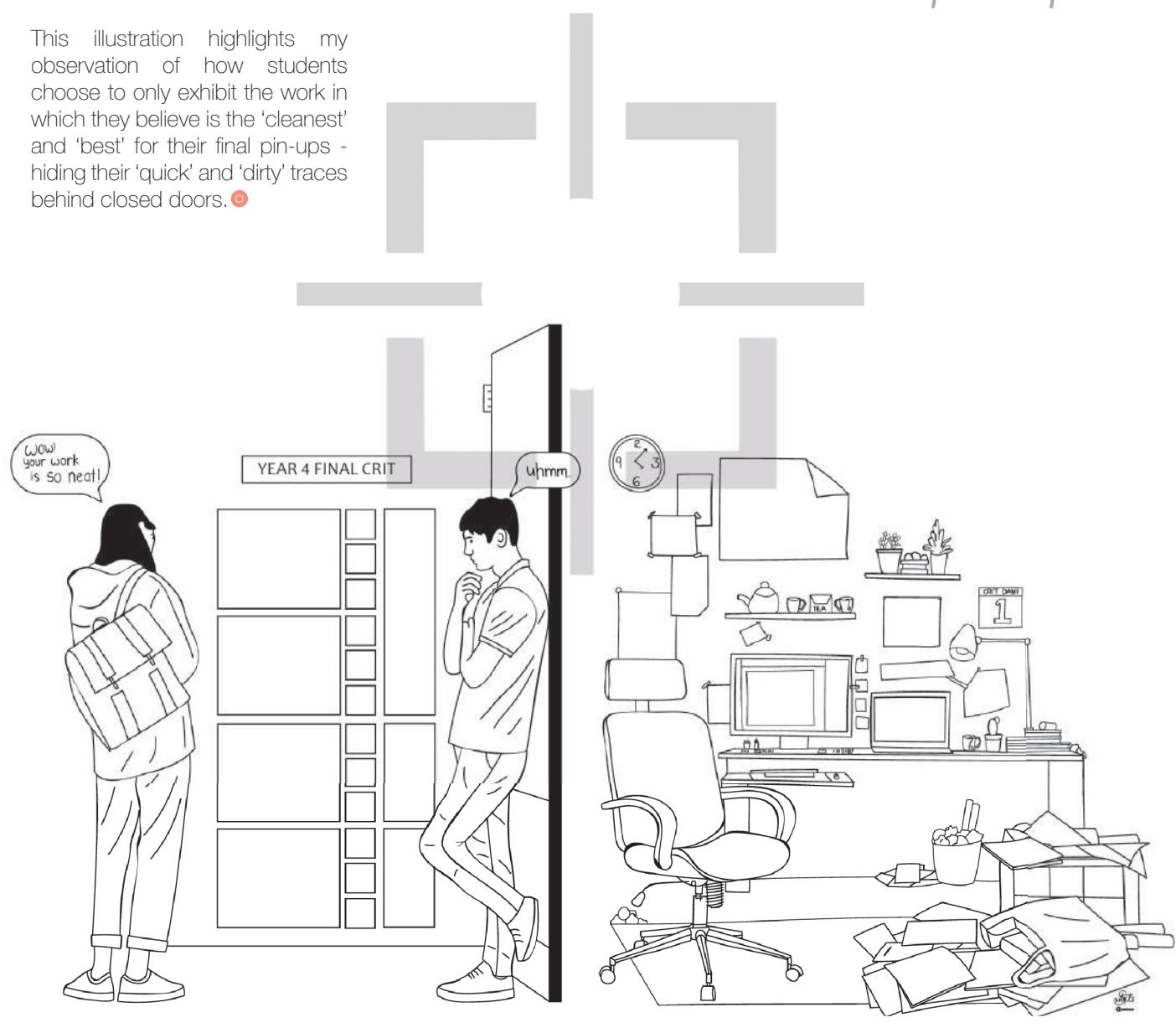


tracing the ‘Original Idea’

By Sweta Sanker
(2020) digital illustration

How important is the end result of any form of a design? Is producing a clean, final image more important than the many mistakes and decisions made over the entire period?

This illustration highlights my observation of how students choose to only exhibit the work in which they believe is the ‘cleanest’ and ‘best’ for their final pin-ups - hiding their ‘quick’ and ‘dirty’ traces behind closed doors. ☺



*why is it that we choose
to leave no trace of our
hard work when it comes
to the final pin-up?*

By Shreya Sarin

The first oil painting I ever made was copied from an illustration in the newspaper. I faintly remember the shade of blue that captured my imagination and drove me to recreate it. It was a big success in my house and was instantly framed and put up in my living room. For years to follow, not a single guest would leave my house without being told (and retold) the story of the painting. ‘It’s just a copy, nothing great,’ I would say, religiously interrupting every narration of the story, with the discomfort of passing someone else’s creative ability as my own.

Conception of thought is undoubtedly the moment of genesis for every work of art and architecture seen in the history of time. The process of producing ideas is therefore fundamental to the progress of the art world. In light of this, many of us in creative fields pressure ourselves to charter unexplored areas of thought with the aim of being certified an artistic revolutionary. This urgency to be constantly creating something ‘new’ often comes at the high cost of redundancy and purposelessness in design. I have frequently been caught in the act of taking an abstract design decision primarily in order to avoid being derivative.

At University, tutors repeatedly warn us against attempting to ‘re-invent the wheel’. Precedents and our interaction with the work of other architects is a crucial part of our education. In this environment, understanding the complex relationship between an

idea and its precedent becomes necessary for any of us feeling less capable due to our regular scrolling through ‘Pinterest’. ‘How do I define my work as original, when a significant number of external references have shaped it?’ is a question that has plagued me for as long as I have attempted to create something.

One way is to ask more questions. Simon Unwin compared the process of creating architecture to philosophy in that ‘At root, it is about generating ideas and exploring propositions’. A brief diversion to trace the evolution of philosophical thought then, might bring us closer to resolving this crisis of originality. Characteristically, philosophical debate seems to take place outside the construct of time. Questions as old as the definition of time itself have been argued across centuries to produce an infinite number of ideas, theories and counter arguments. In this almost paradoxical process, interaction with every thought that has preceded yours seems fundamental to generate new ones.

Another point to note here is that owing to the nature of thought itself, it cannot be confined within the boundary of the medium of expression. The lineage of ideas in philosophy, therefore, is deeply influenced by every other form of expression. This interdisciplinary movement of thought can also be credited for some of the most innovative works of architecture ever conceived. Interestingly, the design of the Barcelona Pavilion is said to be partly informed by Mies Van Der Rohe’s reading of

philosophy.² Simon Unwin, in his book ‘Twenty Buildings Every Architect Should Understand’, claims that the Barcelona Pavilion was a ‘philosophical proposition’ in response to Oswald Spengler’s ‘Destiny Idea’.

Having explored the significance of deriving from the past in the process of creating something new, I find myself ironically reverting to the old Newtonian anecdote to draw my conclusion. The story of the apple that fell on Newton describes concisely the moment of genesis mentioned earlier. Its reactionary character leads me to believe that every creative impulse is responsive in nature.

It responds to a pre-existing thought, idea, or experience and thus derives meaning from it. As a result, one would think that, nothing truly meaningful can be created in a vacuum of ideas or references.

Karl Popper claimed that to be certain, was to be wrong. In a way, he urged us to question everything that has come before in order to widen the scope of knowledge. I believe that the answer to the question of the ‘original idea’ lies partly in his claim. It seems that the generation of new ideas relies on our unique ability to engage with precedence, draw meaning from it and translate it into something ‘new’. This creative endeavour can be daunting, but it is not a challenge we face alone. I leave you with the advice of a fellow creator, Benjamin Mozer; ‘Make of something old, something new – every real artist always has’. ☺

DARK PASTS

For a bedroom there is a glass-walled studio. They dine in gyms. Rooms you would have sworn were tennis courts serve them as libraries and music rooms...

They relax after meals on white operating tables. And in the evening concealed fluorescent tubes light the room so evenly that it is no longer illuminated, it is a pool of luminosity.¹

Joseph Roth



Farnsworth House, Mies van der Rohe

By Matt Dodd

Writing in 1920s Berlin, journalist Joseph Roth attacks the emerging International Style of modernism. The movement set out to re-write the rules - new materials and technologies enabled architects to vanquish the shadows, creating bright open spaces more befitting of the modern ideal. Homes like Mies' Farnsworth House became bathed in light - uniformly lit spaces where all is laid bare to see. Despite the eventual rejection of many modernist ideals, its model of lighting has stuck to this day, thus Roth's observations remain pertinent.

Our homes are often polarised. Darkness has become more and more banished from our lives, washed out in the brightly lit spaces and cities we inhabit, only embraced for the purpose of sleep. In many ways our homes now leave us over-exposed. In bright lighting we are left with 'no space for mental withdrawal and

privacy; even the dark interiority of self is exposed and violated'.

The Swiss army knife of building typology - the home as we know it - requires different 'places' for a variety of activities: sleeping, eating, gathering, playing, cooking and cleaning to name a few. Just as homes need to provide for a variety of activities, they also need to provide for a variety of mind states. Darkness plays a key role in allowing intimate spaces where, as described by Juhani Pallasmaa, shadows 'dim the sharpness of vision' and where 'thoughts travel with an absent-minded and unfocused gaze'.² Our lives are dominated by our vision, so it is important that we have spaces where we can subdue or control it, creating intimacy for us to connect more with ourselves and others.

Architecture and darkness have always been intrinsically linked. Stripping back a building to its basic function, that of shelter, darkness becomes an inevitability.

Whether it is for shade or warmth, a structure will always naturally result in the formation of darkness. Only through the augmentation of a space via a technology: fire, glass or lightbulb, does this connection become broken or lost.

The cave is where this relationship between darkness and the spaces we inhabit perhaps began. The primitive cave has always been part of the earth, forged by it and within it. Formed in the cave, darkness resides within the earth too. In the eyes of Sverre Fehn:

The shadow belongs to the earth.

Light can be understood as the opposite, originating from elsewhere. Most shadows however only come into being when this light meets the earth, cast by and cast upon it. Even the blanketing darkness of night is just the shadow of the earth.



When humans inhabited the caves they, like the shadows, were part of the earth. As Fehn writes: 'The cave-dweller is unable to free himself from the mass, but lives in his own shadow as a token of place'. Within the cave there are three defining features; its material, the inhabitant or observer and the darkness that envelopes them. Of these three, darkness is special, only being formed by the cave and realised by the observer's eye. The darkness is a result of its place, dependent on its characteristics.

*The tree mobilizes
light and casts its
shadow on earth, a
realization of place. You
are part of another's
shadow, and you are no
longer alone.³*

Sverre Fehn

Once mankind has left the cave they are now sharing the shadows. In this new world they have the ability to create new shadows and darkness. The tree was a critical tool for creating shadows; architectural writer Reyner Banham imagines a tribe, laden with timber and faced with two options: light a fire or construct.

When night sets in, fire can provide heat and light for tribe members to huddle around. Others may recede to the 'penumbra zone'. Here, partially shadowed by those close in, they can sleep or contemplate, embracing the darkness but still under the protection of the fire. A built structure would keep the tribe sheltered from rain, wind and the cold. Here the tribe are effectively creating their own cave. In Sweden, log construction was historically used with tree trunks stacked to form load bearing walls.

These massive walls enclosed a space and any opening cut through the walls could not be substantial as it would weaken the structure. The cavernous space that resulted was protected from the cold nordic climate, by virtue of the material and technique used.

For those in hot arid climates, darkness becomes a necessity. In the city of Isfahan, Iran, the landscape takes the form of a 'shadow carpet'. Buildings are densely packed, built back to back with narrow alleys for access; reducing the area of walls and surfaces exposed to the sun. Households are based around a shaded courtyard. These holes within the 'carpet' keep spaces cool; rooms still benefit from the ventilation and daylight of the courtyard, whilst avoiding the blistering sun. As well as providing respite from the heat, this vernacular also provides privacy for the dwelling inhabitants, culturally significant in the context of its place.

*..our ancestors, forced
to live in dark rooms,
presently came to
discover beauty in
shadows, ultimately to
guide shadows towards
beauty's ends.⁴*

Jun'ichirō Tanizaki

Just as modernism forced darkness from our homes, it also discarded any sense of place. Tanizaki describes the traditional Japanese house in the context of its culture and climate, speaking of Japan's acceptance and eventual celebration of shadows. In Japan they did not build with glass, concrete or bricks but resorted to low roofs with large overhangs.

This provided adequate protection from the driving wind and rain, but in doing so cast the entire home into darkness. Thus darkness formed due to the cultural and climatic forces acting upon it. This darkness is of its place, just as in the courtyards of Isfahan and the log cabins of Sweden.

Luis Barragán's Studio House, built in 1948 in Tacubaya, Mexico, is an example of a modern home grounded in its place. Louis Kahn described the house as 'not merely a house but house itself'. The home is heavily shadowed, acting as a shield against the harsh Mexican sun. Inspired by the tropical plants and animals of the country, Barragán employs a wealth of different coloured walls and materials, all using local natural pigments. Light internally is limited, yet hugely varied, subdued via a number of lighting solutions throughout. It is filtered and refracted, bounced off coloured surfaces providing 'different tones of shadowy depths'. Here exists one last gift of darkness, and that is silence. In the house's 'shadowy atmosphere' silence prevails. Kahn describes this silence not as quiet but as 'lightless; darkless. Desire to be; to express.¹⁵

Notes

¹ Stephen Kite (2017) *Shadow-Makers* London: Bloomsbury, 220

² Juhani Pallasmaa (1996) *The Eyes of the Skin*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 46-49

³ Sverre Fehn and Per Olaf Fjeld (1988) 'Has a Doll Life?'. *Perspecta* 24, 42-43

⁴ Jun'ichirō Tanizaki (1933) *In Praise of Shadows*. London: Jonathan Cape, 30-31

⁵ Kite, 2017, 229



Studio House, Luis Barragán

Decolonise Architecture

Words by Zeid Truscott
Images by Andrew Dickens



With the latest Black Lives Matter protests fresh in our mind, conversations around race and racism have been brought to the fore. Within the School of Architecture these conversations have moved from conversations of hopelessness between students of colour and ally members of staff into a conversation that is calling on the whole student body and staff to fight racism. 'Decolonise Architecture' was set up by a number of students to tackle the institutional racism faced within the University of Bath and to educate and politicise students, staff and professionals across the industry as well.

But what does decolonising architecture look like and what does it mean? In its broadest sense 'Decolonisation' is about recognising the roots of contemporary racism in the multiple material, political, social and cultural processes of colonialism and proceeding from that point; this involves the laborious work of structural change at several levels of society'.



It is about changing the lens through which we see society. This not only means questioning why our curriculum is the way it is, but also looking at the wider social, political and economic contexts of the works featured in the architectural canon. It also means looking at modules like History & Theory and seeing how they can be developed so we can better understand the society we design for and what the impacts of our architecture will be on that society. The impact can be positive and I hope our work will be, but it can also be negative with communities destroyed through gentrification and even death as seen in the Grenfell Tower disaster.



Decolonising architecture is not simply about diversifying reading lists - though important, this should not be the limit of progress. We need to look at the structural issues within our university and profession that perpetuate racial inequality - for example white students are 2.7 times more likely to be accepted onto the Architecture BSc than black students. While this is not down to direct discrimination on the part of department staff, given that applicant ethnicity is not disclosed at the point of application, the reasons must still be looked into. We must also investigate the institution-wide awarding gap between black and white students, with white students being awarded higher marks across the board.

These are all conversations that need to be had to change the culture within architecture from one that is silent on racism with the excuse of being 'apolitical' to a profession that acknowledges the problem and aims to tackle it head on. This change will not happen overnight and there is a long road ahead but this is just the start.¹⁰

ACTION POINTS

Curriculum

1. Social Issues

Introduce lectures discussing architectural responses to social issues to support Design Studio, particularly in 3rd year to better prepare the many students who choose socially conscious projects for 4th year.

2. World Architecture

Develop a new History & Theory module for the non-DEU 3rd year unit to explore architecture around the world, including the impacts of colonialism and globalisation on the architectural canon.

3. Wider Curriculum

Work with students through the Decolonise Architecture collective to lobby the ARB / RIBA to make world architecture an essential part of the curriculum.

Diversity

4. Staff

Work with groups such as Black Females in Architecture to hire a more diverse body of visiting critics, tutors and guest lecturers. At the university level work with students to review recruitment policy and procedure for all staff.

5. Resources

Support the library in increasing resources on global architecture and BAME architects and include such material on the weekly library email. Publish student essays through the library to create an accessible resource.

6. Students

Work with charities such as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust to encourage and support disadvantaged BAME students to study architecture and apply to Bath.

Environment

7. Workshops

Mandatory diversity workshops for permanent and visiting staff to tackle subconscious bias and prejudiced comments which make students feel alienated or unwelcome. Expect staff to recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour from their colleagues.

8. Reviews

Introduce an anonymous post-review feedback system where students feel safe to raise concerns about inappropriate conduct or comments from critics, expanding on the current efforts to make reviews less confrontational.

9. Presentation

Ensure architecture is respectfully and accurately presented in the historical and political context that allowed it to be built, such as war, colonialism and slavery.



The Storytellers of Bristol

*Bristol Bristol, a place still haunted by the ancestral
ghost that echoes the historical hangover that yet
sobered us up to what time hasn't changed*

Excerpt from 'Bristol! Bristol!' by Poet Miles Chambers

By Michael Tsang

Act I - Redress

The Bristol Old Vic, formerly the Theatre Royal, came into existence in 1766 during the years of the Slave Trade owing, at least partially, to the funds of slave traders and merchants. At the time the theatre was technically illegal, not possessing a Royal Charter, and thus had to be hidden behind street-facing houses. The building has since undergone numerous redevelopments including work in the 1970s that still closed much of the building off from the street, yet most recently the redevelopment by architects Haworth Tompkins completed in 2018 has finally remedied this, revealing the fabric of the original building to the public realm. In this sensitive redevelopment one begins to observe moves being made to redress the city's conflicted past.

No doubt referencing the palladian composition of the neighbouring Coopers' Hall, the Bristol Old Vic's new face-lift comprises three triple-height bays with ground floor openings and shutters above. Accompanying this triplet is an entrance, both recessed and angled as to mirror that of the original theatre itself, with bold red

letters above reading 'BRISTOL OLD VIC', proudly announcing its presence as to redress its former hidden state. Upon closer inspection of the aforementioned double-height shutters one may discern the appearance of words more subtle - these are the inaugural words of actor David Garrick in what was the first ever performance on stage in this theatre, in addition to the poem 'Bristol Bristol!' by former Bristol poet laureate Miles Chambers, which addresses the city's 'historical hangover'. This gesture of immortalising these words acknowledges Bristol's past and is a subtle redressal which may be seen as a first step towards bringing in the city's marginalised Afro-Caribbean community, for whom the effects of the Slave Trade are arguably still felt.

In 2017 the University of Manchester's Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity in collaboration with the Runnymede Trust, a race-equality think-tank, published a report highlighting Bristol's problem with racial inequality, with the city ranked 7th worst out of 348 districts in England and Wales. The following year the Bristol Old Vic was involved in organising a series

of 'City Conversations' in an effort to reduce racial divisions whilst re-examining the 'city's relationship with the Slave Trade, and how to move forward'. This response, which is but one amongst many, to the revelations of the Runnymede Report demonstrates the wider movement in Bristol in redressing its Slave Trade past and its lasting influence on the city's communities today, and in doing so highlights the importance of dialogue in bridging such division.

As a place of performance, the Bristol Old Vic arguably holds a great responsibility in initiating such dialogue; its most recent architectural language amplifies this. Visible behind the front facade is the new foyer. Like a civic square it spills out onto the street, yet this urban reach aside, it is effectively another performance space, albeit an informal one flanked by bar and reception. Towards the rear a subtly raised level forms an impromptu stage, the masonry of the original theatre immediately behind forming the backdrop. Key to the success of this foyer space was Momentum Structural Engineers' weaving of the timber diagrid roof within the existing structure, celebrating the



The Bristol Old Vic, Photography by Fred Howarth

presence of both as to tie together the conflicted past with the present in a space that welcomes any and all to engage in community discussion. The significance of this is the recognition of the influence of the city's difficult history in present day life and the importance of openly discussing this in order to remedy the impact on Bristol's marginalised communities.

One, of course, cannot discuss the Bristol Old Vic without mention of the adjoining Coopers' Hall, which in the 1970s was incorporated as the theatre's primary entrance and circulation. The public room originally situated within the hall's upper level has now been restored as a space suitable for weddings and events-hire. Beneath, the new 'Weston Studio', has been carefully engineered by Max Fordham Engineering to allow for controlled natural lighting and ventilation. The addition of this new performance space has provided the Bristol Old Vic with greater freedom in hosting smaller productions, in particular the recent 'Missing Pieces' season. This series of shows, directed and performed by black actors, focused on black issues - 'Crowning Glory' for example tells the story of the pressures

suffered by black women with regards to their hair in the face of Western beauty standards. By celebrating such compelling stories and diversifying its portfolio, the Bristol Old Vic makes further moves of redressal, bringing this marginalised community to the foreground whilst inviting the wider community to engage in this important dialogue.

Act II - Rebellion

In our current climate of divisive discourse and polarising politics, rebellion is unavoidably familiar to us all. Bristol, as a largely left-leaning city, has been home to many protests - most recently those of the Black Lives Matter Movement and Extinction Rebellion. The revival of the Tobacco Factory from a derelict industrial shell into a mixed-use cultural hub with theatre at its heart, by architect-turned-politician George Ferguson in the 1990s, predates our current climate, yet from its conception to this day continues this rebellious streak. In order to understand the significance of this one must first look back to the history of Southville prior to the Tobacco Factory's emergence as a theatre.

Originally named 'No. 3 Factory', the building once sat as part of a larger industrial site, which at its peak provided employment for more than 40% of the local working population. In the 1970s, however, the tobacco industry moved to the outskirts of the city, leaving behind mass unemployment alongside these red-brick shells. Many were subsequently demolished, and this too was to be the fate of the former 'Number 3 Factory'. It was only by the rebellious whim of architect George Ferguson that the factory was saved from demolition. Purchasing the building in 1993 he then commenced the impromptu process of redeveloping the Tobacco Factory into a mixed-use community hub, home to independent businesses with 'the arts at its core'.

Ferguson was adamant that the Tobacco Factory project be arts-led, emphasising the performing arts. He soon welcomed a small local theatre company, 'Show of Strength', to occupy the dilapidated building and after setting up the bare essentials they began to put on shows. Using a single mobile phone as the Box Office, their first production of Shakespeare received critical





The Tobacco Factory, A Mural of Greta Thunberg adorns the building



acclaim and was a great success that would mark the beginning of the Tobacco Factory's life in theatre production. The success of this first show no doubt provided the recognition, to this group of rebels, necessary to cement their position in Southville, and arguably is evidence of the first signs of a renewed community.

Other functions soon followed - a cafebar, Sunday market, offices and apartments - as the Tobacco Factory truly became a mixed-use community hub. Underpinning the addition of all these mixed uses was Ferguson's 'Strike A Light For Independents' campaign with the aim of promoting independent businesses and outlets. This philosophy of Ferguson's in regenerating the Tobacco Factory would hold wider significance for the city of Bristol in characterising his political career as he successfully ran for the post of the city's first elected Mayor in 2012, serving until 2016 and defeating the favourite - now incumbent Mayor Marvin Rees - of the Labour Party, and interestingly mirroring the civic role that the Tobacco Factory's original architect Sir Frank Wills took on when becoming Lord Mayor of Bristol

a century before. This rebellious campaign of Ferguson's which characterised his civic life cannot be denied its influence in the city of Bristol - his election as Mayor is evidence of the successful reach of this rebellious streak and demonstrates the growth of a community that began in this once abandoned red-brick shell.

What one may observe now when walking down North Street is a rejuvenated high street, home to a host of independent retail outlets, the urban regeneration catalysed by the Tobacco Factory having, according to local shopkeepers, 'brought a lot of people back to the area'. Outdoor markets regularly occupy the Tobacco Factory's car park on one side of the building as a meeting place for locals, whilst on the opposite side facing into the adjacent supermarket's car park, murals adorn the building's wall - currently the face of the Extinction Rebellion Movement, Greta Thunberg's portrait, occupies this prime spot. Such graffiti is not uncommon in this neighbourhood, which is home to Upfest, 'Europe's largest Street Art & Graffiti festival', and further illustrates the rebellious character uniting the Tobacco Factory community.

This 'hands-off' approach continues upstairs into the theatre where the columns again stand

proud within the stage, there to be integrated into one's performance. Like the Bristol Old Vic, the retrofit of the Tobacco Factory is far more subtle - in essence it is primarily a reconfiguration of the interior layout, enabled by the open plan and high ceilings of the original factory building. Internally Ferguson Mann Architects' 'hands-off approach' can be seen through the use of colour and materiality in order to mark a clear distinction between old and new. Exposed ductwork and services are visible throughout and the original steel columns stand proud but with the addition of round desktops circling around them in the cafebar such that they may double up as essential seating space. This cafebar space is key to the building's success, home to not only the food and drink offerings of the community hub, but also as the primary meeting space. Local volunteers, the 'BS3' group, regularly meet in this very cafebar where new members looking to get to know their neighbours may join and engage with this community - in this way the architecture inspires civic engagement.

Act III - Conclusion

In witnessing the story of the Bristol Old Vic it becomes clear that it is beginning to extend its existing community. With the new entrance foyer, the building welcomes citizens and encourages civic engagement, whether by listening or performing, and with the new Weston Studio hosting the likes of the 'Missing Pieces' season, the theatre celebrates the city's marginalised communities, bringing them to the foreground for dialogue. Just as the new timber diagrid structure has been weaved into the existing fabric, the Bristol Old Vic is working to similarly bring

'I was determined to go the whole hog and show them that the more you mixed it the better it would be! The challenge was that I found myself with a building beautifully sited at one end of a run down high street in an area that was suffering from depression at the loss of its staple industry and employer.'

George Ferguson, Former Mayor of Bristol and architect behind the Tobacco Factory's revival

together divided communities, and evidently driving this is the effort to redress the city's conflicted past. The success of the Tobacco Factory at the heart of the urban regeneration of Southville speaks to the power of civic buildings in creating community. In respecting the original building with a 'hands-off approach', the existing community of former factory employees has similarly been respected - in fact they are part of the heritage that is evident in the architecture. This strong heritage, much like in the case of the Bristol Old Vic, in combination with the building's renewed purpose as a theatre-led mixed-use hub, forms a powerful magnet that attracts new rebels to this community.

Ultimately the success of these two civic buildings comes down to their nature as both retrofit and mixed-use projects. A comparison of the two reveals a shift of the Bristol Old Vic towards becoming a piece of social infrastructure more akin to that of the Tobacco Factory, as the former becomes a more welcoming hub, introducing elements of mixed-use as exemplified by its new foyer which sits comfortably within the heritage

Notes

The Berkeley Essay Prize is an annual essay competition for undergraduate architecture students focusing on the 'social art of architecture'. This year's question 'How do Civic Buildings Create Community?' was the driver for this essay which was awarded the Third Place Prize.



Ties Between: national identity and architecture

By Fathimath Ema Ziya

All over the globe, cities have architectural landmarks and buildings that act as their emblems. They become synonymous with their geographical locations; their form and features instantly recognizable. These landmarks are often historical, leaving us with traces of stories from past times that create a connection between our ancestors and us. At first sight, these buildings are merely just that; buildings that connote national or historical significance. However, it could be argued that they are more than 'innocent aesthetic embellishments' or a must-visit sites for tourists.¹ They represent stories that are fundamental building blocks of the national identity and carry deep political and cultural meanings. This may be obvious in explicitly political spaces, such as memorials. Nonetheless, even apolitical buildings may cease to be apolitical once national and historical significance is attached to them. Drawing on the theories of Clare Cooper, this article investigates how these nationally significant landmarks become symbols of a collective national identity and how they can be key drivers of feelings of patriotism.

It should be noted that the assumptions and statements of this article are not conclusive nor comprehensive and that this is more of a thought experiment than a piece of research.

Understanding the Intangible

Cooper's theory is rooted in Jungian psychology. The human mind struggles to understand intangible and complex ideas such as the 'self'. By using a physical and concrete 'symbol' i.e. a representation of what cannot be represented or defined (despite the paradox this creates), we can comprehend such concepts better. Cooper believes that the home can act as a suitable symbol of the 'self' because, for most of us, it is where we are most comfortable and feel most like ourselves.² At the heart of her argument is the belief that our physical built environment can act as a representation and a means of understanding metaphysical concepts such as identities. This article attempts to extend this reasoning within the premises of national landmarks and collective national identity.

The National Identity and Historical Landmarks

Similar to the concept of the 'self', the notion of a national identity is difficult to define and understand. I believe that it can be considered to be a sense of a nation as a whole or the 'essence' of a nation. It is tied to distinctive traditions, cultures and languages and is an amalgamation of the past and the present. Constantly in motion, it is ever-changing according to our values and in an infinite cycle

of development. Additionally, it is individual and unique for each person, yet simultaneously shared collectively across everyone in the same nation.

Due to the complex and everchanging nature of this 'identity', a physical representation can not only improve our understanding of it but also aid in developing and fostering a more cohesive collective identity throughout the nation. Because of the clear links between national identity and history – for example significant ties to the past such as tradition and culture – historical landmarks can be considered to be a suitable vessel that can be used to enhance our understanding of this concept. This can be explained through the development of collective memories that are centred around these sites. Historical landmarks are rarely without a compelling story behind them. These stories often exemplify bravery and patriotism and are taught to almost all of us at a young age to instil these culturally relevant values in us. In this way they serve as foundational building blocks that make up our collective identity as a nation. Most of us share these stories as collective memories. The landmarks then become physical manifestations of these stories and values, and become imprinted within our collective memory of the past as well. Therefore, they become intrinsically linked to the

formation of a national identity.

The memories carried by these spaces are not just of the past though. By linking our individual remembrances of these spaces with the stories of the past, the strength of the present memory is reinforced. For instance, visits to historical sites are often accompanied by a retelling of the legends of the space. Our vision of the place then consists of the recent individual memory of the visit – complete with the visual image of the physical space itself – and the social memory of the nationally significant history of the site. The memories are then 'visualised in masonry and bronze'.¹

Countries usually utilize these spaces to reinforce this national identity and to foster patriotism. For instance, parades or ceremonies for key dates such as Independence Day or Republic Day will be held near or at these landmarks. Attending these events, or even viewing them on television would create a collective memory shared by most of us; tying the physical space with the patriotic message sent during these events. As mentioned before, utilizing space to embody an intangible concept such as national identity and cultural values or patriotism would strengthen our understanding of the concept, and the impact of the message.

Dissonance between the Past and Present

On the other hand, we also come across sites of historical importance that represent values which are outdated or wrong. The tales of these sites contradict our present moral beliefs and what we desire from our national identities. When this is the case, some of these sites may be destroyed. Others may stop being a symbol of values we want to impose on ourselves, and instead act as a reminder of lessons from the past on what not to do. These sites then become physical representations of social and political change.

Too often, people underestimate the power of the built environment to influence: its ability to evoke emotion and create intangible atmospheres. Historical landmarks serve as a common thread that unites people across different communities and cities of one nation through the revival of past memories and the creation of new ones. Or they serve as reminders of the broken thread, signifying our progressing and evolving values.²

Notes

¹ Johnson, N.C. (2002) *Mapping monuments: the shaping of public space and cultural identities*. Visual Communication, 1(3), p.293–298.

² Cooper, C. (1974) *The House as Symbol of the Self*.

Edward Colston Statue torn down during BLM Protest in Bristol, Photography by Harry Pugsley



ethnic enclaves

How we can learn from migrant communities & ethnic gentrification?

By Ryan Hillier

'Chinatown' has become a cultural phenomenon within multiple cities across the world – London's West End, Melbourne's East End, New York's Manhattan to name a few. Tourists and locals alike flock to these districts in search of their favourite Eastern delicacies and hot Instagram photos, with little regard as to what the area means and stands for. But when you look at Chinatown as a development, a shelter formed as a result of racial abuse and discrimination, the perspective changes completely.

I only became acutely aware of this history after listening to a podcast in which comedian Evelyn Mok spoke of her childhood experience within Gothenburg's own Chinatown district, in which she stated 'in Gothenburg, basically all Chinese people know each other' commenting upon the tight-knit community where everyone works alongside and relies upon each other.¹ Despite the exaggeration, it is a worthy comment on how the population within an ethnic community is vitally inter-dependent, and the reflection this casts of the history of discrimination within cities worldwide. Although it seems obvious upon thought, reflecting upon this made me re-think what a 'Chinatown' and other ethnic enclaves represent, sparking interest in the history of urban diversity and migrant culture.

This initial thought then sprawled out to look at other examples of

'popular' areas that have resulted from ethnic enclaves. These include, but are not limited to:

- Little Italy
- Jewish Quarter
- J-Town
- Little Korea/Seoul
- Little India

This list is of neighbourhoods with particular commercial or tourist attraction, but where their roots lie is as communities forced to occupy in 'lesser' districts that are more affordable, a common result of discrimination. Also included in that family are (again, not limited to):

- Latin Barrio
- Black Neighbourhoods
- Little Pakistan
- Greektown
- Irish Communities

Their popular attraction may be deemed as less than those of the previous list, but they hold equal importance in understanding what an ethnic enclave is, and how we can learn from them when looking to tackle social & urban design situations. With discrimination and ethnic abuse ongoing, and currently more apparent than ever, it is important to understand the importance of emigration, ethnic enclaves, cultural exploitation - and more importantly, what we can learn by tracing their history and overlaying from social importance.

In order to learn from them, an understanding of an ethnic enclave is required, in particular:

their formation, development and subsequent gentrification/lack of. As a base model, the districts of Little Italy within New York are used to provide context.

Emigration can be a result of different push/pull factors, including economics, politics and geography, that cause those worst affected to seek respite abroad. Underlying such movement is the attitude that 'the grass is greener on the other side'. The choice of destination is not individual, nor comprehensive, but represents a location of often glorified promise and opportunity within prosperous cities. Proximity to one's home country, a thriving economy and existing ethnic diversity factor into these choices of destination, which subsequently find themselves subject to mass immigration and the arrival of those seeking accommodation and work.²

Although Italy has a rich history of migration since the 1500s, 1870 to 1970 saw a rise in Italians transferring to Europe and North America, resulting in the neighbourhoods we have come to know as Little Italy. This came as a result of Italy's post-French revolution 'the Risorgimento' and the Second World War, where an estimated 26 million Italians declared their intention to leave their home country.³

The development of a neighbourhood or community is complex and diverse, with the establishment of an ethnic neighbourhood commonly defined

by discrimination. In seeking affordable accommodation, the newly arrived are forced to find whatever is cheaply available, often being shunned into unsavoury apartments. Whilst working multiple jobs they are still subject to abuse and discrimination as a result of intolerant local attitudes.² When Stevie Wonder sang 'His father works some days for fourteen hours, And you can bet he barely makes a dollar', it was not without context.⁴ Over time these households come together, seeking to establish a community, and as a result form their own unique district.²

New York's Little Italy is not bound to one location – it has at least 70 sub-districts across Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, so they cannot be respectfully covered under one generic umbrella, but the attitude towards Italian immigrants has remained constant. 'Italo-phobia', a term coined by Robert F. Harney, is where locals felt challenged by the presence of colonized, racialized and incompletely subordinated native 'outsiders', fuelled by both the mass numbers of new immigrants arriving to Northern American shores and the strong Catholicism they brought with them.³ Jacob Riis described Mulberry Bend, the birthplace of Manhattan's Little Italy, as 'the foul core of New York's slums'.⁵ The intolerance and reluctance to accept new cultures results in the defined ethnic labelling that the neighbourhoods receive, as a form of rejection and warring identification.³

During WWII, the height of Italo-phobia in America, internment facilities were established in New Mexico to capture Italians solely on ethnicity. Filipo Molinari described how his interned commute to work was 'over the snow, still with slippers on [his] feet, the temperature at seventeen below and no coat or heavy clothes'. Outside of the camps, the FBI orchestrated a series of arrests on

local Italian Americans based on war crimes that had no supporting evidence. This includes the arrest of opera singer Ezio Pinza in March 1942, for 'communicating with enemy via a boat radio', yet this was a boat that Pinza had previously sold with a broken radio unit. Another accusation claimed Pinza was a close friend of Mussolini, despite the two having never met.⁶

The gentrification and commercialisation of an ethnic enclave is a fork in the road and the defining difference between the previously listed examples. Gentrification and commercialisation here is defined as a measure of the popularity, approval and urban 'success' of an ethnic neighbourhood relative to their surrounding and peer communities. Whereas the likes of a Chinatown and Little India hold fame in offering native delicacies and traditions with acceptance and interest, a Barrio or Little Pakistan is commonly regarded less for their public offerings and more for their concentration of families and individuals within the neighbourhood – a result of the changes to, or lack of, discrimination in their respective communities and the subsequent reputation the district achieves. Although this brings fame and acknowledgement to some, this should be a comprehensive attitude towards ethnicities and traditions, as they bring so much that should be shared and enjoyed.

The base model of Little Italy plays particular importance here, as from the outside we regard New York's Italian heritage to be fully integrated and essential within its history – given the Italo-phobe outlook and struggle arriving Italians found in establishing their own lives in North America, this proves the image to be shallow and untrue. The popularity of the districts within the city and fame from abroad is thanks to its rich history – from traditional delis and

restaurants, to its prominence in television & film, and localised legacy of architecture from the Art Deco and beyond. Although we are lucky to have benefited from the fruits of Little Italy, this is but a drop in the ocean, and exemplifies what can also be experienced within other ethnic communities where the aforementioned and more is beyond prevalent.

The importance and relevance of an ethnic enclave lies within our treatment of different ethnic groups worldwide, and how within the design world issues regarding social and urban integration are continuing problems that must end. Recent events regarding the Black Lives Matter movement have further highlighted the racial discrimination that continues to operate across the world, bringing it rightly to the forefront of the media as a crippling issue that needs immediate address. Emigration will continue to form an important part of international travel and response to national crises, which we will find no shortage of, and new communities arriving to foreign countries will certainly not slow down. Although travel will be revolutionised by the effects of COVID-19, it will return on an international front; attitudes towards exploring different countries will only be heightened by our respective lockdown periods, and as humans we are keen to move. In short: emigration will not be tamed, but discrimination must be tackled.

Tackling an issue with historical precedents requires us to learn from previous examples – not only tracing the relevant history in order to understand it, but overlaying in order to use examples as reference, following the lines of positive examples but acknowledging the mistakes and correcting them.

We must respect and continue what has been successful. The celebration and accommodation for new ethnicities within an

existing environment is healthy and joyous, diversifying a larger-scale community and helping to embrace new traditions & cultures. However, we must acknowledge and progress from what has been wrong. The systematic discrimination of ethnicities is a fundamental issue that we must address globally, whilst the gentrification of traditions selfishly manipulates cultures and disrespects their origins.

Within existing communities, we should approach regenerative projects with greater respect towards their specific requirements, instead of the far too often whimsical archi-typical urban moves. Although not perfect, Denise Scott Brown's approach to The Philadelphia Crosstown Community in 1968 embodies a far more community-sensitive approach within its urban renewal, embracing the African-American culture it was home to and helping their community thrive.⁷ The fact that this approach can still be described as uncommon is absurd, and indicates our egos determining our motives.

New Affordable Housing Initiatives are both indirect and negligent. To state 'affordability' with no further direction is confused and does not directly cater for those requiring affordability, which holds different meanings within different communities. Instead, we should perhaps take the sense of community generated by ethnic enclaves and re-create this with specific ethnicities in mind, not in discrimination but in celebration. Through designing inclusively towards multiple ethnicities past, present and future, we can fully support the diversity that urban profiling has previously shunned but must now look towards.

We should embody this multi-cultural outlook beyond the small bubble of affordable housing to all sectors of design, to comprehensively accommodate ethnicities in all aspects of life.

Perhaps the ideas of a fixed client or brief are outdated – should we ditch individual profiling, a fixed programme, and monolithic needs within design to broaden our approach to how we address a situation? Instead, we should look to meeting the requirements to address a problem but also look through what is written on paper and think about how we can design beyond that in an inclusive manner. We must embrace, appreciate & be grateful for what every nation and ethnicity can bring, and cater for everyone in order to fully embrace all corners of the planet and eradicate the stifling global discrimination.

Call me optimistic, but maybe we can start designing for the whole world as one.⁸

Notes

¹ ACAST Podcasts, 2019. Ep 36: Evelyn Mok. [podcast] Off Menu with Ed Gamble and James Acaster.

² 2017. Migration And Its Impact On Cities. [ebook] Switzerland: Self-Published.

³ Gabaccia, D., 2006. Global Geography Of 'Little Italy': Italian Neighbourhoods In Comparative Perspective. [ebook] Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.

⁴ Wonder, S. (1973) Living for the City. Los Angeles: Motown Records.

⁵ Tonelli, B., 2020. The Demise Of Little Italy - Nymag. [online] New York Magazine.

⁶ Molland, Gillian P., 2018 "The Italian American Community's Responses to Discrimination during World War Two." Departmental Honors Projects. 72.

⁷ Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D. and Izenour, S., 1972. Learning From Las Vegas. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, pp.126-133.



Chinatown, London, Photography by Rob Greig



Little Italy, New York, Photography by Stuart Franklin



Sketch for Philadelphia's Crosstown Community by Denise Scott Brown

learning how to

W A L K

To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world—impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito.

Charles Baudelaire, 19th-century poet

By Elena Oliynyk

Charles Baudelaire, a 19-century French poet, coined the term flaneur, meaning a stroller. A literary character, a man of leisure, an urban explorer, a Parisian bourgeois, free to stride the boulevards and wander with no purpose. A flaneur understands the city, its architecture and its residents. Flânerie (the act of strolling if you wish) might be the key to the resurrection of walking culture. With more and more land becoming urban, we need to adapt our lifestyles as well as the way we design cities to allow people to enjoy the stroll. When was the last time you went for a long walk? Get out exploring, get lost in your surroundings, and you might find a few gems or treasures that connect you to your home like never before. You will never get lost while you flaneur.

In order to avoid being the person who only ‘talks the talk’, but does not ‘walk the walk’, I packed lightly and went on my little adventure. I am an avid walker myself, as

according to my phone, my monthly average is fluctuating between nine to twelve kilometres per day. It is a residual by-product of an eating disorder from an earlier age, which I subsequently reinvented with a positive spin. What used to be a compulsive, purely mechanical, physical action became my way of finding a sense of belonging. I have not had a place, which I can, without a shadow of a doubt, call home for the past seven years of my life. However, as long as I can go for a long stroll, I feel like I fit in perfectly. Whenever I get a chance to revisit a place, I would walk to the places I can call mine, places which stole my heart the first time I saw them. A little moment I shared with a city.

So, to experience flânerie more mindfully, I decided to go to Liverpool and Cambridge, two vastly different cities. After four days of travel, I walked 60 kilometres and made a significant number of memories.

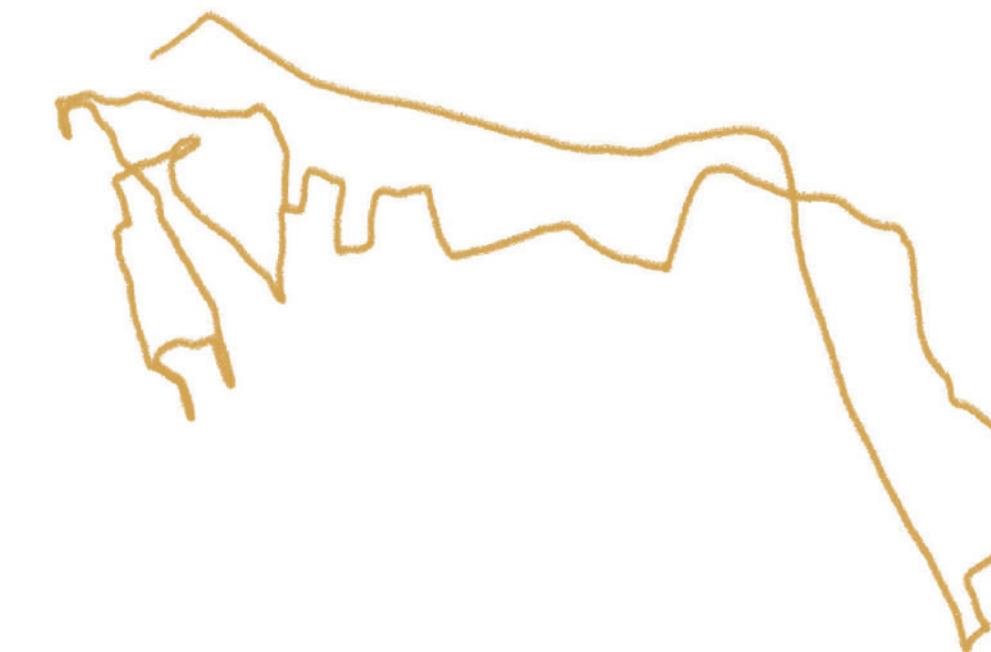


L I V E R P O O L

My flaneur adventures started on the 19th December. I walked up to Liverpool Lime Street Station at 8:40 a.m. just in time for a train to West Allerton. The plan was to live the day of a suburban resident, so why not put myself in the shoes of Sir Paul McCartney? Walking allows you to become someone else; you just need to set your mind free. It was everything you would expect suburbia to be: detached houses, wide roads, cars, cars and cars. Unbelievably quiet for a Thursday morning, but then again, it is suburbia. All children are at school, adults have driven to work. Every so often, you could see a lonely housewife or a work-from-home character. I felt like an imposter, I did not belong there and I knew it. A camera with a giant 100mm lens gave me away.

After reaching my first checkpoint, I moved to Lennon's house. The lack of care for pedestrians is palpable. No crossings, no signage, almost non-existent pavements. I got stuck in the middle of a golf course, wondering if Paul had ever gotten himself in the same pickle. If I was not such a Beatles' fan, I would have no reason to walk here. Even if I was a local, I would find it a bit dreadful. Each park I passed felt a bit unloved. Considering the splendid English climate, half of the time the paths are marshes at best. Unless you have leg-lengthened Wellington boots, you will not cross to another side of the hedge. As much as I love walking, the experience was far from pleasant.

My biggest excitement was for a regulated crossing not far from Penny Lane. While I was a block away from the famous street, I had to cross five roads to get over a massive intersection. Inevitably, I gave in and took a bus to the city centre. After walking 8 kilometres, my fatigue became my travelling companion, and all the aggressive drivers made me fear the roads.



The next important milestone of my journey was the Georgian quarter. It got more familiar, but each building had its charm of Liverpudlian red brick. The unburdened honesty of the surroundings rekindled my motivation to flaneur.

The only three times I was genuinely astonished by the sense of scale was when I saw the skyscrapers in New York and Hong Kong, and when I entered Liverpool Cathedral. Blocks of red sandstone seemed to me like blown out of proportion bricks like this structure was erected by giants as if I was in a medieval fairytale. I thought I had to keep quiet not to wake giants up; that's how tiny I felt. I was Alice, who had just drunk a potion from a mysterious bottle and shrunk down to get to Wonderland.

After that magical experience, I took a route through Chinatown to the Albert Dock. The Georgian terraces softly transitioned into industrial structures. The houses started to lose their opulent decorations. The waterfront is a place of the stylistic freedom; it marries the old docks with the cutting-edge shapes of the Museum of Liverpool, RIBA North and neo-classical Three Graces. This city never embellishes to impress you, but it still leaves you in awe. Liverpool shows its true colours. Predominantly red. It allows all the architectural styles to exist and flourish. Buildings are there whether you like them or not — call it the stoic northern mentality.

The whole of Liverpool felt like a tapestry, sewn roughly together. It is a city of patches, separated by harsh streams of cars. Even in the very centre, you need to cross the four-lane highways to get to the docks. It would not be my most favourite walk. Despite being a seasoned flaneur, the exhaustion took over me, making it hard to make warm memories to look back in many moons' time. Yet I would love to return.



C A M B R I D G E

By the time I arrived in Cambridge, I had forgotten all other colours of brick but red. The cultural change was immediate; people walked, talked and held themselves differently. You could feel that this city is of a much smaller scale. They respect pedestrians here.

Cambridge is a special place, as it was the first place in England I visited around seven or eight years ago. Clare College became my home throughout those summer months, while I was studying hard to improve my English. One might assume I enjoyed my stay as, after all these years you can still find me here in the UK. All the stereotypes you have ever heard about England might be true while you are in Cambridge. The queuing, the tea brewing and never-ending weather complaints. You hear 'proper English' in that everyone sounds posh and ever so slightly snobbish. When I first came here, being a shy teenager, this did not help me when it came to making friends; therefore, long strolls across the city became a way for a lonely outsider to get to know the place. All these years later, I recall and re-enact my memories by walking.

I started my journey in residential areas to the north of the city. Again, it is suburbia, but a bit friendlier. The most striking thing about living in Cambridge is that you do not always feel like you belong here. There is a sharp divide between the locals and the students. As a student, you are privileged; more doors would, quite literally, be open to you. Luckily for me, I befriended a student at Clare College, who gave me access to the familiar quad. Classical order meets the traditional English Gothic in the Old Court. You cannot walk on the grass unless you are getting married there or a fellow of the college. There is a whole list of rules on how to walk through Cambridge, which no one has ever written or publicised, but

everyone just seems to know.

After walking for long enough, the whole city just blends into one 'college'. All the terraced dorms and vaulted arches. The list of all the names that never stick in my head and of which I quickly lose count. It feels like travelling back in time, everything preserved just the way it used to be back in medieval times. You follow the steps of the greats, Charles Darwin, David Attenborough, Sylvia Plath, Isaac Newton and many others, and in my opinion, strolling around allows you to relate to them. All of these remarkable people are just like everyone else and walking keeps us grounded, reminding us of the humility and authenticity we all possess but tend to lose.

The walker is king, and the earth is its domain.

We have the power to take back the streets and public spaces, reclaiming what has always been ours. People can bring life back to their neighbourhoods by being active. Take a walk — march against the unreasonably fast-moving capitalist world. To bring change, we need to remind urban planners about the human scale. The impact of the increased number of walkable neighbourhoods on our environment could be a potential solution to the climate emergency that we are faced with as a society.

The act of walking embodies humility. It brings us to our primitive selves, free of prejudice and preconceived opinions. It is a quiet recognition of our finiteness and the infinite opportunities for mindfulness. People can create new bonds with the places they live in. Flânerie can give us a real sense of belonging no matter where we are. We all walk on this earth, it belongs to all of us. ☺

urban markers

By Julia Korpacka

When one walks a lot, especially regularly taking the same long route – to university, work, or to the shops, one unintentionally starts to notice some mundane reference points, or their absence, along the way. Apart from the physical, architectural and infrastructural elements that frame, and define movement in the city, one needs those markers to move through the city in a conscious way, stimulated but not confused, confident but not mindless. Those urban crumbs, seemingly unimportant, trivial traces which we rarely consciously pay attention to, help us orient ourselves in space and context.

While long, straight streets seem to go on forever, endlessly extending in time and space, the same distance in a diverse, stimulating setting appears easier to travel. Time passes quickly.

Walking without markers

Long, straight streets seem to go on forever, endlessly extending in time and space. One could soon start to notice the minute, even obtrusive, markers – a particular crack in the pavement, a crooked bollard whispering ‘there is still a long way to go’. Similarly, large, solitary buildings looming in the corner of our eye appear to prolong our route even more. The first image-experience that comes to my mind is walking next to the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw. The building itself is placed on a massive empty square in an otherwise dense city centre. The square, known as Plac Defilad (Parade Square),

has changed its purpose from an arena of communist celebrations and propaganda demonstrations throughout the majority of the 20th century, a semi-legal market area between the 1990s and early 2000s, to an unofficial coach station and car park nowadays. Almost vulgar in its emptiness, the square is framed by wide, busy through routes, with the majority of pedestrian flow happening in underground passages. As one emerges from the below-ground stream of usual human traffic - travellers, bazaar clientele and ever-busy locals - onto the pavement just across the street from the Palace, and continues towards the Old Town, that is where the most tiresome stretch of the way begins. The ‘longest’ 500 meters I have ever walked consists of monotonous glazed shop fronts of popular chain stores on one side, and the gigantic façade of the Palace of Culture and Science on the other.

Architecture enthusiasts may find it quite interesting, but for a regular passerby that view quickly loses its charm; the Palace is so large that from the perspective from which we are looking at it, it does not seem to be changing. Walking along this view seems to take much longer than it should because not much changes and there is nothing new or exciting to orient us in the time-space along the way. In a denser urban situation just a few blocks away, however, the Palace becomes an important reference point as it emerges from a distance, capping the ends of smaller streets leading towards the square. This brings us to the dictionary of urban punctuation.

The mundane marker

The other category is less obvious, therefore more challenging to lock in a definition. An equestrian statue or a fountain will extremely rarely, if ever, change its place in

Exclamation point – the monument

In ‘Building and Dwelling’ Richard Sennett describes a few examples of urban punctuation marks:

*Big-bold monuments
serve as exclamation
points. Walls are
periods. Crossroads
serve as semicolons,
breaking up the flow
without halting it.*



Palace of Culture and Science and its surroundings, Warsaw, Poland. (by Jan Bielecki, East News)

the urban realm (the only case of a moving monument I know of is the fountain on the Place des Taxis in Lyon). Perhaps their fixed state and weight – both physical and immaterial – contribute towards their role in giving directions to lost tourists looking for their hostel or a friend searching for that new café. Urban exclamation points must be easily distinguishable, straightforward and strategically placed. Their importance is objective and imposed rather than subjective and relative to the observer – that is why they are useful when giving directions. However, the markers can also be more diverse, or alive, in their nature. They then become more personal and objective; we cannot expect a lost tourist to notice the same things as we do taking the same route on a regular basis. Those markers can take any shapes and forms, being a very pretty shrub, a door of a particularly bright colour, a cool graffiti or even a very ordinary bench on which you once had an unusually tasty sandwich. These markers are more difficult to define or communicate to someone, but

nevertheless are of great value, as they help us orient in time-space, making our regular routes more interesting, or at least more bearable, as these traces are like digits on a watch – we know where we are and when, more or less, we would get to our destination.

Contrary to the monumental markers, the mundane ones are prone to change. Any differences in their appearance, say an old tree losing its leaves in autumn or blooming in spring, will be observed and noted, perhaps without much consequence to its meaning in regards to our route. Still, it could be a nudge to document those changes and reflect. Similarly, there might be a street coffee vendor on your route to work. If he or she moves their cart some 10-20 meters down the road to be closer to a busy bus stop, for example, it will not go unnoticed, even if a morning latte to go is not really your thing. The mundane markers usually emerge in time rather than being imposed on a particular space, as their authorship is two-way – a street bench will not become a marker

just by being placed in any spot along a street. It needs someone to ‘appropriate’ it.

Does this mean that only monumental markers can be designed for? Placing an urban exclamation point in any city requires careful planning, appropriate space that is usually quite empty and ordered, as well as a substantial budget. How can architects and planners design for the mundane markers? This brings us to the last, most challenging category of urban punctuation marks – the quote mark.

The quote mark

Richard Sennett talks about the urban quote mark in terms of low-budget, high-impact interventions in deprived neighbourhoods. Street furniture, art, greenery, a different material used for sidewalk paving or a wall can be an invitation to engage with the space, hence adding arbitrary, immaterial value to this particular area. ‘Why is this here?’, ‘What does it mean?’ - the passersby and locals alike are welcome to ask, reflect and ‘rate’



Stair Squares in Brooklyn Borough Hall, 2007 (by Mark Reigelman)

these markers. A bench placed in a particular spot says: 'this is a place of value because you can rest here'.¹ A tree brings pleasant shade in a concrete jungle, while smaller pots filled with tall grass or flowers instantly prettify the space and invite nearby dwellers to bring plants out onto window cills or doorsteps themselves. The value of these gestures is twofold - for someone local, an inhabitant of a nearby dwelling or a local business owner, such a small intervention means it is a space worth caring for, meaning it is okay for them to care for it too. For an ordinary passerby, a regular 'visitor', or accidental flaneur, it is a new type of reference point on the way to their destination. The quote mark sits between the mundane marker and the exclamation mark in the dictionary of urban punctuation. While its value still remains arbitrary and depends on the observer, it is much easier to communicate to someone else. The route passing through spaces highlighted by a few quote marks instantly becomes more recognisable and varied, and is therefore perceived as being shorter and enjoyable.

Urban quote marks do not necessarily have to be imposed by a designer - an architect or a planner can also create such a space to invite the placement of independent interventions by someone else. The street can function a bit like an open-air gallery where the planner acts as a curator inviting artists - either professional or amateur - to contribute to a larger exhibition.

Conclusion - perception vs speed

We can only talk about urban markers in a situation when the city in question is designed to be walked in rather than driven through. As the width of our field of view is inversely proportional to the speed in which we move, the urban markers targeted at those travelling by car need to be much larger and robust than those aimed at pedestrians. They are much more popular as they serve mostly a commercial purpose; ironically, in some places it seems to be much easier to place a large advertisement or a banner than it is to introduce

a much smaller bench or a few flowers pots. These signs are too wide and too tall for a pedestrian scale; moreover, their meaning is imposed and communicates only one message directed at a consumer. A car-centric city is filled with signs escaping the field of view of a pedestrian. A city made for walking has markers which serve different functions, not only commercial. Some can have a functional purpose, other purely an aesthetic one, but one thing is certain - they add value to the neglected spaces and make walking a pleasure for everyone. ◎

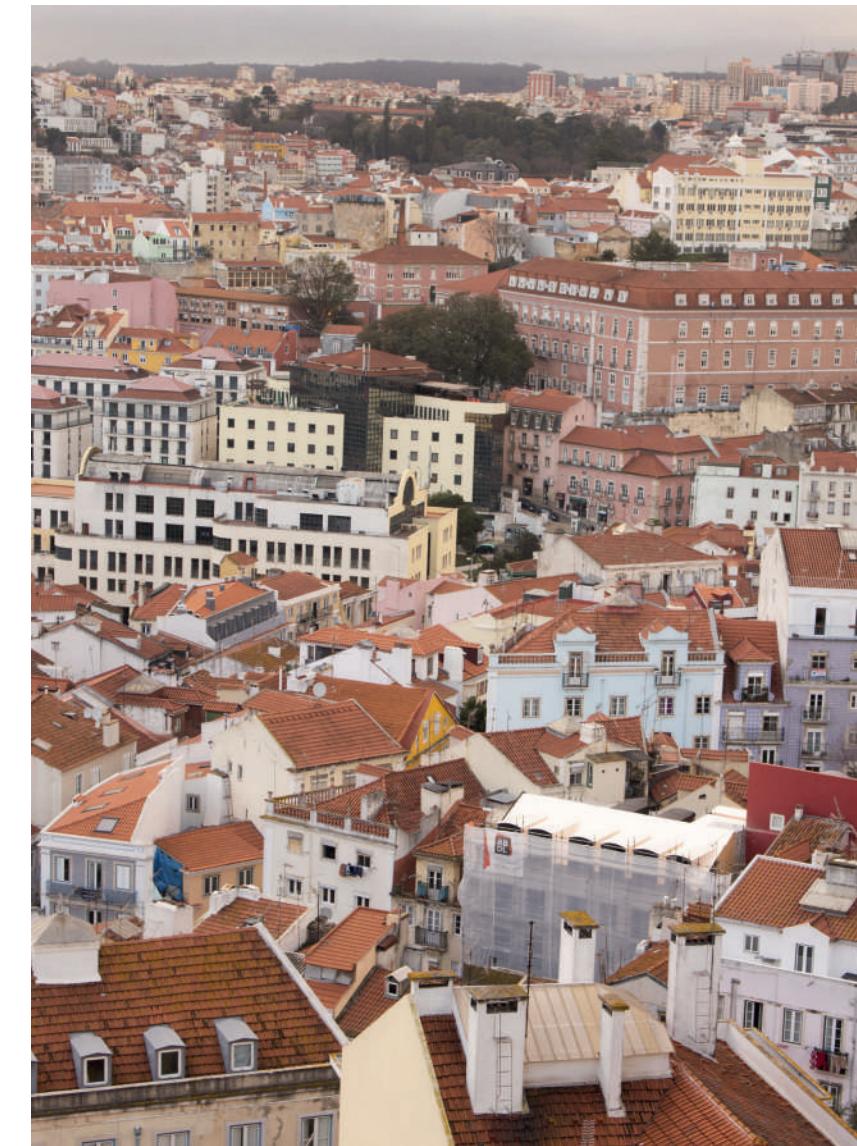
Notes

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TRACE

LISBOA

By Eleanor Hyde



Cobbled streets, mosaic houses, colourful character
ALFAMA'S heritage overlooks a terracotta metropolis
climb or tram ride up to the best MIRADOURO
trace the 22 back towards the water
where pizza & PRAÇA deceive of ROME

Eiffel's elevadora overshadows CHIADO 'S slumber
BARRIO ALTO welcomes curiosity, boasts bold graffiti
allow the Tagas to stretch you
up towards cotemporary CALVARIO
where hipsters hide

Will you make it to BELEM for a pastry or two?
before
the elastic city recoils
the promise of faro music echoes
from secret bars buried below the cobbles



MAAT Museum of Art and Architecture



Príncipe Real



Praça do Comércio



Alfama



Chiado District



TRACE

[re]tracing the elusive path

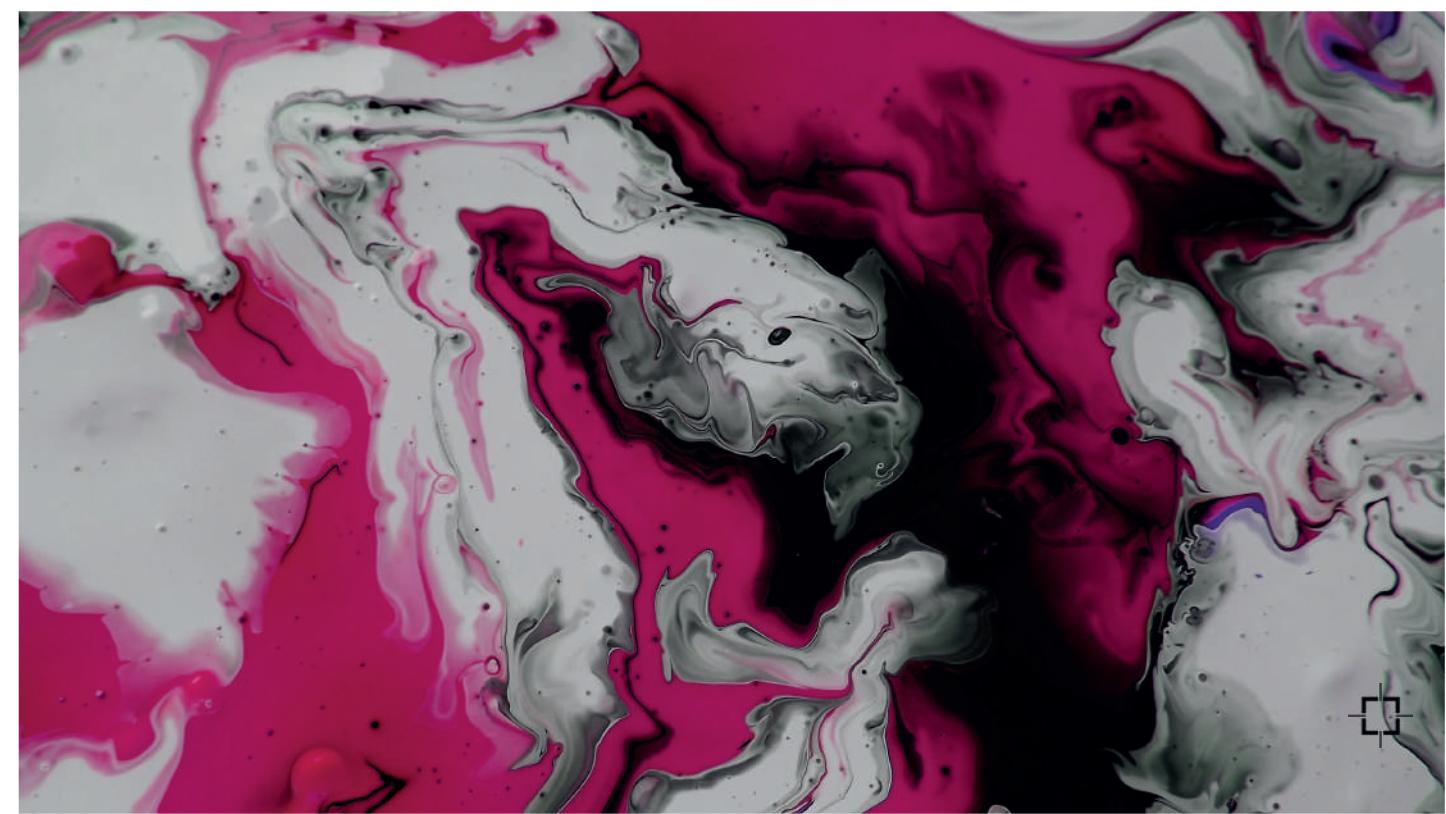


to our subconscious

a quest into the deepest darkest corners of our mind

By Maddi Gomez-Iradi (2020) marbling inks and acrylics on paper

paperspace



By Leo Ng

Social distancing measures have confined individuals to the boundaries of one's home.

Such a climate has fostered a hyper awareness of one's immediate surroundings, a natural integration into the familiar contours.

This series traces the transition of the working environment of an architecture student during the pandemic of COVID-19. ☺

*From everyone's studio
to one's room,*

From off-line to on-line,

From macro to micro.



macrotrace - studio



microtrace - room



Book Review: Being Ecological

By Amy Young

In light of the current pandemic, the term 'post-COVID' world has cropped up again and again within the architecture community. Architects have rushed to the rescue with mediocre design solutions; temporary hospitals, 3D printed face masks, and socially distant parks, just to name a few. Despite the seemingly good intentions, I find the design proposals incredibly problematic. It highlights the 'architect is god' phenomena, in which architects try to solve complex social, political and health issues, that are far beyond their skillsets and reaches of the profession. Instead of all these quite pointless and dead-end projects aiming to 'revolutionise' the 'post-COVID world', I feel as if it would be far more productive for these architects to try to just get the architecture right. Highly problematic buildings are still being erected that have a detrimental impact on the climate, just look the work of Zaha Hadid or BIG. Perhaps it would be wise for architects to truly understand climate change, climate-driven design and their role in designing a sustainable future first.

A book that illustrates an incredibly refreshing and new perspective on climate change is Timothy Morton's 'Being Ecological'. It restructures the entire argument around climate change, allowing the reader to understand there has to be a deep shift in thinking before we can solve any of the complex problems involved. As an architect, it is a fantastic book that prompts the re-evaluation of how and what we design, in the midst of a climate crisis.

The tone of 'Being Ecological' is one of assurance and authority. Morton has clear ideas throughout which are well supported by his breadth and depth of understanding not only on ecology but on philosophy, literature, art and the sciences. The book is a piece of academic literature and tests the reader to connect references in order to comprehend the often-complex ideas Morton presents. After overcoming the sometimes-intellectual waffle, the perspective Morton offers in 'Being Ecological' is fresh, exciting and layered. He gives the reader permission to relax into the uncertainty of the future and refuses to conjure all the solutions.

Morton states very clearly at the start of the book, that the writing is not a 'data dump' with 'factoids' and numbers. Instead he writes a series of provocative statements and questions that slowly try to change the readers perception of the climate and ecological crisis. For example, in the first chapter he states;

'So, I do have a lot of sympathy for the "so what are we going to do?" sort of question. And this is precisely why I refuse to give a straight answer. What this type of question is asking, and the way the question is asking it, has the need to control all aspects of the ecological crisis. And we can't do that. That would require being able to reverse time and return to at least 10,000 BC before humans set the agricultural logistics in motion that eventually gave rise to the industrial revolution, carbon emissions and therefore to global warming and mass extinction.'

It is a refreshing point to hear, emphasising that perhaps our very ridged problem-solving approach to climate change is ineffective because we are simply too late, we have already surpassed the point of no return. In a world that is effectively fuelled by neoliberal capitalism, it would 'require a major global revolution to dismantle the structures that are polluting the biosphere with carbon emissions.' The author dismisses the idea that we can be the saviours of earth and instead we have to start thinking about how we can minimise the effects of climate change in a different way.

Morton also challenges the idea of blame in regard to the climate and ecological crisis. He suggests that the individual is not to blame, arguing that only populations could have caused climate change, only in the masses could we have made such a disastrous impact to the planet. However, he raises the sorites paradox which asks when does a collection of things become a heap? Or in relation to Morton's problem, when does the individual become the population? He does not answer the question but as a reader, it brings forward a point to ponder yourself. Do you still have to feel guilty about your personal contribution to climate change because one is in effect both the individual and the population?

To give his arguments more assertion, in the second half of the book Morton refers to the philosophic theories of Kant and Heidegger, focusing largely on object-orientated ontology. This theory looks at how non-human entities experience their existence in a way that lies outside

our human-centric definition of consciousness. It brings us away from the anthropocentric way of thinking and instead suggests we should view the world more wholly. This in itself is intriguing as it presents the idea that climate change is not just a human-focused problem, but there are many, many other components to consider, everything non-human has a complex existence that needs to be accounted for too.

The existence of humans and non-humans is further explored in relation to the idea of systems. The ecosystem simply cannot be broken down into its constituent parts, each relies on each other. Morton explains these human and non-human connections through the analogy of a forest; 'A tree isn't connected to the forest it's in because it's measurably "inside the forest". The tree has to do with the forest.' Or more directly he explains the theory through the bacteria biome in our gut, it clearly demonstrates the intense connection between the human and non-human, one cannot exist without the other, creating a complex system that is formed of many individual parts. From the perspective of climate change, this attitude of interconnectedness is essential. Every decision made by humans will impact the system. It is not simply a case of looking to the impact on human life anymore but to the impact of the larger entity, to the non-human elements that are equally important to the system or the 'web of life' as Morton refers to it.

However, Morton does admit this is a difficult position for humans to be in, we struggle to see the bigger picture because we are right in the depths of the picture,

floating amongst everything else.

Morton concludes the book with quite a dramatic and final statement 'You don't have to be ecological because you already are ecological'. He builds up the argument in the previous chapter by suggesting that we are already part of the system, we already live symbiotically with nature, we already breathe the air and coexist with non-humans. Instead of trying to be more ecological, we instead should raise the question, how should we be more conscious of our ecological life, how can we treat it more carefully and with more intent. We have to perhaps abandon the anthropocentric idea that has been instilled into us since the Neolithic age, trying to instead view the world more as one, one that we are intrinsically and deeply a part of.

'Being Ecological' is less so a book on climate change but more on contemporary philosophy and thought. However, the angle in which Morton directs his comments allows the reader to connect the ecological with the philosophical. With a base understanding of Kant and Heidegger, 'Being Ecological' is a fantastic read, however the major critique is that it is easy to get lost among the string of theories, philosophers, artists and ideas that Morton presents. With some prior reading and understanding however, the book is enriching and thoroughly worth the hours ploughing through the pages. 

You don't have to be ecological because you already are ecological.

Timothy Morton,
Being Ecological





The Amazon: A Cultural Monument

By Lauren Dennis

'Leaving a trace' has long been considered a prerequisite for successful architecture. Whether in the building of ancient monuments or hastily planned social regeneration programmes, an enduring mark on the landscape is viewed by architects and politicians alike as proof of power and a forceful cultural movement. Perhaps the absence of any emblematic edifice is the reason why the cultural values and systems of the Amazon's indigenous people have proved so challenging for the rest of the world to comprehend.

The policy of Jair Bolsonaro, the current president of Brazil, is to assimilate the indigenous

population of the Brazilian Amazon so that both they and their land can contribute to the country's economy. This approach has been adopted by officials for decades. The fact that indigenous people make up 0.4% of the population and inhabit 13% of Brazil's land surface has long caused resentment among those seeking to exploit the rainforest for their own profit. In January 2020, the area lost to deforestation doubled compared to the same month in 2019, in part due to illegal land-clearing which goes largely unchecked by the authorities. Paired with this is an increase in violence towards indigenous people, with the number of recorded illegal invasions to their land increasing from 96 in 2017 to 160 in 2019, and the number of

killings increasing from 110 to 135 between 2017 and 2018.

More recently, the threat of COVID-19 has been largely ignored by Brazilian authorities, resulting in a 6.4% national mortality rate. This compares to a 12.6% mortality rate for the indigenous population, who have little immunity to respiratory diseases and who live far from any available healthcare. The risk has been compounded by invaders such as farmers and missionaries who have been allowed to enter indigenous territories due to the lack of official border enforcement. If the Brazilian government decides to rethink the 'no contact' rule which preserves the right of tribes to exist without external visitors, what follows would be nothing short of genocide.

The Awá are one of 160 known societies in the Brazilian Amazon, numbering roughly 300 people. Like other groups, their culture is intrinsically linked with the rainforest, with many leading a nomadic lifestyle, allowing the ecosystem to replenish naturally, so that it can continue to serve future generations. This requires a detailed understanding and respect for nature, which is expressed through tradition. Children are named after plants and animals, creating lifelong connections with the species and its place in the structure of the rainforest; each animal owns a tree and is asked by other animals for permission to eat its fruit. A ritual is practised by the Awá to establish contact with spiritual entities, some of which also depend on the rainforest for their existence. Therefore, the destruction of the Amazon is unthinkable, as it represents both the belief system and way of life for the Awá. To leave the rainforest would be to abandon their culture and their ancestors.

Although contact has given the outside world a greater understanding of how the Awá live, for the people themselves it has brought many risks. Most Awá lived a nomadic lifestyle before 1973, when the establishment of permanent contact with mainstream Brazilian society led to some discovering subsistence farming as an alternative. The adaption to permanent settlement required a shift in sanitation practices, and caused a depletion of nearby resources. An increase in diseases was caused by denser living, as well as uncontrolled contact with agents of FUNAI (Brazil's National Indian Foundation) which for one group led to a population decrease from 91 to 24 between 1976 and 1980. The Awá's territories are considered to be particularly at risk compared to other indigenous groups because they have been made more accessible by illegally built roads, and in 2011, the murder of an 8-year old girl by loggers led to

this struggle being noticed on an international level. A campaign by the charity Survival International contributed to the eventual expulsion of illegal loggers in 2014 by Brazilian forces.

Another drawback of outsider interventions is that indigenous groups often become more susceptible to overreliance. For example, shotguns have become commonplace for hunting in place of traditional methods, which has led to an unsustainably rapid killing of animals, forcing hunters to venture further and further afield. Additionally, in some tribes it has become necessary to buy ammunition from loggers in exchange for trees or land. It is essential that the imposition of outsider culture on indigenous people does not threaten their time-honoured traditions, and that any introduction of mainstream medicine and technology is done responsibly.

Ideally, indigenous people should be able to establish contact with the outside world on their own terms, without any threat to the territory which is their birthright; it is a privilege to the researchers and activists that the Awá have welcomed them. However, the lack of political will to promote long-term action for the protection of the indigenous land has begun to make it a necessity rather than a choice, that contact is maintained with outsiders who are in a position to help. It is feared that there are other groups who have faced similar persecution to the Awá without any cries for help reaching the authorities or the media. It is a testament to the magnitude of the risk posed by COVID-19 that Beto Marubo, a representative of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley, has appealed for international help to enforce land boundaries and provide both logistical and medical support.

In light of international attention towards the Amazon rainforest in recent years relating to its value as



one of the world's largest carbon stores, it is worth noting that advocating for its preservation is a commitment to its indigenous people, and requires a respect and understanding of their way of life. The Amazon does not only need to be conserved to slow down the rate of global warming, it is also the monument of an entire civilisation who deserve to live there on their own terms. 

Notes

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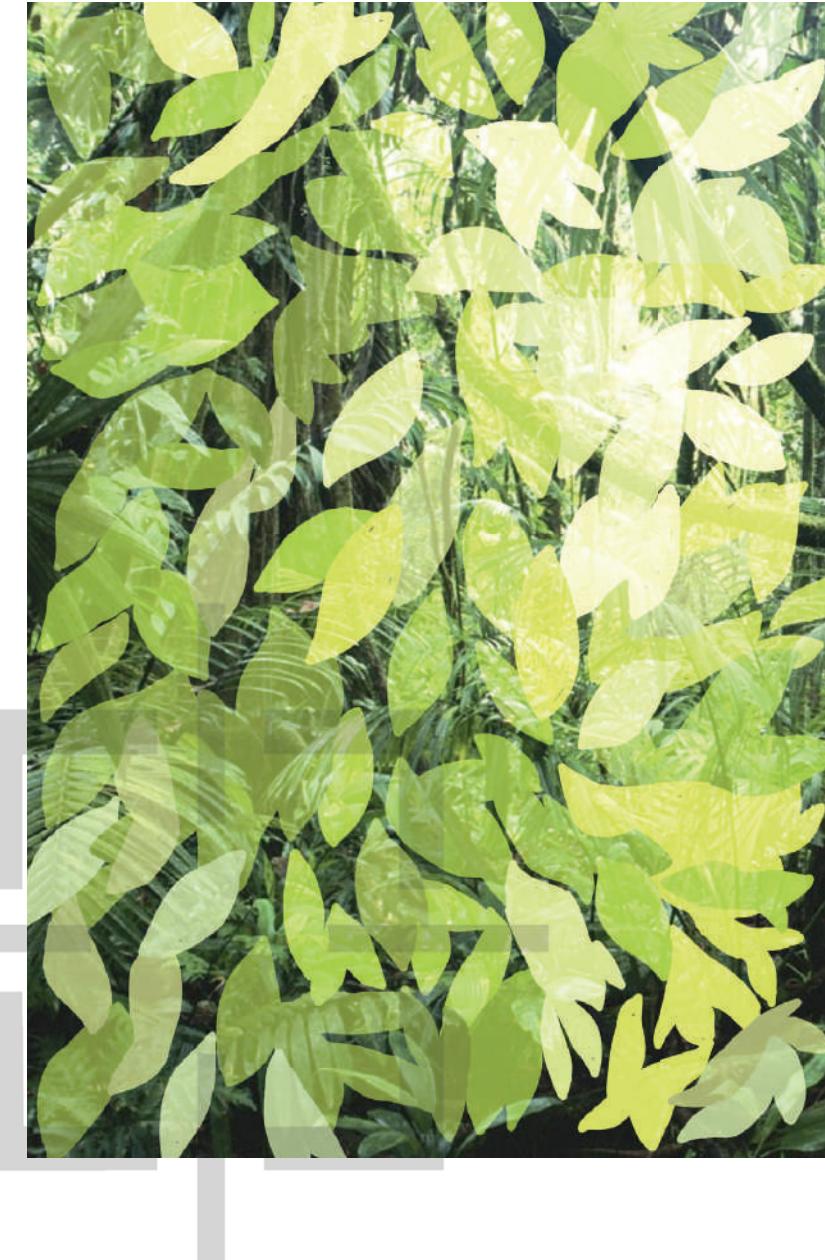
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(n a t i o n a l) p a r k | i f e

**Words by Alice Kerry
Images by K. Kim & A. Kerry**

2020 has delivered the unexpected for all of us. For me, there have been few things more unexpected than seeing my town featured on LadBible, a Facebook page with over 37 million followers.

'Locking Down' at my parents' house, I retreated from my placement in London to the Peak District. For my friends and I, Derbyshire was a great place to come back to – for a weekend. The lack of public transport means that most teens' social lives begin the day that they get their driving licence. Living in Britain's most accessible National Park, the longstanding opinion of residents is that its greatness lies in being only an hour away from anywhere, but the downside being that everywhere is an hour away. But during the pandemic, it seemed to be the place to be; people from the cities that always exemplified excitement for us growing up – Manchester, Sheffield, Derby – were coming in droves to the Peak District.

My town's internet exposure began on LadBible in March, when tourists came from as far as Cornwall to visit what is known locally as the Blue Lagoon. Over 60 miles from the nearest bit of coastline, this is far from what you would imagine something with such a name to look like – Buxton's Blue Lagoon is instead one of the many traces left on the landscape from years of limestone quarrying

on the edges of the National Park. In an area that has over 170 rainy days a year, water collects in the pit and leaches through piles of quicklime and ash, becoming incredibly alkaline – with a pH of 11.3 (the pH of bleach is 12.3). Not only that – during the Second World War, the site was the largest chemical weapons storage area in the country, and afterwards was the site of the disposal of German chemical weapons such as mustard gas. This is not mentioned on TripAdvisor.

From the moment we were released from quarantined isolation and allowed to take unlimited exercise back in May, we have rediscovered a love of our outdoor spaces. It seemed as though everyone was chomping at the bit to get out into open space. Now in cities, proximity to a park or open area is possibly one of the main contributors to quality of life. But as restrictions are eased, and the prospect of a summer holiday without a trip to a Spanish coastal town dawns on most Brits, more and more people are venturing to our National Parks and seaside towns for staycations.

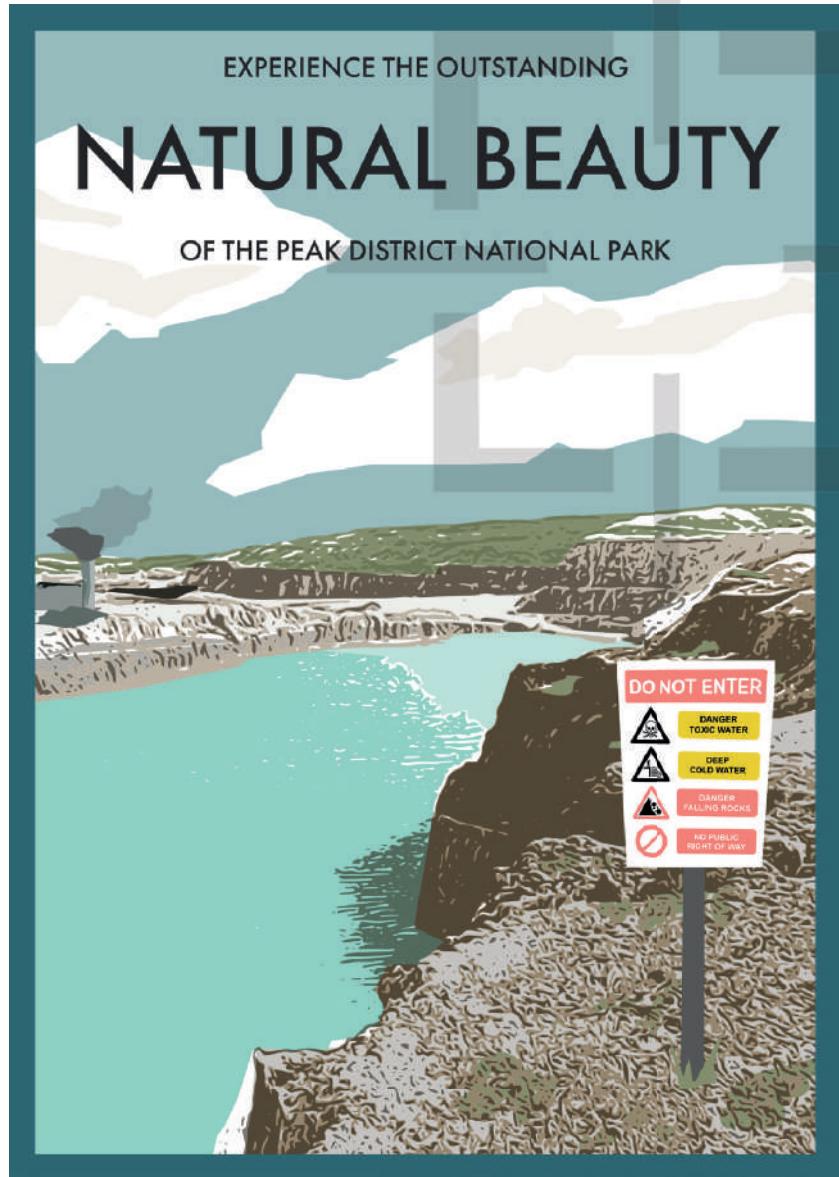
Now, on weekends, the Peak District is the busiest it has been for years, but the bustle feels and looks different. There are always more people around in summer, predominantly middle-aged, white, outdoorsy types, coming with 80 litre rucksacks and campervans. Since lockdown, visitors are beginning to better represent the residents of modern Britain.



Across the whole of the Derbyshire Dales, an area of 792km², there are only 7,040 people aged between 15-24 – so a sudden influx of younger people is obvious to those who have grown up in the area.

Since March, Buxton's Blue Lagoon has appeared on LadBible twice more, not to mention The Times, The Guardian, and on the BBC. The intrigue is no longer at the crowds of people, but the tension arising between locals, the police, and visitors. Locals have taken to covering areas in cow and pig slurry in order to deter visitors endangering themselves at the disused quarry, and Derbyshire

police have faced criticism since the beginning of lockdown, with their methods of using drones to patrol the open land as 'sinister'. The most public condemnation came from Lord Sumption, the ex-high court judge who attacked police for the routine dying the bright Blue Lagoon to black, a move to deter Instagram-hungry visitors and people tempted to swim in the pool of bleach. Whether he knew the importance of the deterrent, what all this highlighted is how as a country, we have increasingly divided views about what purposes the countryside should serve, and what we want from it.



Although it has taken a global pandemic for the countryside to be more widely visited by a greater proportion of society, it can only be a good thing that some of the most impressive and enjoyable parts of Great Britain can be enjoyed freely by everyone living in the country. When National Parks first arose in the UK in the 1950s, the world was a very different place. In 1950, there were 4 million registered vehicles in Great Britain – now there are over 34 million. Where towns and cities are adapting to this, it would be wrong to expect that our National Parks will have done the same. The only thing stopping the harmonious use of our National Parks, is how well equipped they are to deal with all the visitors. The local residents' Facebook group is bombarded by angry posts with photographs of cars blocking roads, rubbish left strewn across fields, and even unpleasant 'gifts' left in gardens... The problem is not the presence of tourists or visitors, but rather the traces left behind. But with areas of uninterrupted open moorland over 35km in length, how can there be enough provisions for everyone wanting to visit?

In areas with tight development policies, it is not a case of scattering toilet blocks and car parks across the countryside – nor would that be the best fit for everyone's needs. This may be a time for a different type of infrastructure design. Our towns and cities will no doubt undergo radical urban planning changes to better suit a post-pandemic population; should this be the same for our National Parks and green spaces?

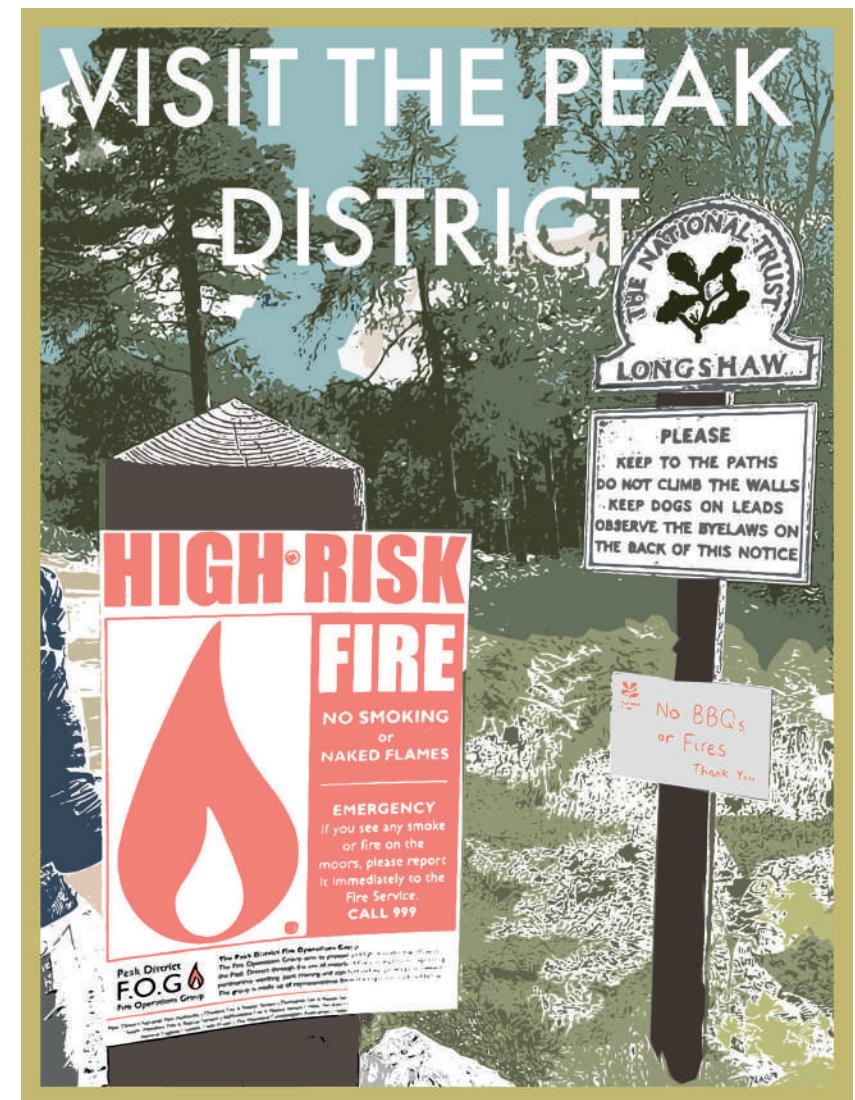
Not only would well thought-out subtle development dilute tensions between local residents and tourists, there has never been a more urgent need for people to develop an affinity with nature and a drive to protect it at all costs. In the midst of our current climate crisis, things like litter are

not just a visual eyesore; they are a danger to the environment and the humans and animals in it. Cigarette butts, glass bottles, and barbeques left abandoned on the moors caused 96 wildfires in the UK in 2019 – the highest figure ever recorded. These themselves caused a spike in pollution levels. Good design in the countryside, in the form of small architecture, or even effective graphic design of posters and signs, may be able to prevent so many fires in the future. Our planet is now so unstable, that carelessness is not affordable in places like these.

Places of outstanding natural beauty have a specific set of problems when it comes to development – much like protected cities like Bath do. Development has to make as little impact to the natural area as possible, and often fit in with existing architectural styles. The building of toilet blocks alone will not solve the problems of litter and parking. The thought of making people pay to enter National Parks, such as in America, would probably go against the grain for most Britons, but how can designers and planners disperse traffic to avoid areas bottlenecked by parked cars? Solutions may be in the form of underground architecture. Underground car parks would make little impact on the countryside visually, and visitor centres on top of these could also provide the services required for visitors, and provide hubs for peak park rangers, who can educate us on how to enjoy the area without leaving a trace. There is however a fine balance between making the countryside more accessible, and making it commercial, which is where designers and architects have the greatest role to play.

Lockdown has shown to me the power that open space and natural beauty holds over us all, and highlighted the ways in which our National Parks are suffering

from their lack of means to support the wants of so many visitors. With thoughtful and sensitive design, designers, architects, and planners can help us all to discover what our National Parks hold, behind the impressive views. Design that gently nudges us away from dangerous man-made scars, that hold a façade of natural beauty, like the Blue Lagoon, and guide us towards more enjoyable and impressive areas, with space to exercise in the open countryside. Design-led development ought not to be limited to built-up areas, but to anywhere that large numbers of humans inhabit, if we are to have a fighting chance of protecting the environment that we are so lucky to have. ☺



p o t t y t a l k

Tracing the path of toilets and exploring their wider role in the urban environment

By Ru Quan Phuah

I.

For many of us, going to the toilet to relieve ourselves seems to be naturally ingrained into our very being, not something that we need to put much thought into. Interestingly, the word 'toilet' both meant the device and the room or space, where one performs the day-to-day excretion, defecation or other self-cleaning activities; or the act of cleansing in old fashioned terms. However, toilets have evolved in many forms in a meandering chronology throughout the ages, as we have seen changes in technology and social culture. The unity of different functions - washing, bathing, etc. - into one private room has made it a space that cannot be precisely or universally named. Today, toilets remain one of the fundamental elements in a building or in an urban context to sustain life.

In an article by Colomina and Wigley, they described the toilet to be a space where the hidden interior of the body comes into intimate contact with the hidden interior of the building, two plumbing systems temporarily connected. It is a space where the technology within the architecture is designed to remove all the foulness of the visual, odour and acoustics released from the body

and hide it from the world through intricate plumbing which connects to a larger system of the city. Hence, when a person enters the toilet, it is not to enter the smallest room in a building, but to enter a space, largely hidden but as big as a city. It just shows that toilets have a far greater impact on the urban context as much as on an individual scale.

Today, there seems to be many bad connotations attached to public toilets - dark, dirty, dangerous, damaged, and disgusting. The mention of public toilets in a conversation with friends brought out different nightmarish experiences that we have heard or seen happen. Dim flickering lighting, stains on walls and the toilet sit, risks of bullying, hidden spy cams and mugging, tampon-blocked toilet bowl and the list goes on. Going to the toilet to some is almost like a matter of survival – to survive the dangers, risks and unpleasant things. Due to this, discussion on toilets is often seen as a taboo, overlooking the many active roles that public toilets play in society. This essay seeks to explore and discuss the bigger roles of the public toilet through information I have gathered and some of my personal experiences, hoping to create awareness about provision of public toilets.

II.

Public toilets serve people who are 'toilet challenged'. For these people, including young children, old people, pregnant women, and patients with some medical conditions like Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), the urge to relieve themselves are often sudden or uncontrollable. As such, they rely very much on their frequent visits to the public toilets to avoid any 'accidents' in public. Easy access to public toilets allows them to enjoy outings and physical activities without being mentally stressed.

The lack of public toilets would result in their fear of leaving their house. Trapped at home, they spend most of their time isolated from the rest of society, increasing the danger of suffering loneliness. Loneliness is a serious problem not just in the UK, but in many countries worldwide as well as it impacts the physical, social and mental health of an individual, adding to the burden of their healthcare system. My personal experience of this was with my grandmother whose movement was restricted after she fell in the bathroom. Gone are the days of her busy routine, she became uninterested in going out even when we offered to accompany her. The fact is that

she was worried about the hassle of finding a toilet and did not want to trouble any of us. Hence, she spends most of the time dozing off alone in front of the television. Her sedentary lifestyle led to a quick deterioration of her health.

Another group that would appreciate the convenience of public toilets are parents of young children. I remember as a kid, whenever my family went to the mall, the first thing that my parents would do was to bring us to relieve ourselves. It is funny how they have this weird belief that once you are sorted with the toilet, the rest of the day will go on smoothly. When it became my turn to look after my 4-year-old cousin, I found that funny little practice surprisingly helpful too. Children may not be in full control of their bodies, to add on the dilemma, they often do not know how to express their needs accurately either. Hence, it would be a great relief if there were public toilets close by for the sudden urgent needs of a child. In the UK, with high streets being the main urban characteristics, rather than huge indoor malls, I can only imagine the hassle for parents to locate public toilets. In most cases, I believe parents will be forced to spend in cafés or eateries, so that their children can gain access to use the toilets.

Adequate access to public toilets encourages more active participation from communities that are 'toilet challenged', delivering peace of mind to their caregivers. No one should need to go through the anxiety of frantically looking for a place to relieve themselves.

III.

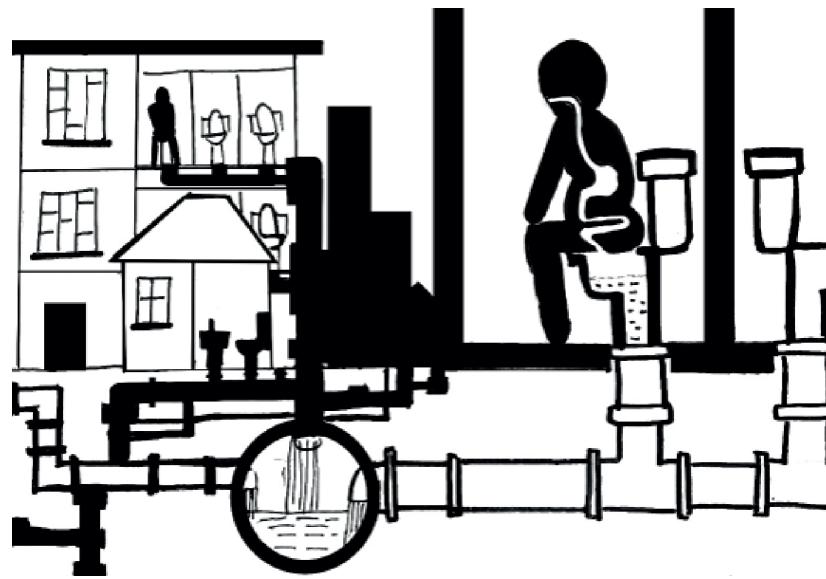
Public toilets are unique in the sense that it is both public and private in nature. Imagine a typical public toilet; you will first enter a common area, where you share the space with others to wash your hands or use the mirrors. As the

door shuts behind you, all noise is removed from the foreground, apart from the occasional sound of the hand dryers, flushing toilets and running water. From the common area, you find and enter an available cubicle. Immediately you are confined in your own private space, temporarily hidden from the outside world.

Under the safety of the closed-in space, you are in full control, finally able to be with just yourself, free to do your 'business' or just to clear your mind. I think most of us, excluding those with claustrophobia, would agree that the sense of security makes public toilets the perfect refuge from overwhelming social situations. Those who suffer from anxiety attacks and other mental health issues are even more affected by such scenarios than others. Toilets are where they can retreat to when they are under stress in public.

In her article, comedian Sofie Hagen shares the story of managing her own social anxiety by taking refuge in public toilets. She describes it as 'social angst', which usually happens after spending too long in a large crowd or a loud environment. In those situations, the toilet becomes her friend that helps find her cool. It reminds me how as a student, I like going to the toilets to spend some time away from work. The open-plan studio of 120 people can often be distracting, not even music shouting through earphones helps with everything that is happening around me. The toilets provide a comfortable place for me to refresh myself, the perfect temporary refuge to reflect and refuel.

For the significant homeless population in the UK, 'refuge' in public toilets takes on a different meaning. After enduring the wet and cold weather, hunger and even verbal or physical abuses from passersby on the streets,



A depiction of how when we are using the toilet, two systems – the body and the plumbing – are connected, and we become part of the complex network in the wider urban context that is largely hidden from plain sight

public toilets are by far their greatest comfort to look forward to in their daily struggles to survive. Temporarily sheltered from the often-unforgiving world, they could finally be at ease to relieve themselves or take care of their personal hygiene. It is the very least we can do to support the rough sleeper.

In London's Westminster area, a Local Democracy Reporter was told by rough sleepers that finding a toilet during the night is the most difficult. The reason being toilets in Victoria Railway Station or cafes near St-Martin-in-the-Fields are closed. Having nowhere to go, they resort to answering their call of nature in open spaces like Cathedral Piazza. The increase of such cases could lead to a higher chance of pathogen contamination due to unsanitary contact with faeces or urine, causing individual illness or potentially leading to an epidemic. During an outbreak of typhus in Los Angeles, the high-risk areas were immediately places like Skid Row where many homeless tents can be seen lining the streets. Consequently, the lack of public toilets for them to wash up further contributes to the spread of the disease. Besides, many rough sleepers could have already been suffering from mental health issues. The humiliation of publicly

urinating or defecating will only worsen their condition, leaving the homeless even more vulnerable. A simple provision of public toilets will not solve homelessness but could be a good place to start supporting them.

IV.

As part of the city's infrastructure, public toilets do not just serve the public's interest, but also reflect the civic development of the city, representing the very 'image' that the city or country would like to showcase to the world. Toilets are where all tourists will go before they begin or end their journey which explains why the UK Parliament's report highlights that the availability of toilets is ranked high in tourists' lists of reasons for why a location is worth visiting.

Provision of clean and comfortable public toilets will help enhance the tourists' overall experience of their trip, leaving them with a great impression of the city and the country. Among them, Japan is definitely one of the destinations that deserves to be mentioned. When travelling in Japan, there is no need to worry as tourists can easily find clean toilets in 24-hour convenience stores, fast food chains and even on public transportation. Other than their

availability, their toilets are also known for thoughtful features for additional comfort like automatic bidets, seat warmers or flushing sounds for shy users.

This brings us to why most airports or major transport hubs in the world often spend much money and effort to ensure that their toilets are clean, comfortable and welcoming. They want to give the best first impression when tourists arrive in a city or country. In the UK, there are many such commitments being carried out. At Heathrow's Terminal 2, newly-opened toilets facilities now utilise the Internet of Things (IOT) technology to collect data, analyse in order to further improve the customer's experience. The toilets are fitted with sensors that anonymously count the number of people who use them and also send alerts to cleaners after a certain number of people have entered to ensure the toilets are always in their best condition.

Investing over £4m to refurbish the toilet facilities at London Victoria station, Network Rail hopes to 'provide people with clean, modern, reliable and comfortable facilities that befit one of the busiest and most iconic stations in the country'. Although there are debates on the need

for the amount of money spent on expensive refurbishments, from another point of view, it shows that relevant parties are paying attention and recognising the important role that clean and comfortable public toilets play in enhancing visitor experience and boosting the tourism industry. The refurbishment in Victoria for instance received an overall satisfaction rate of 96% with responses via the i-Pad feedback buttons, a great indicator that the investment is worth its value.

V.

It is obvious that public toilets play a bigger role than just providing convenience for individuals. The provision of public toilets impacts a wide range of issues in our society, including healthcare, livelihood, housing crises, local economy and the environment. Being an integral part of the urban realm, the considerations for public toilets in the discussion of our urban policies and city planning will catalyse change towards a more inclusive and universally accessible society

Around the world, many countries have slowly started to recognise its significance and put emphasis on the allocation of public toilets in their development. In China, President Xi has been pushing for its 'toilet revolution', now with a target for 100 percent coverage of sanitary toilets in the countryside by 2030 while increasing and improving the public toilets in tourist areas. In India, Prime Minister Modi has declared that 110 million toilets have been built in just five years after launching his 'Clean India' Campaign in 2014. Clean water and sanitation has also made its way in becoming one of 17 Global Goals in the United Nations '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', with hopes to end all open defecation and achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and

hygiene for all.

As much attention as public toilets received everywhere else in the world, the opposite scenario is happening in the UK. A significant decrease in public toilets has been recorded in recent years, with it being described as 'deserts of inconvenience' from 'Wandsworth to Newcastle'. Most reasons are due to local councils with budget constraints cutting spending on public toilets. The taboo which surrounds the subject does not help to improve this situation. The reluctance to discuss such topics means that their increasing absence goes unnoticed or becomes less prioritised.

We need to start recognising that public toilets are a fundamental part of our lives, and there is no need to be embarrassed to talk about it. We need to work together to advocate for more provision of toilets, only then we are able to initiate discussion on wider issues that are related to public toilets. With the provision of public toilets, we can then talk about 'potty parity'- the disproportionate provision of cubicles for men and women, accessibility for the transgender community, tackling bullying in toilets with natural surveillance design, cultivating toilet etiquette and more.

We need to stop being ignorant and start celebrating public toilets more. We cannot just rely on the authorities on this issue. All of us have an obligation to be involved in the conversation in providing adequate public toilets. The more support we show for public toilets provides more incentive for our local councils to put more attention in improving our public toilets. The provision of public toilets plays a crucial role in determining the success of the urban realm. Clearly, the only question left for us is, do we really give a s**t? ☺

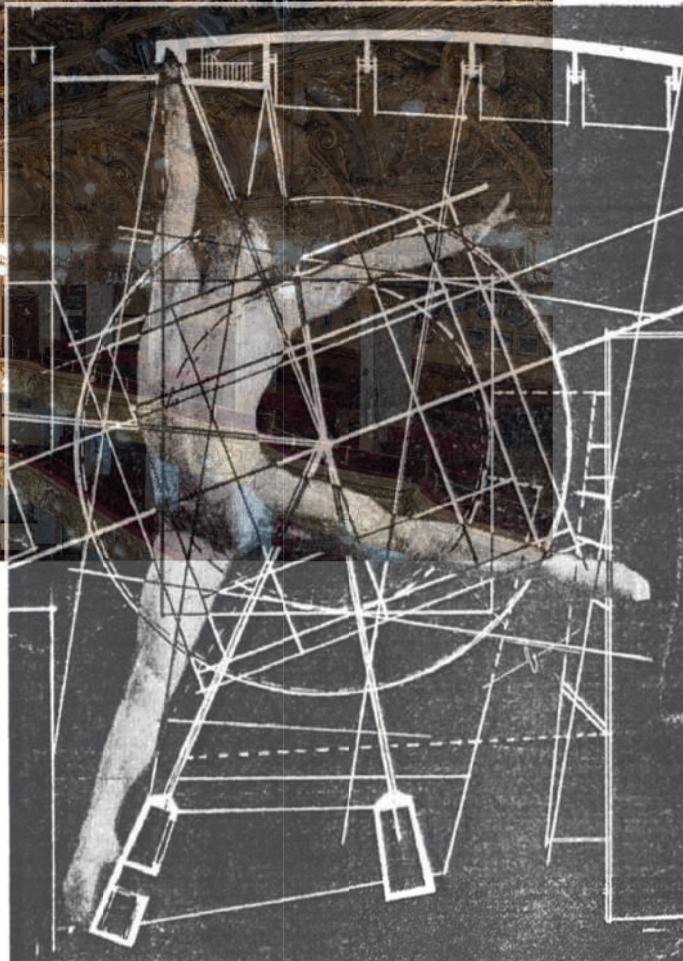
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Form Follows Motion

Tracing the Science Behind When Buildings Dance

You are dancing. The world spins around you. Wall and window merge to form a continuous rush of colour and light. You twirl, surrounded by onlooking marble columns and beneath the ornate gold ceiling. In this grand space, your emotions are heightened; your kinetic dance and the stationary architecture respond to each other. You realise your display of natural expression is being aided by the rooms organic forms. You are connected. How can this be?

By Tanya Chiganze

Modern science has made leaps in the effort to understand the human brain. A recent discovery impacting the study of architecture and psychology is that of mirror neurons. These cells in the nervous system allow us to feel empathy as they 'fire both when an animal acts and when the animal observes the same action performed by another.' While these electrical signals fire along our limbs, we are affected both physically and emotionally. Essentially, we are doing what we are seeing. Often, architects strive to design dynamic buildings, with a clear purpose and direction. Considering both this and our sensitive response to movement, it begs the question: if we can see buildings, are we copying them too?

In 1969, Hartmut Esslinger coined the phrase 'form follows emotion'. He saw architecture as the pursuit of creating experiences, with the use of solid materials as a means to this end. By prioritising emotions, we are left with buildings that exist in harmony with 'the innate reflex of our bodies to respond to rhythms'. Many builders know that a sprung floor is essential for a dancer, it amplifies a leap and cushions a

fall. In the same way, a decorated and textured room is also essential to the storytelling aspect of dance.

Within the ballroom dance world, events at Blackpool Tower are eagerly anticipated. There is a buzz of excitement at the prospect of dancing within such a beautiful space. This may be down to the interior's richness in shape and colour which encourages a greater sense of awe within performers. This heightened emotion may translate itself into more fervent movements and overall a more powerful performance. Similar to how music fills a room, the space itself speaks back and is absorbed by those on the dancefloor.

Going further, it may be that when we look at a curved wall, we curve too. When we see a surface going in one direction, we follow suit. With this, architecture has the biological power to affect how living beings move. In the same way that you would judge a dance partner's compatibility, we should design buildings that seamlessly partner the human psyche. By keeping that as a central ethos, not only will we live with more emotional fulfilment – we may do so while dancing.^①



[re]tracing the elusive path to our subconscious

By Maddi Gomez-Iradi (2020) marbling inks and acrylics on paper



Ever since I showed up to my first meeting in October 2016, PaperspACE has become an integral part, and evidence of, my experience at Bath.

All of the eight issues I have contributed to, from SEVEN to TRACE, two of which Michael & I have had the pleasure to curate for you, are a witness and a trace of our development as writers, architects and human beings.

This issue marks the end of our involvement in the magazine, as well as our adventure at Bath, but we are proud to leave our mark through PaperspACE.

We look forward to seeing what the future holds for PaperspACE, as well as the editors and writers to come.

All the very best,

Julia Korpacka

Editor in Chief of PaperspACE



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