

Architectural Association  
School of Architecture

Prospectus  
2023–24

Diploma Programme



AA Prospectus 2023–24  
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# Welcome

Welcome to 2023–24 at the Architectural Association (AA). These pages describe a wealth of pathways into architecture, one of the oldest professions. The AA has educated leaders in this field for well over a century, but we have always extended beyond the confines of our ever-evolving profession. The process of architectural qualification is long, and while our work may seem practical and even useful, architecture is also instrumental in shaping the wider contexts for everything we do. As a result, we need a much more complex understanding of the world if we are to contribute something meaningful to it. By cultivating broad curiosity and actively engaging with the environment around us, we can add some intelligent delight.

The AA provides a platform for new voices to be heard and new approaches to be tested. Located at 36 Bedford Square, the school sits at the heart of one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, and behind our black door is a space for experimentation by students and staff alike. This is a place to try almost anything, to take risks and to reckon with failure as well as success.

We come together within the school in both structured and chance encounters. The AA, like London, is a site for multiple, layered conversations that take place across a multitude of scales, from the intimate and material to the global and conceptual.

We make the space for collective action and welcome creative outliers, understanding that bigger and more urgent questions emerge from ongoing debate. The conversations that start here or in our Hooke Park woodland facility resonate worldwide through our community. They proliferate and are carried forward to the many international locations that our students and staff call home.

While we know architecture has the potential and the responsibility to shape the world for the better, we also understand that its definitions are fluid and the world we inhabit is increasingly changeable. The range of topics and methods outlined in this prospectus describe an area of study that is one of the very last comprehensive interdisciplinary forms of education. This equips students with the intellectual agility to embrace the unknown challenges that lie ahead. Our international and multi-generational community has the rare opportunity to support, promote and realise architectural ideas with the potential to effect real change.

All of this starts in our labyrinth of spaces in central London, whose scale obliges us to converse with one another. These spaces enable everyone to be heard. We come together in the bar and on the terrace, in the Lecture Hall and in the studios. Most importantly, we are in a public space. We are part of the city. There is no bell to ring, lock to turn or log to sign. Our door is open.

Ingrid Schroder  
AA Director



Julia Issler Richter, *Fluid Horizons*, DIP1, AA Dipl Hons, 2023.



Oluwademilade Oyeyinka, *Holy Ground*, DIP12, AA Dipl Hons, 2023.

# Introduction

The AA is the oldest independent school of architecture in the UK. It was founded in 1847 as a student-centred collective that aspired to radically transform architectural education. Since then, it has fostered an environment that encourages students to speculate without limitations, take risks with confidence and cultivate individual, radical research that shapes the future of the discipline. The identity of the AA is informed by the contributions of its students, through its structure as a participatory democracy and as a result of their critical engagement with cultural discourse in London and beyond.

Today, the AA comprises approximately 1,000 full-time students, 8,000 members, 290 tutors and 130 administrative staff. It occupies ten Georgian houses in central London – eight in Bedford Square and a further two on nearby Montague Street – as well as a 350-acre woodland site at Hooke Park in Dorset. The school offers a broad range of flexible, self-directed programmes that empower students and staff to challenge established methods within contemporary architectural education and professional practice.

Prospective students can apply for the Foundation Programme (AA Foundation Award in Architecture); the Intermediate Programme (years one to three of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of BA(Hons) in Architecture (ARB/RIBA Part 1); the Diploma Programme (years four and five

of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of MArch and the AA Diploma (ARB/RIBA Part 2); and nine Taught Postgraduate Programmes leading to MA, MSc, PG MArch, MFA and Taught MPhil awards, as well as the PhD Programme.

We also accept applications throughout the year for two RIBA Part 3 courses and a range of Visiting Schools that take place around the world, as well as a Summer School held at Bedford Square each July. Research develops elsewhere in the school within two AA Residences, Ground Lab and Wood Lab, which were established in 2019. Together, these courses, programmes and initiatives allow students from different backgrounds and with varied interests and ambitions to find their own path through the school.

The AA curriculum is enhanced by the Public Programme, which focuses on the unique opportunities and challenges of the present through a series of lectures, exhibitions, workshops, symposia and book launches, and by the Communications Studio, a media, publishing and graphic design studio. This year's Public Programme, which is free to attend and welcomes students, staff and the general public, will include exhibitions of the life and work of MJ Long, who was the architect of the British Library; *Chronograms of Architecture*, inspired by the diagrams of Charles Jencks; models of the many premises that the Warburg Institute has occupied

over time; and a multi-screen film project by Noemi Blager that looks at how we can do *A Lot with Little*. These exhibitions will shape themes for our termly lecture series, which this year will explore the gendering of space and objects, the role that smaller educational institutions can play in knowledge production and dissemination, and the practices that engage with social enterprise and promote environmental sustainability. This year, every unit and programme within the school will come together during Climate Matters week in Term 1 for a series of lectures, workshops and an exhibition that will encourage the AA to think collectively about how we, as architects, can mitigate our impact on the planet.

Publishing and cultural production are integral to AA life, and the school engages with a number of digital and print-based initiatives including the creation of new AA Publications that disseminate architectural discourse to a global audience; *AA Files*, the school's journal of record; the student-led *AArchitecture* magazine; and *AirAA*, a podcast and media platform.

## Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and Office for Students (OfS)

The Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture is a private Higher Education Provider with Taught Degree Awarding Powers. The AA is an Approved Provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and a Tier 4 Sponsor Institution registered with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). The AA is an Approved Institution and Affiliated Research Centre of The Open University (OU), UK. The OU is the awarding body for research degrees at the AA.

Our programmes, public events and publications exist alongside spontaneous discussions, unexpected encounters and vibrant exchanges that take place throughout the academic year. This confluence of activity keeps the AA in a constant transformative flux that permeates the spaces of the school, and the projects, ideas and ambitions of the students.



# Diploma Programme

MArch and AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2

Two years, full time

The Diploma Programme introduces students to the study of advanced research and design methods, and new approaches to practice. Throughout its history, the Diploma Programme has fostered some of the most innovative, challenging and progressive thinking in architecture.

As projects are developed within the Diploma Programme's year-long studio units, students work to improve their technical proficiency and engage with a critical agenda relating to the broader societal issues with which architecture intersects. Lively, informed debate permeates life in the Diploma Programme, inspiring students to develop rigorous, inventive design and research projects. This process allows students to find their voices as architects, but also offers a means of articulating ideas that they can carry with them into their professional careers.

## Diploma 1

### Prometheus: The Creative Life

Tutors:  
Miraj Ahmed  
Martin Jameson

#### Questions

**Creativity:** As we enter the era of AI, what scope is there to be 'creative' and how might new approaches to creativity be conceived?

**The Retreat:** How might we imagine new ways of working and living in the near future based on some form of withdrawal into nature?

**Materiality:** What values do we attribute to the physical and the substantive in response to the damaging consequences of modern life, such as extraction, waste and pollution?

#### References

**Prometheus:** A titan in Greek mythology who was said to have created mortals from clay, and who stole fire from the gods to give to humanity, bringing forth the arts, science and technology.

**The Modern Prometheus:** The subtitle to Mary Shelley's novel about a scientist called Dr Victor Frankenstein who gives life to a grotesque bricolage of human parts using electricity.

**Prometheus AI:** The marketing strapline given to the code written by engineers at Microsoft that uses ChatGPT by OpenAI to give artificial intelligence to the Bing search engine.

#### Places

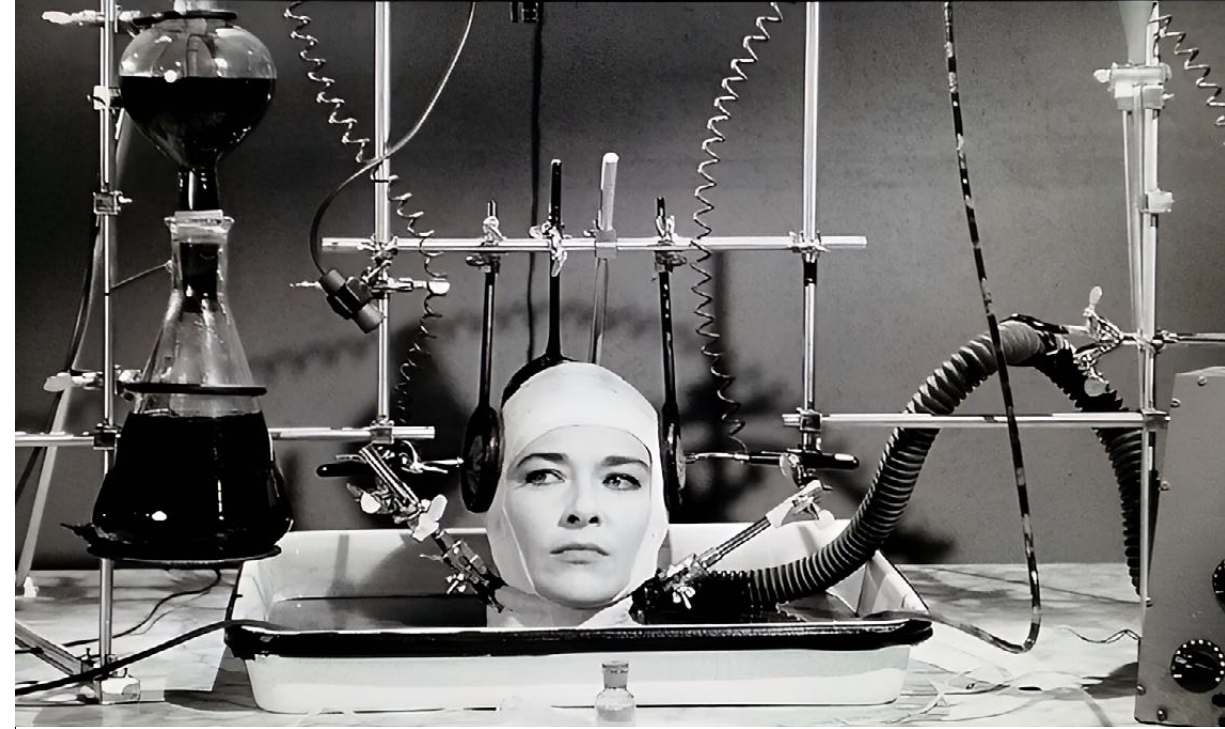
**Hooke Park:** We will make a series of working visits to the AA's woodland campus in Dorset to reflect on the forest, forms of withdrawal from the city and construction techniques.

**Finland:** The unit trip will be to Finland, where we will study the Finnish forest, glulam production at a leading manufacturer and the country's social architecture.

**Bedford Square:** We will spend more time in the workshop this year, making physical models using paper, card and wood, and creating drawings and time-based visualisations of space.

#### Coda

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) was conceived while she was cooped up in a house on the banks of Lake Geneva. Shelley was an early feminist and had eloped to Switzerland with her lover Percy Bysshe Shelley; the couple were staying, housebound, with Lord Byron during the cold, rainy summer of 1816. This retreat from the city and closeness to nature influenced the creation of the *Frankenstein* story. The idea of the 'retreat' will be a key reference as we develop collective research into new forms of creative life.



Still from *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, directed by Joseph Green, 1962.

#### Staff Bios:

Miraj Ahmed is an artist and architect who has taught at the AA since 2000. He is also an associate lecturer at Camberwell College of Art and was a design fellow at the University of Cambridge from 2006–14.

Martin Jameson is a partner at Serie Architects. He has an AA Diploma with Honours, a BA in Philosophy and Politics from the University of Oxford and an MBA from IMD, Switzerland.

## Diploma 2

### Reclaim the Commons: Where Physical Communities Meet Digital Activism

Tutors:  
Nick Almond  
Torange Khonsari  
Mehrdad Seyf

DIP2 will work collectively as a decentralised autonomous organisation (DAO). We will operate as a laboratory that investigates the discourse of New Commons (Hess, 2008) in conjunction with contemporary developments in blockchain technologies such as the metaverse, NFTs and peer-to-peer organisation, all from a perspective rooted in social justice. These two seemingly disparate frameworks – one focused on situated socially-engaged practice, and the other on abstract technology – converge in their shared emphasis on citizen control and systematic challenges to established power structures. The unit understands New Commons not in the normative sense of what society believes we all share, but rather focuses on how commonalities are constructed in neighbourhoods to create diverse communities of interest.

DIP2 is framed as a political project, and we will nurture a culture of collaboration. The unit will create a taxonomy of the materiality of commons, encompassing digital assets, physical objects (buildings), digital art and performance. We view these as cultural common goods: objects imbued with political agency that empower citizens to assert their own agency through them. In our laboratory, we will speculate in the digital world and test these speculations with our partner organisation Spheroid Universe. Concurrently, we will develop the physical commons in partnership with the London Borough of Islington, with input from the Design Council and UK government's Ministry of Housing and Communities. Our sites encompass a live project site in Archway, north London and the Spheroid Universe metaverse.

Students will build upon their own individual strengths to develop rigorous projects that unfold in both physical and digital realms and reflect the space between the two spheres. By mapping the conflicts, commonalities and gaps in knowledge between them, we will reveal why there is currently a disconnect between these practices in their respective industries.



Public Works, *Ministry of Common Land*, part of *The Garden of Privatised Delights*, British Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, 2021.

#### Staff Bios:

Torange Khonsari is cofounder and director of Public Works. She has taught at UMA School of Architecture in Sweden and the Royal College of Art, and is a visiting professor at Barbican and Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the International University of Barcelona. She was a member of the Mayor of London's Specialist Assistant Team, and advises the Design Council.

Mehrdad Seyf is a writer, director and interdisciplinary artist. He is a director at Public Works and was previously founder and artistic director of 30 Bird, an interdisciplinary performance company. He has curated three festivals at Cambridge Junction, and has been a visiting professor at Barbican and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Birmingham University, the University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University.

Nick Almond currently specialises in crypto and Web3 and is the founding director of FactoryDAO, building the next generation of DAOs as democratic forms of governance. He was previously the associate dean in learning, teaching and enhancement at University of Arts London – London College of Fashion. He is a physicist and has headed various postgraduate courses in the UK.

## Diploma 3

### The Living Ecology I: The Eternal Playfulness of Edifice

Tutors:  
Jonas Lundberg  
Andrew Yau  
with Ka Yu Chan

*'...three priorities – improving inclusiveness and diversity, shielding scientific integrity and policy relevance of IPCC assessment reports, and making the effective use of the best available science on climate change.'*

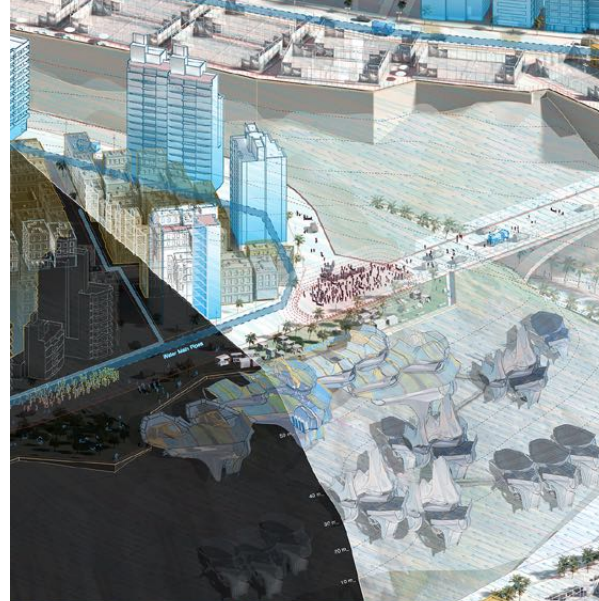
Jim Skea, Professor of Sustainable Energy, Imperial College and Chair of UN International Panel on Climate Change, 26 July 2023.

The Climate Action Tracker, an independent scientific analysis conducted by two research organisations, has estimated that global temperatures will increase by 2.7°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100. This is despite the commitments and targets established in the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and all UNFCCC Conferences. While global communities are compelled to move beyond greenwashing and take meaningful action, architects face significant

challenges to construct the built environment more sustainably and reform current practices of consumption, wastage and degradation.

This year, DIP3 will create lively architectural projects that offer respite from ecological anxiety and contain the potential to have lasting positive effects on the environment. The unit will propose new sociocultural incentives and practices that reclaim architecture's ability to reshape the future. Our goal is to develop forward-looking designs that foster playful experiences, and which can establish new relationships between ecological responsibilities, craft-based production techniques, spatial outcomes and transformations of urban environments and ways of life.

The unit will investigate adaptive, regenerative and radical architectural practices, and will create playful tectonics, interventions and experiences that are communicated through physical models and digital visualisations. Our ambitions are twofold: we will design spaces and modes of inhabitation that respond to their contexts, encouraging public engagement with the urban environment, and we will work in close collaboration with our direct neighbours – both human and non-human – to envision ecological wonders that enable new modes of coexistence. Join us in our endeavour to underline the importance of playfulness in living ecology.



Clockwise from top left:  
Wonho Lee, *Oasis of Ambience*; the work of DIP3 at *Projects Review 2023*, photograph courtesy Ka Yu Chan; Jocelin Chan, *Rush Hour*; Youngchae Ahn, *Homo Plasticus*.

#### Staff Bios:

Jonas Lundberg and Andrew Yau are members of Urban Future Organization, an international architectural practice and design collaborative. Urban Future has exhibited its work globally; the practice is currently working on architectural and urban projects in Europe and East Asia.

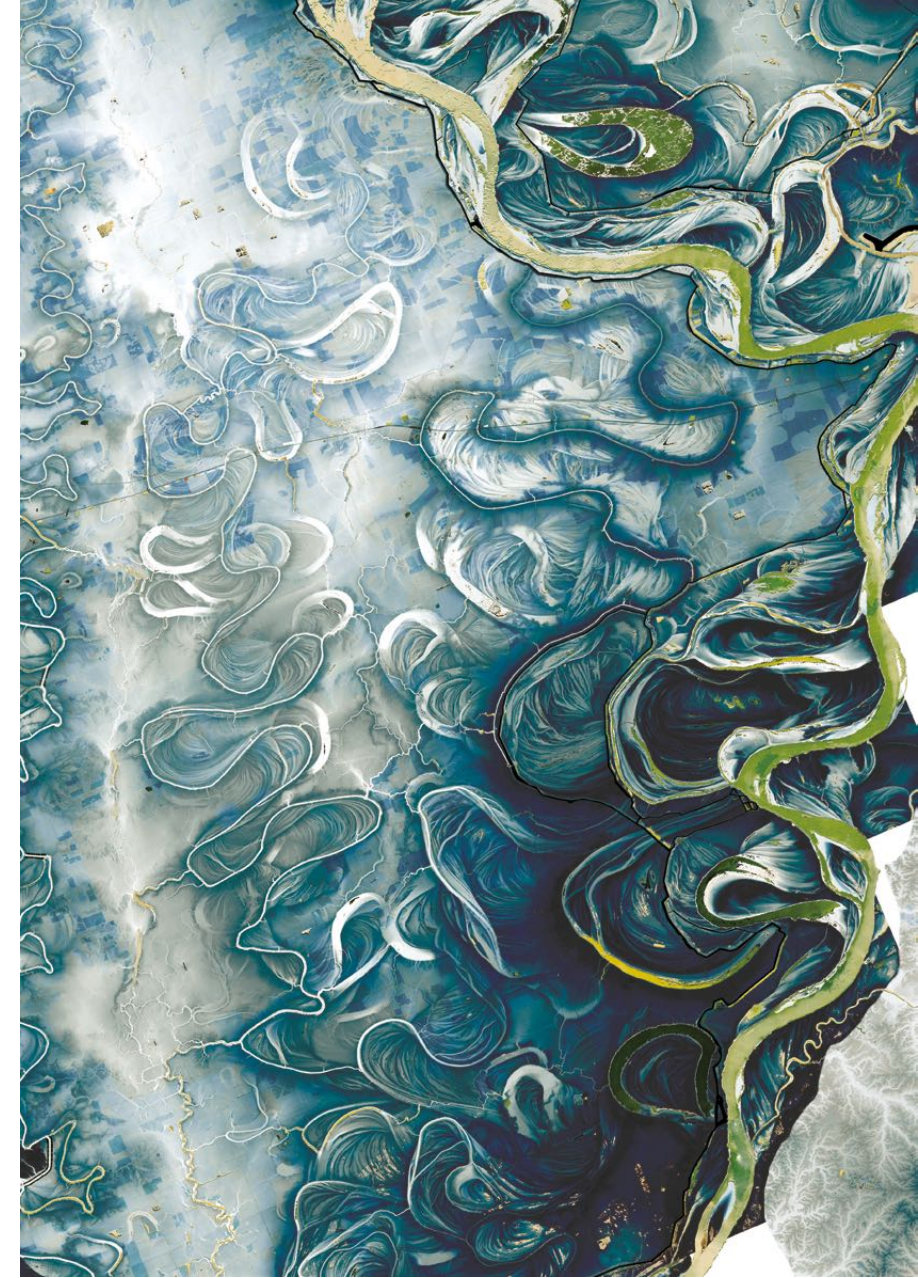
Ka Yu Chan is an AA graduate and has been involved in various programmes at the school. He is currently working on material-focused typological design projects and office publications at ACME.

In the depths of a small lake in Canada, isolated from the rest of the planet, scientists have registered a spike in plutonium isotopes associated with the H-bomb tests that took place in the early 1950s. The presence of these isotopes is a stark indicator of the rapid rise of the technosphere, the new component of the Earth System. It marks the beginning of the Anthropocene epoch, and the end of the Holocene – the long period of climate stability during which human civilisation developed.

The technosphere encompasses all technological elements that humans have produced. Its rapid rise has shaped industrial releases into the atmosphere and across all surfaces of the planet, the constrained fluxes of rivers, the transport systems that unfold on the waves and in the sky, changes to sea currents, and troubling extinctions. The technosphere is now of a similar magnitude to the biosphere. It is a system driven by its own dynamics. Its rise is a vigorous blink-of-an-eye geological event.

Gaia devices are structures designed to amplify the biosphere and counter the rapid expansion of the technosphere. They interact with upheavals in all elements and cycles of Gaia, the multi-centred living entity that shapes the earth. They generate anti-systemic interference in the explosive ripples of the technosphere. The rise of the technosphere disrupts territories, relations, networks, identities and practices; Gaia devices play a key role in the complex process of recomposing spaces in which to be human during the Anthropocene.

DIP4 engages with the forms of stratified energy, information and material fluxes that shape contemporary cohabitation. We combine the development and design of architectural solutions to address climate chaos with technologically-advanced spatial analysis, science and advocacy, in an inclusive environment that encourages experimentation.



Kelly Van Homrigh, *Debt Has No Beginning – Sediment Should Flux*. Multi-temporal multispectral composite image derived from Earth Observation data, detail. DIP4, AA Dipl Hons, 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

John Palmesino and Ann-Sofi Rönnskog are architects and urbanists. They are the founders of Territorial Agency, an independent organisation that combines contemporary architecture, science, art, advocacy and action. Territorial Agency is a leader in the

development of architecture's relation to the Anthropocene, with projects including *Plan the Planet*, *Sensible Zone*, *Oceans in Transformation*, the *Museum of Oil* and the *Anthropocene Observatory*. They are chief curators of the Lisbon Triennale 2025. They are the recipients

of the STARTS 21 Grand Prize of the European Commission honouring innovation in technology, industry and society stimulated by the arts.

DIP5 will work with the notion of the archive, with emphasis on non-Western methods of preserving memories and events. The unit will challenge the essential idea of what an archive is, questioning who it is for, what it keeps or discards, and what role it plays in preserving truths or ideals. We will consider the archive as a provocation, an ongoing dialogue and a site of reconstituted memories and spaces for worldbuilding.

The unit will establish a framework through which to examine how architecture can enable and catalyse different ways to archive both tangible and intangible materials. We will explore the intersection of the domestic, the idea of 'home' and the act of storing objects, histories and narratives. To challenge conventional approaches to archiving, we will consider the role of architecture to facilitate flexible and idiosyncratic methods of storing and documenting materials and memories.

The interplay between the personal and the public is central to our work. We will propose new ways in which archives can collect, display and disseminate knowledge, memories and stories. Our research is concerned with how different global cultures have approached the concept of the archive and how they have preserved memories, through methods ranging from oral traditions and the use of objects in ceremonies to the creation of myths and legends.

DIP5 will investigate the process of collection itself, focusing on how we extract and acquire the things we store. We will question how we perceive and interpret collected materials, considering inherited and borrowed influences upon these processes. Practitioners from a range of different fields will contribute to these investigations, and we will travel to places, spaces and collections that inspire conversation.

The unit will navigate between the pragmatic and the poetic, using conventional architectural methods such as drawing and large-scale model-making as well as more evocative forms of communication such as filmmaking and narrative-building. Our presentations will critique the formats architects use to communicate work in progress by exploring a combination of media and spatial propositions.



Still from *You Hide Me (The Colonization of African Art in the British Museum)*, directed by Nii Kwate Owoo, 1970. Image courtesy of Nii Kwate Owoo.

Staff Bios:

Nana Biamah-Ofosu is an architect, writer and director of YAA Projects. She worked on the 18th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice as a research assistant to the curator, was a tutor in the inaugural Biennale Architettura College and was co-curator and designer of *Tropical Modernism: Architecture and Power in West Africa*, the Victoria and Albert Museum's Applied Arts Pavilion.

Giles Nartey is an architect and moving image maker. His work references African craft cultures and investigates the potential of reconstituted fragments, objects, artefacts and rituals to reimagine territory as a political act. He is currently a design PhD candidate and design tutor at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL).

DIP6 explores ongoing transitions within urban contexts, experimental practices and design methods. The unit provokes debate about architectural culture and the architect's role as a provocateur of ideas. We redefine the core characteristics of speculative design that make ideas visible, traversing space and time while creating new project registers and testing grounds. This year, the unit will investigate the potential of 'lightness' to conceive and construct our worlds with economy, delicacy and precision.

This way of thinking can help us to transcend ideological extremes and contemporary fixations. The concept of 'lightness' might not only enable us to promote material circularity and urban metabolism, but could also reshape our perspective on the environment, time and entropy. However, we will not seek to dissolve and dematerialise architecture – instead, we will leverage its unique ability to relate intangible infrastructures to tangible forms. Our design briefs will indirectly respond to contemporary urban tensions, such as the weight of history versus the flow of modernity in the European city. We will reconsider our attachment to material structures and monuments, while reflecting on the impact of systems of production and communication.

We will delve into immaterial, diagrammatic and mediated aspects of our projects that enable us to maintain links with urban and cultural contexts, while moving away from conventional typologies and tectonics. Working on this meta-level of planetary imagination will empower us to reframe complex problems, generate hypotheses and test alternative urban futures. To achieve this, we will upgrade our tools to favour selective, loose and time-based modes of representation, as seen in diagrammatic models, hybrid drawings, films and animations. We will support our human imagination and intuition with artificial intelligence. This approach will allow us to generate impactful, effective, theoretically ambitious and technically resolved projects.



Verdi Tsui, *Ex-Urbia: Ghost of the City*, DIP6, 2022–23.

Staff Bios:

Maria Fedorchenko has taught at the AA since 2010, leading both Intermediate and Diploma Programme units, and has been involved with the History and Theory Studies programme, the Housing and Urbanism programme and the AA Visiting School. Previously, she has taught at UC Berkeley, UCLA

and the California College of the Arts. She is a cofounder of the Plakat Platform collective for architectural provocations and is a codirector of Fedorchenko Studio. She is also a founding partner, with Gleb Sheykin, of Karta Architecture Ltd.

## Diploma 7

### Fluid Territories: On Allocation and Negotiation

Tutors:  
Platon Issaias  
Hamed Khosravi  
with Georgia Hablützel

In *Discourse on Inequality* (1755), Jean-Jacques Rousseau states that ‘the cultivation of the earth necessarily brought about its distribution; and property, once recognised, gave rise to the first rules of justice; [...] a new kind of right: that is to say, the right of property, which is different from the right deducible from the law of nature.’ Therefore, in Western modernity, man-made law was introduced in a violent way. ‘Defined’ space is the result of complex power relations, and rights are never distributed equally during the parcellation of land, its allocation among individuals or groups and the regulation of communication between shareholders. Walls and enclosures are the spatial protagonists of this historical process and are enforced by laws that cover property, trade rights and maritime space, monopolies, reproductive rights, and multiple physical, bodily and mental exclusions.

Yet the nomadic trajectories embedded in space resist these forms of delimitation. They instead distribute human and non-human subjects according to their habits and virtues, within a fluid territory: a field that is not regulated solely by legislation but also by customs and rituals. Such space operates through temporary relations, negotiations and associations that are reinforced by commitment. Architecture in this context can be seen as a device that mediates power relations, redistributes rights, negotiates forms of belonging, choreographs rituals, collectivises use and establishes forms of care and co-operation. It becomes a multi-scalar field of forces wherein space, its subjects and forms of power distribution are intertwined. As such, it has the potential to generate forms of life that resist exploitation, extraction and exclusion.

In DIP7, we investigate architectural propositions that react to these spatio-juridical conditions and which perform on multiple scales. We create frames that capture, forces that trigger, lines that appropriate and lenses that make visible the conflicts between space, rights and subjects.



Giulia Rosa, *Fractura: On the Gaps in Space, Time and Regulations*. Digital collage, DIP7, 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

Hamed Khosravi is an architect, researcher and educator. He studied architecture in Tehran, holds a master's in Urbanism from TU Delft and IUAV, and gained his PhD from 'The City as a Project' programme at the Berlage Institute and TU Delft. He is the co-Head of the Projective Cities programme at the AA.

Platon Issaias studied architecture in Thessaloniki, Greece, and holds an MSc from Columbia University (GSAAP) and a PhD from 'The City as a Project' programme at the Berlage Institute and TU Delft. He is co-head of the Projective Cities programme at the AA, and practices with the research and design collective Fatura Collaborative.

Georgia Hablützel is an architect, researcher and AA graduate who was awarded the AA Prize. She is a member of the inaugural team of the Negev School of Architecture, where she is head of First Year and a lecturer in Visual Cultures. She also holds a teaching position in the Third Year at Bezalel School of Architecture.

The universal right to housing is under threat in large Mediterranean cities. Political instability in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region and the rising cost of living in Southern Europe have generated a socioeconomic crisis, resulting in a severe shortage of affordable housing. The situation has been exacerbated by a lack of policies and strategies from local municipalities, together with disengagement from the private sector. Economically vulnerable groups such as the young, the elderly and migrants have borne the brunt of these challenges, and are confronted with overpriced housing stock designed for nuclear family structures that do not meet their needs.

In response, DIP8 will develop new housing strategies and design solutions for inner-city areas with social networks, resources and opportunities in close proximity. Given the scarcity of resources and the escalating climate crisis, we will encourage the reuse of obsolete building stock rather than the development of greenfield sites. To do so, we will evaluate existing dormant or neglected buildings and seek ways to reconfigure them.

We will begin by analysing the typologies that exist within our chosen sites, using these insights to inform the development of new spatial arrangements. Our designs will negotiate the need for both shared and private space within each building, and we will place particular focus on transitional spaces between indoor and outdoor areas, such as staircases, thresholds, corridors, entrances, windows, doors, balconies and terraces. We will identify local material techniques that can reduce emissions and the environmental impact of our interventions in each specific context. Through this, the unit will generate a set of architectural proposals that encourage new forms of living within existing buildings.



Elisa Paneni, *The Multiple Courtyard: Exploring the Link Between Spatial Proportions and Human Perception*. DIP8, 2022–23.

#### Staff Bios:

Francisco González de Canales and Nuria Álvarez Lombardero are cofounders of Canales and Lombardero and Politics of Fabrication. Both hold a PhD and are coauthors of *Politics and Digital Fabrication: An Ongoing Debate*. Francisco studied at ETSA Seville, ETSA Barcelona and Harvard University, and worked for Foster + Partners and Rafael

Moneo. His publications include *Experiments with Life Itself*, *Rafael Moneo: A Theoretical Reflection from the Professional Practice*, *Rafael Moneo: Building, Teaching and Writing*, *Practice and Crisis* and *The Mannerism Mind*. Nuria studied at ETSA Madrid and the AA, and has worked for Machado and Silvetti Associates. She has taught at the University of

Cambridge, the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL), TEC Monterrey and the University of Seville. She is the author of *Arquitectas: Redefining the Practice*, and her work on gender studies in architecture and urban typologies has been widely published.

DIP9 focuses on the idea of universal free housing. Alternative ways of living and working are becoming more attractive as societies grapple with the repercussions of automated labour, increasingly unaffordable housing and the rising cost of living. To rectify this, we first need to address the institution of property and land ownership, as this is a major factor in the hyper-commodification of space that affects its affordability.

The unit aims to create a decommodified network of human-sized projects that avoid inflating the exchange value of space and which do not result in social segregation. We adopt a multidisciplinary approach that draws upon technology, social sciences and the principles of urban planning to produce new models of sustainable free housing outside of the private real estate market.

We will begin by examining case studies from diverse regions, and evaluating the effectiveness of the architectural strategies they employ to accommodate the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities. Each student will define their own site, identify recurring exploitative patterns of ownership in their chosen region and invent design approaches that challenge these patterns. Projects will investigate the economic feasibility, legal context, spatial organisation, materiality and adaptability of the structures they propose, considering their impact on residents' wellbeing, social cohesion and sense of ownership. Students will explore the challenges and trade-offs within such housing models by investigating their ecological implications and scalability, as well as considering their long-term viability and the potential benefits they can offer to society.

The work of the unit aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse around housing affordability, and to inform policymakers, architects and urban planners of the ways in which alternative housing models can address the urgent need to provide adequate, resilient shelter for all members of society.



Jake Williams, *An Alternative Model to Regeneration in Lewisham*, DIP9, 2022–23.

#### Staff Bios:

Taneli Mansikkamäki is an architect and educator. He works in academia and in his practice tm-a.xyz to promote sustainable affordable construction solutions, and his research explores design concepts that address urban housing challenges in relation to economic inequalities and climate change.

Max Turnheim is an architect and founder of UHO, a studio that focuses on modifying the distribution of space under current economic conditions. Alongside his practice, he teaches at the AA and at the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris.

Calvin Po is a strategic designer at Dark Matter Labs (DML) who explores institutional systems as sites of design for shaping built environments. He leads DML's work with the Scottish Government Land Commission on land reform, and works on legal personhood for a river and for FreeHouse, a house that owns itself.

London needs rethinking. Unconnected nondescript towers continue to rise in Nine Elms, the borough of Croydon is bankrupt, knife crime is rife and the Metropolitan Police is in desperate need of restructuring. London is changing as it always has done.

It is crucial to recognise that the city is not just a physical structure; it is also an active participant in shaping social interactions and experiences. The city's space is socially constructed, politically contested and deeply intertwined with social relations and power structures.

'So, what's next for London?' To find answers to this question, DIP10 will use the borough of Hackney as a testing ground.

The first move will be to choose a topic or a situation to dive in and experience the city first-hand. In this initial immersion, texts, notations and videos will be employed as tools to unravel and document the intricate nature of the city's space.

The first proposal will be to edit the city and to emphasise its narrative qualities. The editing of the collected media into a stand-alone film will generate preliminary speculations into potential changes that could be made to the city.

Building on this, the constructing process will aim to spatially adjust a part of the city within Hackney. A spatial proposal will bring together and adjust the layers of complex relationships that interact reciprocally within the city. At the architectural scale, it will transcend functionality to prioritise social relationships and cultural diversity, and a constructed situation will create a deliberately orchestrated event or setting to encourage active participation and provoke new ways of experiencing the city.

The final move will be to put together a book and a film that will integrate the work into the wider context of London.



Pierre Zebouni, *The Service Node Effect*, DIP10, 2022–23.

#### Staff Bios:

Larissa Begault (AA Dip, MA) is an architect and urbanist with extensive experience in design and applied research. She is a programme lead at Social Life and founder of Make Public in New York City, a consultancy that focuses on guiding and measuring the social impact of place-making initiatives.

Carlos Villanueva Brandt (AA Dip, ARB) is an architect and educator, and was awarded the RIBA President's Silver Medal Tutor Prize in 2000. A founder of NATØ, he challenges architecture's role in culture. His practice has designed projects from London to Khartoum. He is the author of *London +10*, highlighting Direct Urbanism.

In Ancient Greek, *taxidermy* means the arrangement of skins. In the 19th century, mythical creatures such as unicorns and mermaids were crafted using this technique to make alluring additions to cabinets of curiosities; today, taxidermy is practised to preserve beloved pets.

In his text on 'The Vanishing Organism', Robert Smithson coined the word 'detemporalising' to describe the process of transforming organic properties into 'solid objects that embody "ideas of time"'. In Smithson's eyes, cities can be a detemporalising landscape, and their architecture can embody notions of time, energy and pain.

This year, DIP11 will use taxidermy as a critical lens through which to observe London in its current state, and as an instrument for piecing the city together. The unit sees design as a way of embracing slowness and smallness in a rapidly changing landscape. We study the value of imperfections and the dysfunctional charm inherent in unplanned matters of the city, observing the post-colonial landscape as it is yet to recover from its industrial past. Current patterns of urban erasure, which result from neoliberal values, reduce all buildings to their superficial appearance. Whether new or old, they are living corpses – their souls hollowed out, their narratives and lives substituted with stuffed skins.

By revisiting the working methods of Aby Warburg and Colin Rowe, we will delve into London, letting the city retell its non-linear histories. We will begin the year by creating a London atlas in the form of a bestiary, capturing an enduring image of the city as it evolves. We will list vulnerable buildings and neglected places that could soon rot away, looking first to the contents of the 2022 Heritage at Risk Register, whose 631 entries span everything from collapsing roofs to rotting façades, structural monuments, places of worship, and parks and gardens. Our atlas will assemble the architectural skins of neglected 'pets' in the urban landscape.

Our endeavour goes beyond preservation to communicate values, in a similar manner to that of Jorge Luis Borges' *Book of Imaginary Beings*, which compiles imaginary creatures. The London creatures we describe could be monsters or architectural beings that demand love and care.



DIP11, *Un-London* mural installation, *Projects Review 2023*.

#### Staff Bios:

Shin Egashira is an architect, artist, educator and PhD candidate. He worked in Tokyo, Beijing and New York before coming to London to study at the AA. From 1990 he has taught at the AA and has run a unit since 1996. His artwork has been exhibited internationally, with the most recent solo show at Betts

Project in 2019. He has been an artist in residence at Camden Arts Centre and Bennington College. He has run the Koshirakura Landscape Workshop in Niigata and the AA Maeda Workshop in Tokyo, London and Hooke Park, and is also a visiting professor at Tokyo University of Fine Arts.

## Diploma 12

### The Thingness of Things: The Magic and Power of Objects, Materials and Spaces

Tutors:  
Inigo Minns  
Manijeh Verghese

‘Stories are a kind of thing, too. Stories and objects share something, a patina... Perhaps a patina is a process of rubbing back so that the essential is revealed.’

Edmund de Waal, *The Hare With Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010).

Nothing is neutral. All objects, materials and spaces, whether natural or artificial, contain power: the power to enrich, to corrupt and to transform lives. In our cities and homes there are countless objects and spaces that trigger biases, urging us towards certain actions while subjecting us to their will. Similarly, in the landscape there are materials primed for extraction that distort how we treat the natural world. These things are not passive – they are objects of reverence and are energised with values that we cannot ignore. How do we, as architects, choose to engage with this potent material world? When faced with these imbued elements, do we disrupt them or do we nurture their potential by nudging them towards richer, more diverse worlds?

We will work with film to identify *memento mori*: resonant objects that signal dying cultures. We will make a series of pilgrimages to mystical sites where we will engage directly with these objects of power, exploring the spaces they occupy to expose their influence over rooms, landscapes and realms. We will create design strategies that reveal how these artefacts can herald new beginnings as well as endings. We will then work directly with architectural outputs by making 1:1 material interventions situated in real scenarios, to create new, charged things designed to stimulate change.

DIP12 is interested in political practice at a time of systemic crisis. We operate as architect-tellers to communicate new futures through design, material, imagination and fabulation. Using objects as our talismans, we navigate the intersection of conflicts that arise in relation to climate, inequity and social divisions. We search for ruptures between power structures, communities and belief systems, and develop strategies to rise from the ashes and build new things, spaces, cultures and worlds of our own.



Violet Yue Cao, *Performing the Auras of Objects*, DIP12, 2022–23.

#### Staff Bios:

Inigo Minns works with architecture, performance, film and curation. His recent film work includes Ridley Scott's *Napoleon* and working with Disney on architecture, landscape and storytelling. He is Head of Media Studies at the AA, is an external examiner on the Curating Contemporary Design course in Kingston University and has taught on the Political Architecture course at KADK, Copenhagen.

Manijeh Verghese is a designer and curator. She was co-curator of *The Garden of Privatised Delights*, the 2021 British Pavilion at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, and was the interpretation specialist for the new South Asia Gallery at the Manchester Museum in partnership with the British Museum. She is Head of Public Engagement at the AA and is currently one of the Mayor of London's Design Advocates.

## Diploma 13 Islanding

Tutors:  
Elena Palacios Carral  
Lola Lozano Lara  
Sabrina Puddu

### *Practice in Space*

Recycling, Repairing, Maintenance, Nursing, Feeding, Restorative Justice, Gardening, Expression, Playing and Gaming, Archiving (what else?).

### *Islands*

Contamination and purity, danger and safety, scarcity and lavishness, exclusion and retreat, sovereignty and subordination, flows and enclaves, dependency and self-sufficiency, danger and cosiness, domestication and ferality.

Experimental, self-governed communes that challenge or reject the established social order have flourished in the real world as well as in the imaginations of gurus, activists or architects. These intentional communities generally form within well-defined social and physical boundaries, centre on ideas of housing and aim to nurture unity based on shared beliefs. DIP13 will propose new ways in which these communities can wilfully come together, looking beyond the sole provision of housing and live-work spaces that aspire to be self-sufficient. We acknowledge that collectivity can be based on conflict rather than on idealised notions of harmony, so will move away from shared ideologies and instead view shared practices as incubators of togetherness and commitment.

This year, we will develop architectural ideas for communities situated on an island. Islands are constructed environments in which practices emerge or are imported and transfigured. Modernity has solidified the small island as a symbol of isolation, serving purposes of production, military objectives or carceral logistics to exile an unwanted population. However, islands also embody notions of pleasure and retreat. Identity and localism have emerged as byproducts of islands' isolation, overshadowing these places' pre-modern history when they functioned as crossroads for diverse cultures, practices and ideas, and fostered cosmopolitan communities of locals and outsiders.

Our projects will involve acts of repair, restoration and retrofitting existing structures, infrastructure or fragments of the landscape found on the site. Self-directed briefs will allow us the freedom to pursue various goals, from the construction of a collective farm to the establishment of a new republic. Our proposals will be conceived within a time framework that considers not only their completion but also their inception and continuation. Architectural models will be our primary medium and will act as a palimpsest for actions of inhabitation, adaptation and modification.



Yushi Li, *The Dream of the Fisherwoman* – 2.

### Staff Bios:

Elena Palacios Carral is a director of the design and research practice Forms of Living and holds a PhD from the AA on the studiofication of the home. She teaches architecture at various UK universities, and is currently working on a research project about the life and work of the architects MJ Long and Ruth Rivera Marin.

Sabrina Puddu is an architect and researcher. Her main research project, Territories of Incarceration, focuses on the spatial paradigms of incarceration. She is a design fellow at the University of Cambridge and coleads the Visiting School Asinara at the AA.

Lola Lozano Lara is an architect and researcher. Her PhD research focuses on domestic space and typology through the notion of proximity in Mexico City. She teaches architecture at several UK universities and is a director of the design and research practice Forms of Living.



DIP15 will explore how groups of homes can function as social laboratories of ideas. Domestic space will become both a resource and a generative tool: by colliding 99 homes with emerging economies and an exploration of landscape, we will create new settlement patterns, revitalise existing conditions and offer a direct response to the climate crisis. With a focus on both adaptive reuse and transformative behaviours, the ordinary will slip quietly into the unfamiliar.

We will document and reinvent village structures, exploring their nature, components and character. By understanding the role they play within a regional system, we will promote collaborative exchange, build resilience and generate places of innovation. The rural home can become a framework for alternative ways of living through a combination of playful invention, systems and storytelling. We will collapse scales, blur the distinction between object, room and landscape, and use the architectural plan to create spaces that nurture co-operation, shift across seasons and embrace contradictions.

This unit designs buildings. In Term 1, we will explore domesticity across scales of permanence, among them climate, infrastructure and soil. We will generate new village forms through iterative design exercises, multiple media and systematic shifts of perspective that enable us to rethink the relationship between home and landscape. In Term 2, we will assess the environmental consequences of our proposals, exploring permaculture principles and the deep plan. Our approach will look at material choices, supply chains, regeneration, the envelope, water and mobility systems. In Term 3, we will investigate implementation strategies that combine an understanding of local specificities with ideas of extension, multiplication and domino-effects.

Each project will follow its own investigative path and develop its own visual language. Together, our projects will form a series of studies that offer ideas on how to inhabit the rural, create places of economic and cultural possibility, and restore a relationship to the land.



Milton Avery, *Clear Cut Landscape*, 1951.  
© Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS),  
New York and DACS, London 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

Lawrence Barth is co-head of the Housing and Urbanism Programme at the AA. He has consulted internationally on urban strategy for cities, architects and landscape architects, and has led planning and design projects. He has lectured and published on urbanism, politics and sociology, and has a special interest in housing.

Lucy Styles is an architect and partner at SANAA. During her time at the practice she has completed the Serpentine Pavilion, the Louvre-Lens museum, Fayolle social housing and La Samaritaine, among other projects. She also has a small design studio and an interest in the rural landscape.

The Greek government is in the process of relocating nine government ministries from their current locations in the centre of Athens to a single location at an abandoned industrial site in the suburbs of the city, creating a 'Government Park'. The project presents two design challenges: the masterplanning and design of the new government ministry buildings and park, and the renovation and creative reprogramming of the ministries' vacated buildings in the centre of Athens. Last year, DIP16 gave form to the new national government complex. This year, we turn our attention to the existing institutional buildings that will be left behind.

The unit asks: how can we work with existing buildings and fragments of the city? How do we resist the market forces of tourism that will fill this space with more hotels and Airbnb rentals if left unchecked? How might we transform the hollowing out of the city centre – seen by some as a contemporary tragedy – into a narrative of productive urban catharsis and re-engagement?

We will move beyond tired tropes of 'adaptive reuse' by mobilising the idea of *spolia*: fragments of a building that are reappropriated for another meaningful use. At their worst, spolia recklessly destroy or culturally appropriate, but at their best they suggest nuance, accumulated meaning and evolution. We propose the idea of *City Spolia*: objects, buildings, systems, resources or memories that are understood in close relation to their urban context, and which are reclaimed and redeployed in meaningful and strategic ways.

As we redefine the architecture of the abandoned city fragment, we will also recalibrate our politics. To be political is to engage in the matters of our *polis*: its education, its healthcare, its environment, its culture; its past, present and future. To become relevant again, the abandoned institutions of our city must empower citizens to participate in the continual remaking of the *polis*.

The 'Government Park' project connects to a tangle of ambitions and fears that resonate globally: austerity, gentrification, tourism, national identity, public space, decarbonisation and digitalisation. DIP16 will engage in these urgent conversations, asserting its own opinions and provocations in a real-world, real-time design challenge.



Neiheiser Argyros, *City Spolia*, 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

Xristina Argyros and Ryan Neiheiser are codirectors of the architecture practice Neiheiser Argyros, whose projects range from furniture and exhibitions to buildings, landscapes and urban masterplans. They have been teaching in both the Intermediate and Diploma Programmes at the AA since 2014.

Bryce Suite is an architect and associate at Diller Scofidio + Renfro, where his work focuses on international public and cultural projects.

The work of DIP17 focuses on two primary concerns: developing architectural form with the capacity to engage with the corporeal, and critically rethinking the politics of architectural conception and production.

This year, we will continue to explore the implications of material production and manufacturing processes in architecture, with a particular focus on technique. The design and production of architecture is increasingly dependent on supply chains, tools, automation and digital workflows; in response, the unit will examine how architecture is made and re-evaluate its ethical, socioeconomic and environmental footprint. We will work to develop an understanding of how technique mediates our relationships with others and our environment, by examining philosophical theories, historical research, industrial archaeology and contemporary debates.

DIP17 will focus on peri-urban contexts, unravelling the intricate network of tensions and power dynamics present in various locations. Students will investigate a place of their choice where the past and the future intertwine, where the interfaces between urban expansion and agricultural land are in conflict, where there is pressure on natural resources, or where the territorial implications of socio-economic inequality are evident. Exploration of these places will enable students to identify key issues that form their thesis question, which they will investigate by design throughout the year. We will disentangle the role that ideology plays in our understanding of these places by examining the role of discourse and the diversity of worldviews expressed within it. Our work will emphasise the importance of the input of marginalised voices when envisioning new modes of coexistence within complex environments. We will create speculative briefs in which different levels of social interaction and forms of occupancy influence the design of architectural spaces.

We will imagine creative architectural strategies that are both sophisticated and democratic. Our project briefs will evolve through fieldwork, photography, documentary filmmaking and model-making, and we will blend the use of both analogue and digital media to negotiate between the realms of imagination, creativity and the real world.



Malek Pierre Arif, *Dormant Infrastructures*, DIP17, 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

Dora Sweijd and Theo Sarantoglou Lalis are the founders of LASSA Architects, an architecture studio with offices in London and Brussels. LASSA operates at the intersection of architecture, landscape and art. They have taught at the AA since 2009, as well as teaching postgraduate studios at Columbia University (GSAPP) and Harvard University, and undergraduate studios at Chalmers University of Technology and Luleå University of Technology in Sweden.

## Diploma 18 Sweet (and Sour) Homes

Tutors:  
Aude-Line Duliere  
Juliana Muniz Westcott  
James Westcott  
with Rotor

Developers are planning to build tens of thousands of homes on the UK's formerly sacred green belt land, in agglomerations branded as 'garden villages' – mini utopias of suburban life transplanted into rural contexts, typically bolted onto the edges of villages.

Architects remain absent from this building boom, sidelined by developers who follow their own pattern books. But they may also be oblivious to the enduring attraction of the spaces and the lifestyle on offer. These picture-perfect houses fulfil dreams of home ownership, and the UK's tiny supply of energy efficient, affordable and spacious homes pushes buyers (and developers) into the countryside.

It will take a strong constitution to spend time understanding these brand new, super-generic rural developments. But we shouldn't look away if we care about the bulk of new structures currently being built, their long-lasting effects on their inhabitants and the landscape, and the inexorable consumption of materials and their associated greenhouse gas emissions.

DIP18 will lead design-driven investigations into these developments. The unit will explore how we might push the design of rural developments into new or old directions by employing used materials, and in doing so we will reveal material procurement chains that developers are struggling to fulfil. We will think about energy and infrastructure as ways to trigger new forms of living together more collectively. Could we create new authenticity beyond the thinly-cladded pastiche façades? Could we make these places feel rooted, rather than car-dependant grids dumped onto the landscape to fill a quota? Could we understand what makes a good home, and how hamlets can foster commoning and inclusivity?

We will begin by exploring two tracks simultaneously: the salvage yards still plying their trade in rural areas, where remnants of vernacular materials might still be found, and the cookie-cutter rural developments that many people are angry about but where many others end up living and loving.

By nudging the tip of the iceberg – by addressing design – might we be able to influence planning laws and economic structures to incentivise more sane ways to live in the countryside?



'The Holden', one of the 22 home typologies that compose a new housing development on the outskirts of Oxford. It is replicated 11 times across the site and is adjacent to a new Aldi supermarket. Both the store and the development were built last year and encroach upon Oxford's Green Belt. Photograph by Aude-Line Duliere.

### Staff Bios:

James Westcott is editor of *Back to the Office* (NAi010) and of a forthcoming book with Rotor on suburban homes made with reused materials in post-war Belgium. He edited the Rem Koolhaas/AMO books *Elements of Architecture* and *Project Japan*.

Juliana Muniz Westcott is an architect and urbanist who completed her MArch at the AA. She is a PhD candidate at Central Saint Martins, focusing on participatory democratic processes in city planning in the face of the climate crisis.

Aude-Line Duliere is an architect, researcher and educator. She contributes to academic, cultural and built projects that consider our relationship to resources, labour and supply systems. After graduating from Harvard University (GSD), she worked at David Chipperfield Architects. She has collaborated with Rotor since 2016.

Rotor is a co-operative design practice that investigates the organisation of the material environment.

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, colonisers, missionaries, fortune-seekers and slaves left Europe, Africa and Asia for the mysterious ‘Americas’. There, some escaped or found themselves stranded beyond the fringes of empire and its institutions, technologies and rationalities. Metaphysically marooned in strange new worlds, these castaways were cared for and fed by people who had dwelled in the continents’ forests, deserts and jungles for millennia. Thousands of radically different ‘reality islands’ existed – each as enchanting as they were terrifying to newcomers. Each possessed its own languages and methods employed to reconstruct its architecture and its world.

In places such as present-day New Mexico or the Amazon basin, colonisers and missionaries began to ‘syncretise’, adapt and transform their own architecture and ways of life in response to their encounters. They learned from situated rituals and architecture that included the participation of the human and non-human, the living, the dead and the not yet born – all of whom depended on one another for their survival and happiness.

Conversely, indigenous communities in what is now Mexico faced a choice between assimilation into the European political, economic and socioreligious system or death. To preserve their ways of life, they constructed a fleet of ingenious ‘trojan horses’: ways of nesting or hiding their forms of ritual and practical knowledge inside the apparatus and architecture of the colonisers’ system. Since then, these indigenous practices of intuitive, participatory building and recovery of reality have evolved, but they remain under attack.

This year in DIP19, we invite you to design new syncretic types of architecture in which multiple practices, forms of life and reality can overlap, coexist and flourish. Your architecture of alternate reality must be strategically nested inside of, or allowed to flow over, the dominant hegemonic reality that otherwise seeks to confine and abstract, destroying more autonomous, situated and plural possible worlds in the process. We want to create architectures of transition that carve out spaces for alternative realities, so that we might happily let go of the one which is already, irretrievably slipping away.



Non-Typological Architecture, *Tan Anitguo como los Volcanes*, 2023.

#### Staff Bios:

Brendon Carlin practices architecture, research and writing. He teaches undergraduate, masters and PhD students in London and Vienna, and leads the research practice Non-Typological Architecture.

James Kwang Ho Chung is an architect, researcher and educator who teaches at the AA and the Royal College of Art. He leads a London and Seoul-based design and research practice called Therapeutic Forms and Practices.

*Theme: Architecture and Power*

Architecture organises territories, utilises resources, influences behaviours and reproduces culture. As such, it has historically served as a tool for conquest, subjugation and exploitation, and has been a pivotal instrument in the representation and exertion of power. Yet, numerous examples propose a radically different understanding of architecture: one that offers protection, solidarity and mutual care, and which contributes to the distribution of resources and knowledge.

Diploma 20 explores emancipatory methods, traditions and examples of architecture, and aims to construct an atlas of alternative ways to perceive the world around us. The unit focuses on the interplay between collective subjects and modes of production, and investigates how different objects, structures, techniques and forms of representation can construct a shared foundation from which individuals can identify with a collective, and collectives can establish a presence in a territory. We believe that the current political, economic and environmental crises can only be tackled by empowering forms of life that operate outside of the dominant order.

*Method: Archive and Montage*

Students will choose, observe and engage with a collective subject and its territory. Each will use a range of media, including texts, drawings, models, images and films, to construct an archive whose contents define their field of enquiry and their position within it. We will use montage as a method to articulate the meaning held by our archives, and will connect our collective subjects with architecture and the territory through analogies, juxtapositions and genealogies.

*Paradigm: The Collective Studiolo*

DIP20 regards the *studiolo* – traditionally, a small room dedicated to study – as a paradigm of the relationship between architecture, knowledge and power. The unit will harness the potential of this archetype by reimagining it as a shared common. As such, the *studiolo* can become a platform for the emancipation and representation of collectives that strive for radical change in the way we understand and inhabit our planet.



Unknown author, *Flammarion Engraving*. Coloured by Raven. From Camille Flammarion, *L'atmosphère: météorologie populaire* (Paris: Hachette, 1988), p 163. Original caption: 'A missionary of the Middle Ages tells that he had found the point where the sky and the earth touch...'

Staff Bios:

Gianfranco Bombaci is an architect, holds a PhD and is a founding partner of 2A+P/A. He is an associate lecturer at the Royal College of Art, directs the Interior Design BA at the IED in Rome and is the editor of *Design and Anthropology* by Gian Piero Frassinelli.

Matteo Costanzo is an architect and founding partner of 2A+P/A. He is a cofounder of *San Rocco* magazine and has contributed to several international periodicals and publications. He has taught architecture and design at institutions in Europe, and is an associate lecturer at the Royal College of Art.

Davide Sacconi explores buildings, cities, production and research through designs, exhibitions, books and educational projects. He holds a PhD from the AA and is an associate lecturer at the Royal College of Art. He edited the books *Interior Tales*, *The Supreme Achievement* and *Savage Architecture*.

## Diploma 21

Towards the Weird Heart of Things:  
Building joyful, disruptive, protopian  
creative practices within an age  
of permacrisis

Tutors:  
Ivan Morison  
Ju Row Farr

This is a practice-focused unit. DIP21 will build individual, joyful, subversive creative practices by translating direct encounters with spaces, people, nature, emotions and events into work. In a period of permacrisis during which our connections to lived experience are weakened, we can rebuild them through hopeful practices and acts. We will explore scenarios that foster spatial and social reconnection, with sensitivity and delight.

The unit will operate as a situated social practice, and our work will culminate in crafting physical spaces of connection. Our efforts will focus on building and sustaining a creative flow of inputs and outputs, refining this into projects that express each student's individual practice within a broader tapestry of collaborative work. This will manifest as a social sculpture that draws on networks of relationships, conversations, ideas and shared creative bravery.

While some practitioners focus on creating escape routes from dystopias to the promise of utopia, we will instead dwell within the process of protopia: active engagement in improving the present. The unit will seek out nuanced encounters in social and spatial contexts. We will examine architectural moments of interaction and question how matter, sculptural space, light and time are employed within them. We will explore wild places. We will pursue beauty and experience the fine arts, religion and ritual. We will search for purer forms of subtle connection within digital spaces. We will look at therapeutic spaces and question our relationship to the different stages of life and death. We will look for joy within all these contexts. We will build our understanding of their circumstances and find ways to incorporate them in our own creative outputs.

We acknowledge that everyone is unique and will explore why we are creative and what purpose it serves within our lives, channelling that understanding to build a sustaining, lifelong practice together. The unit encourages divergent approaches and agendas, and will explore the importance of difference and the creative potential of neurodivergency within our group.



Building joyful creative practices: small and large humans inhabit bear, koala, rainbow, alien, abstract and unidentified ways of being, led by Cecilie Gravesen as part of the PDAS envisioning weekend, 2022, Møn, Denmark. Photograph by Ivan Morison, shot with medium format Kodak Portra 400 film on a Hasselblad 503cx.

### Staff Bios:

Ivan Morison is an artist whose work is often site-specific and collaborative, existing as one-off events, social projects or large-scale installations and buildings in public spaces. His research focuses on how we navigate the violence of change in individual and collective contexts. He is a tutor of sculpture at the Royal College of Art and a Visiting Professor at Uniarts Helsinki, Finland.

Ju Row Farr is one of the founding artists of Blast Theory, and has been making interactive art for 32 years. She is interested in how we navigate the world, and how we make spaces and experiences that reflect and stretch us. She is currently working on autobiographical and non-fiction writing about memory and dementia, and has lectured at the Royal Academy, OCADU in Toronto and UCLA.

Living less definitely, we are entangled with a world that is no longer only about ourselves but a multiplicity of dependencies that traverse *more-than-human* dimensions. To draw *with* – involving technologies, species and climate emergencies – is to uncover the ecologies and intelligences of living *with*.

The unit draws to form companionships with more-than-human agencies in space and time, and across different conditions of existence, by proposing that sites are environments, materials are variables and constructs are operatives. We will explore forms and processes of codrawing with materials and energies that change in time; with instruments that respond to micro- and macro-actors and factors; with emergent habitus and forces of destruction; with land, weather, geophysics and planetary sciences; and with possibilities of symbiosis and metamorphosis. These tactics form the basis of the unit, guided by Gilbert Simondon's conditions of threshold, code, limit and information, and by Bernard Stiegler's negentropy and noogenesis.

Our investigation begins with a process of *drawing from* to establish a body of research and a thesis position that reveals gaps between the promise of improvement and blind spots in a field of information, such as drawbacks and damages. We will follow this with a process of *drawing out* precedents of techno-ecological apparatuses, to propose alterations and new responsive interventions which will lead to proposals for architectural operatives that can function as environments contingent to more-than-human conditions.

The initial context of our *drawing with* is the coastal, military and ecological site of Orford Ness on the Suffolk coast in east England, where we will develop acts of drawing to test and alter (e)co-environmental relations through immersive residencies and parasitic interventions. This entanglement will be further expanded in the polemics of *sit(e) with me*, where we continue to question more-than-human conditions by encountering the fragility and resilience of the Faroe Islands. Experimentations in these environments will form the basis of students' architectural propositions pertaining to ex-bodies that incorporate the instruments and implications of our earlier drawing exercises. Each student's final thesis will manifest through a combination of atlases, manuals and enactments of *drawing with*; species of spaces of ecological entanglement; instruments of metamorphosis; material assemblies for resilient defence; and uncanny adaptations, as buoyant response to climate changes – all with the pleasure of (un)prediction.



Pierre Huyghe, *Untitled (Human Mask)*, 2014. © Pierre Huyghe.  
Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

Staff Bios:

Doreen Bernath is an architect, theorist, executive editor of *The Journal of Architecture*, a trustee of SAHGB, and cofounder of ThisThingCalledTheory and Translocality. She teaches within the History and Theory Studies, PhD and Taught Postgraduate programmes at the AA and is head of the AA Visiting School Urbanity from the Ocean.

Ivana Wingham is an architect, academic and winner of the A' Design Award. She has taught design and research on BSc, MArch and PhD programmes at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL) and at the universities of Brighton, Greenwich and Manchester. She is the author of *Mobility of the Line: Art, Architecture, Design*.

# Core Studies and Electives

Core Studies is part of both the Intermediate Programme and the Diploma Programme, and is a suite of compulsory course requirements that are central to the study of architecture. Its lectures, participatory seminars and workshops are designed to develop expertise in four key areas:

- Environmental and Technical Studies (ETS)
- History and Theory Studies (HTS)
- Architectural Professional Practice (APP2)

Environmental and Technical Studies (ETS) offers a complete and coherent technical training that provides students at all stages of their architectural education with the capacity to materialise their ideas, concepts and ambitions. History and Theory Studies (HTS) includes courses that develop historical and theoretical knowledge related to architectural discourses, concepts and ways of thinking through writing. Architectural Professional Practice (APP2) develops and expands on the themes encountered in practice with students in their final year of the Diploma Programme.

## Electives

The Elective courses are available to Fourth Year Diploma Programme students and extend the scope of Core Studies. These courses address a wide range of areas of enquiry, and provide insight into broader creative practices, interdisciplinary processes and new technologies.

The Environmental and Technical Studies (ETS) programme enables students to materialise the ideas, concepts and ambitions that develop in the work of the units, and furnishes them with the knowledge necessary to make informed design decisions. This is knowledge with a purpose: wisdom.

ETS invites creative collaboration with the material demands of individual unit agendas, and centres on a series of detailed discussions with experts in the fields of architecture and engineering. These lectures engage a wide range of disciplines and cultivate a substantial base of knowledge, which students go on to develop through case studies of contemporary fabrication processes, constructed artefacts and building processes. These case studies encourage critical reflection and invite experimentation with different ideas and techniques. Students acquire practical knowledge and develop a set of principles through which they can negotiate the technical requirements of construction in unforeseen futures and unpredictable contexts. The programme fosters an awareness of architects' responsibility to contribute to sustainable and responsible practice in the future.

Lecture courses form a portion of each year's requirements. During the Fourth Year, case studies, analyses and material experimentation are undertaken alongside a selection of required courses that ensure each student explores a range of different structures, materials and environments. The contents of the lecture courses prepare students for the major technical project that they must execute in the Fifth Year.

In the Fifth Year, students undertake a technical Design Thesis: a substantial piece of individual work that is developed under the guidance and tutorship of ETS staff. The Design Thesis synthesises the technical and architectural agendas that arise within the design unit, and develops through case studies, material experiments and extensive research and consultation, enabling students to make informed design decisions that embody their aspirations and ideas. The aim of the Design Thesis is to integrate the ETS5 work with that of the design unit as much as possible, supporting it with additional, specialised information through seminars, lectures and research trips.

ETS reinforces the plurality and variety of the Diploma Programme by adapting the requirements of Design Thesis to each individual unit agenda. To achieve this, the syllabus of the Fourth Year is purposefully loaded with more information, enabling students to then apply their knowledge more freely in the Fifth Year within their final designs.

ETS staff guide students along a trajectory of discovery and growth as they develop their individual projects. The programme remains committed to a speculative approach to teaching and has extended its scope to include new courses, seeking to effect change in the way we work and research, and to catalyse new ideas and processes beyond the predictable. This greater emphasis on speculation goes hand-in-hand with a more intense engagement with the environment, responding to the challenges that confront the environment's future by reconceptualising the ways in which it is currently approached. The programme aims to create a seedbed for the development of well-informed, responsible and innovative architects and designers who are equipped to improve the global environment through their work.

## Fourth Year

### Sustainable Urban Design

Tutor:  
Ian Duncombe

Tall buildings are a defining feature of major cities' evolving skylines worldwide, but can they contribute to a more sustainable future, and what role does environmental engineering play in their design? This course aims to answer these questions by imparting the fundamental knowledge needed to design tall buildings. We will consider these structures in an urban context, and will examine the strategic considerations defining their form, the impact of climate and environmental factors, servicing strategies and various approaches to low-energy and sustainable design. Students will apply the principles learned from the course by developing a concept for their own tall building.

### The Third Skin

Tutor:  
Wolfgang Frese

This course addresses the functions and considerations inherent in envelopes or façades. Since humankind has been able to build, the primary concern of our structures has been to provide shelter and protection. A building's envelope has thus been both ambiguous and multi-tasking: forming a filter for various environmental conditions whilst also acting as a building's 'face', expressing its function as well as the sociocultural status of its owner or occupier. Today, façades are often multilayered environmental performers that communicate on multiple levels with a building's occupiers and the outside world. Sessions will provide a technical overview of the main components of envelopes and façades, exploring the technologies that enable them to respond to variable climatic conditions.

### Digital Ecologies

Tutor:  
Francesco Anselmo

The aim of this course is to rethink the relationship between human and machine in the context of architecture, using networks as a metaphor through which to study the emergent properties of organisms and their relationship to different ecologies. Through tutorials, workshops and hands-on lab sessions, students will design and prototype a range of interactions using digital tools and techniques, from physical programmable microcontrollers to machine learning systems in the cloud. As their final outcome, students will create an interactive, cloud-connected physical computing system that addresses a new mode of interaction or information-gathering in the context of the built environment.

### Light and Lighting

Tutors:  
Giulio Antonutto  
Vittoria Lenzi

This course explores the symbiotic relationship between architecture and light, considering how processes of reflection, refraction and absorption can be used to determine the quality of light in a space and to enhance the experience and emotional response of the user. The course aims to develop students' understanding of the qualities of light, while providing the physical and computational tools to explore and validate design ideas. Lectures and discussions are accompanied by physical experiments and software tutorials, as well as individual and team exercises.

### Timber and Hybrid Structures

Tutor:  
Bola Ogunmefun

Timber and hybrid structures are complex systems providing strength, stiffness and stability to buildings; architects must understand structural principles in order to design buildings that respond to challenging design briefs and site constraints. This course explores the opportunities offered by timber and hybrid forms of construction which have recently gained a newfound popularity within the building community. Sessions will address the creation of sustainable structures and the assessment of embodied carbon, and students will apply their understanding of these subjects to real projects, exercises and workshops.

### Material Systems 2.0

Tutor:  
Nacho Martí

The course provides students with an ability to understand and design systems of different scales in the context of architecture. Each lecture will focus on systems at a particular scale – material, building, neighbourhood, city and territory – to develop a working methodology to analyse elements, interconnections and behaviour, enabling students to make informed design interventions. Concepts such as behaviour, emergence, self-correction, information flows, feedback loops, inputs, outputs and stocks will be introduced, and the course will demonstrate how systems thinking can be used in architectural design to make sense of the dynamics and interconnected realities that surround us.

## Responsible and Responsive Materials

Tutors:  
Giles Bruce  
Tom Raymont

The materials specified by architects embody a complex system of resource extraction, transport, assembly, in-use operation, disassembly and disposal. This journey over the lifecycle of a material, from cradle to grave, can result in a significant cost in both resources and energy. This course explores how architects can evaluate 'responsible' materials and their implications in responsive building design. Students will evaluate traditional and contemporary materials and develop critical tools for informing design decisions in their studio projects.

## Integrated Problem Solving

Tutors:  
Arthur Coates  
Richard Keys

Why do some buildings give us everything we want, but seem so effortless? This course explores a technical approach to integrated problem solving. We will develop multilayered solutions to challenging briefs, focusing on the technical complexities involved and questioning how these can interact with and drive design processes. Students will be asked to interrogate previous solutions, then redeploy and modify materials and technologies in response to a brief.

## Antidisciplinary Integration

Tutors:  
Xavier Aguiló  
Anna Mestre

In contemporary architectural design, systems have become highly fragmented and independent. This course focuses on the integration of all requirements of architectural design into one antidisciplinary system that encompasses orientation, construction, light, structure, water, MEP, energy efficiency, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, environment, thermal inertia, radiant systems, circularity and many more, with the aim of reducing the environmental impact of the building and improving the comfort of the user. Sessions will study successful contemporary projects, and participants will be asked to analyse, challenge and apply new strategies in an existing pavilion.

## Low Carbon Tectonics

Tutor:  
Cíaran Malik

In response to the climate emergency, we need to design architectural forms which emit less carbon during their construction and over the course of their lifetimes. This course explores the use of low carbon structural and façade materials to create new architectural forms. Whole Life Carbon Assessment is used as a tool to examine architectural materials and construction, in use and at end of life. Students will explore combinations of materials to provide the structural, foundational, thermal and moisture barriers required to create equitable architecture.

## Der Lauf der Dinge

Tutors:  
Aude-Line Dulière  
Lena Emanuelsen

Under current regulations and in the quest for standardisation, the ruling model for sourcing materials in architecture relies heavily on virgin resources travelling vast distances to feed an industry that often seeks the new, the easy and the cheap. This course takes the current specification and detailing of a specific building component as its point of entry. Students will develop an understanding of the status quo and explore ways of facilitating the reuse of this material, by experimenting with possible building applications and developing reversible assembly techniques.

## Acoustics Today

Tutors:  
Laura de Azcárate

Acoustic design enables architects to investigate new ideas, sustainable construction techniques and materials. This course explores the creative possibilities of acoustic design and analysis to enhance the holistic experience of architectural space. We will start by exploring what acoustic design is, introducing its basic concepts in relation to digital fabrication, and will conclude with two workshops conducted by architects and acousticians to encourage collaboration between disciplines from the beginning of the design process.

### Between Digital and Physical: Realising Design

Tutor:  
Pablo Zamorano Mosnaim

This course will explore the relationship between computation and making in practice. We will use built case studies to highlight how technology, craftsmanship and ingenuity can come together, enabling innovative design processes to realise designs. Students will gain knowledge of integrated processes, and will be challenged to rethink the use of an ordinary object or process and to reprogramme it to become a novel artefact, revisiting the idea of the master builder as the master hacker.

### Of Itself So

Tutor:  
Patricia Mato-Mora

This course provides students with an understanding of vernacular traditions as lively, fluid and creative processes that respond to ecological, technological and cultural changes. Seminars and lectures will interrogate relevant case studies from a variety of building traditions, and will present a gamut of manufacturing techniques that could form the basis of new vernacular intelligences through mis- and re-appropriation. Students will propose innovative material systems based on these traditions' low-impact adaptation to the land and the materials that can be sourced directly from it, deploying digital tools in novel ways that broaden the spectrum of material finishes and applications.

### Singular Artefacts

Tutors:  
Joana Gonçalves  
Anna Font

While the simulation and prediction of a building's performance is now commonplace in architecture, the integration of this data has yet to develop into a design opportunity beyond problem-solving. This course seeks singular artefacts: pieces of architecture that result from synergies between environmental variables and design solutions in various cultural and climatic contexts. Students will design a transformation of a selected artefact that contributes to the development of a novel architectural agenda, through physical and digital modelling.

### Resilient Details

Tutor:  
Juana Horcajo Rubí

Our environmental surroundings have become more unpredictable as climate change causes rising sea levels, raging wildfires, landslides, drought and heatwaves. As a result, many existing buildings no longer provide adequate shelter from this changing environment. This course focuses on how structures can be designed to anticipate the unpredictable and to adapt as their circumstances and contexts evolve. Students will look beyond aesthetic characteristics to consider how buildings can become more adaptive and intuitive in response to shifting climatic conditions.

### Endless Forms Most Beautiful: Designing and Engineering Complexity

Tutors:  
Adelina Koleva  
Vincenzo Reale

Complexity in architecture and the built environment can refer to the intricate interplay of various elements such as geometry, scale, material, context, traditional and innovative techniques, the rules of physics, and the principles of engineering. To fully realise an architectural vision without compromising on the essence of an idea, architects need to be able navigate this interplay of elements. This course explores how to approach the design of complexity from the perspective of structural design, from basic theory to advanced computational processes. We will use case studies to explore how basic structural theory has been coupled with innovative technologies to solve complex briefs, and students will develop their own studies and create a complete prototype design.

## Fifth Year

### ETS5 Design Thesis

Tutors:  
Xavier Aguiló, Francesco Anselmo, Giles Bruce, Javier Castañón, Laura de Azcárate, Anna Font, Joana Gonçalves, Alan Harries, David Illingworth, Jisoo Hwang, Sho Ito, Omid Kamvari, Nacho Martí, Patricia Mato-Mora, Tom Raymont

Fifth Year students develop a technical Design Thesis under the guidance of Javier Castañón and the Diploma ETS Staff. Tutorial support and guidance is also provided within the design unit. The central interests and concerns of the work may emerge from current or past design work, or from one of the many lectures and seminar courses students have attended in previous years. The Design Thesis synthesises the technical and architectural agendas that arise within the design units, and is developed through case studies, material experiments, extensive research and consultation.

### Digital Explorations

Tutors:  
Jisoo Hwang  
Sho Ito

This software clinic offers an opportunity for participants to explore critical narratives and digital tools for architecture and design within the framework of the ETS programme. Tutorials will provide a support platform from which students can experiment with digital tools and strengthen their technical skills through the simulation and modelling of a range of environments, structures and materials, allowing them to detail and embed these elements within their projects. The aim is to enable students to articulate technical aspects of their work through digital platforms and produce speculative scenarios in relation to a specific project. Sessions are open to participants from the Second to Fifth Years, and students are encouraged to attend as many as they wish.

## ETS Projects

ETS Projects are a series of workshops that introduce environmental and technical research to students in the Second to Fifth Years. Individuals from across the school come together to explore a common theme, which is formulated as a research question.

### ETS Project 1: Terra Ignis

Tutor:  
Patricia Mato-Mora

Ceramic traditions have developed a vast body of material and haptic knowledge. This project investigates the potential for this knowledge to be implemented in the realm of material fabrication for architecture. Terra Ignis will appropriate the process of *mokuhanga* woodblock printing, embedding its creative process into a systematic procedure that can be translated into the fabrication of architectural components, measured for tolerance in accordance with industry standards.

### ETS Project 3: AA Systems Lab

Tutor:  
Francesco Anselmo

This year, AA Systems Lab will become a ‘full-scale laboratory’ to gather evidence about the environmental conditions, energy use and carbon dioxide emissions of the AA buildings. By developing a distributed physical sensing network and cloud infrastructure for simulation, processing, analysis and visualisation, we will create a real-time virtual representation of the AA buildings that will form the basis of our response to climate and ecological emergencies. Participants will design, build and code all the components of the system, from sensing nodes to simulation models and the dashboards used to understand how the building performs.

### ETS Project 4: AA\_Sensorium

Tutors:  
Karl Herdersch  
Kelvin Kaifung Chan

AA\_Sensorium operates as a think-tank. It opposes the inheritance of questions, opting instead to explore the plurality and proximity of complex systems of thinking, writing, broadcasting and technical construction to pursue alternative modes of knowledge within the context of synthetic environments. In contemporary commercial spheres, such spaces are branded ‘digital twins’. With the participation of the school community, the AA\_Sensorium will publish and present its research on the next phase of the incorporated global city.

## Staff Bios

Xavier Aguiló is an engineer and international managing director at SOCOTEC. He is a tutor at Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art, and lectures on postgraduate courses at Zigarat. He is interested in sustainable architecture and singular structures, and in integration between technology and architecture.

Francesco Anselmo has studied architectural engineering and lighting design in Italy and Sweden. He holds a PhD in Environmental and Building Physics and has worked at Arup for more than 15 years as lighting designer, interaction designer and smart building specialist. He has recently joined Google to develop open-source standards and digital tools for the built environment.

Giulio Antonutto is a lighting designer. His portfolio encompasses architectural lighting design, applications of digital technology, broadcast lighting, lighting masterplans, daylighting and environmental design. Currently, he holds a leadership role at Arup in London, heading the Computational Design Skill Network and the Digital Disruption initiative.

Giles Bruce is an architect. Currently director of A-ZERO architects, he has previously worked in Ireland, Norway and the UK. He studied at UCD, Ireland, and graduated from the AA's Sustainable Environmental Design programme in 2007. He has taught at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL), the University of Nottingham and the University of East London.

Javier Castañón is the Head of Environmental and Technical Studies and the Diploma Master for the course. He has degrees from the University of Manchester, the AA and the University of Granada, and has taught at the AA and other schools in the UK, as well as in the US. He is the director of Castanon Associates (London) and Castañón Asociados (Madrid).

Kelvin Kaifung Chan graduated from the AA Diploma Programme in 2022 and leads the development of technical infrastructure for Antumbra.xyz, an alternative media publishing platform. He has worked in Hong Kong as an architectural designer and in rapid software development.

Arthur Coates is an associate engineer at London Structures Lab. His research focuses on the use of technology within the construction industry, and on promoting net zero carbon design. He is also vice chair of the IStructE's Structural Futures Committee.

Laura de Azcárate is an acoustic designer, architect and founder at Soundscape Studio, which specialises in sustainable architecture and acoustic design. She holds an MArch from San Pablo CEU University and an MSc in Environmental and Architectural Acoustics from London South Bank University.

Ian Duncombe is a board director at chapmanbdsp, a building services and environmental engineering consultancy. He cofounded bds in 1995 and has worked on projects in Europe, the Middle East and Africa including 30 St Mary Axe (the 'Gherkin'), the World Trade Center in Abu Dhabi and Britam Tower in Nairobi.

Aude-Line Dulière is an architect. She holds an MArch from Harvard University (GSD), worked at David Chipperfield Architects and has been part of the development team at Rotor Deconstruction in Brussels. She was the recipient of the 2018 Wheelwright Prize.

Lena Emanuelsen is an architect and AA graduate. She is a cofounding member of Becoming X, a crossdisciplinary design and research practice working on projects between the UK and Norway. She also teaches architecture at Kingston University.

Anna Font studied architecture in Barcelona and holds an MArch from Harvard University (GSD). She is currently a PhD in Design candidate at the AA and has worked in architectural offices in Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Boston and Tokyo.

Wolfgang Frese became a furniture maker before he studied architecture at the Arts Academy in Stuttgart and received a master's from the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL). He has worked at Atelier One Engineers and Alsop Architects, and is now a senior project architect at AHMM.

Joana Gonçalves is a researcher, design tutor and consultant in environmental design. She studied at the University of Rio de Janeiro and at the AA, and gained her PhD from the University of São Paulo. She also teaches at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL) and at the University of Westminster.

Alan Harries is a director of Integration Consultancy, supporting architects such as Hawkins/Brown, Purcell and Peter Zumthor. He has 15 years' experience in sustainable building and energy design, development, implementation and post-occupancy evaluation. He has a degree and PhD in engineering, is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a member of the Energy Institute (MEI).

Karl Herdersch operates across architecture, world systems analysis, communications and computation. He graduated from the AA Diploma Programme in 2022 and founded the alternative media publishing platform Antumbra.xyz. He has worked for David Chipperfield Architects, Joseph Rykwert, and in independent film and television production companies in London.

Jisoo Hwang is an architect who graduated from the AA Diploma Programme with Honours. She has worked for architectural practices including Rogers Stirk Harbour+Partners and Hopkins Architects, and is interested in the translation of architectural concepts into tangible space.

Sho Ito is an architect and founder of Studio ITO. He graduated from the AA and has worked for Kengo Kuma, Richard Rogers, dRMM and AHMM across the commercial and residential sector. He is currently a First Year Studio tutor at the AA, while running a third year studio at the University of Westminster.

David Illingworth is a chartered structural engineer working at AKT-UK. He studied civil and structural engineering at the University of Sheffield.

Omid Kamvari is an architect and founder of Kamvari Architects and HOM. He has worked for practices including Foster + Partners, Make Architects and SOM. He directed the AA Visiting School Tehran, Baku and Muscat, and teaches at the University of Brighton.

Richard Keys is an architect and founding director of ByOthers. His practice focuses on redefining the role of architects within the sector and how they can better integrate with industry and the construction process.

Adelina Koleva is an architect, computational designer, BIA technologist and data scientist. She currently works as a computational designer at Bryden Wood and has taught at the Rice School of Architecture in Houston. She graduated from the AA's Emergent Technologies and Design programme.

Cíaran Malik is a structural engineer, teacher and regenerative designer. He studied engineering at the University of Cambridge, trained as a teacher at the University of Buckingham and studied regenerative design at Regeneration Institute. His work focuses on low carbon and socially just design that improves biodiversity.

Nacho Martí graduated from Elisava School of Design in Barcelona and the AA. He founded his design studio in 2004, and his projects have been exhibited, published and won awards internationally. He is a First Year Studio tutor at the AA and is head of the AA Visiting School Amazon.

Patricia Mato-Mora studied architecture at the AA and materials at the Royal College of Art. She works alongside artists and architects to realise large-scale projects while practicing independently as an artist. She leads the AA Visiting School in the Sonora Desert, teaches Media Studies and has taught in the Intermediate Programme at the school.

Anna Mestre graduated from the Polytechnic University of Barcelona and holds a master's in Project Management in Building and Urban Planning from the Professional Association of Technical Architects of Barcelona. She currently works at BOMA in Madrid and has taught at the IE School of Architecture and Design.

Bola Ogunmefun is a chartered structural engineer and graduate of the University of Birmingham. He is a cofounder of Tisserin Engineers, working on research-led design to promote low carbon solutions and social value for communities. He has taught engineering and architecture at UCL, Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art.

Tom Raymont is an architect and director of Arboreal Architecture. He graduated from the Diploma Programme at the AA and worked with Eric Owen Moss Architects in Los Angeles and Asymptote in New York before cofounding his own practice in London. He is an associate fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Vincenzo Reale is a chartered structural engineer and architect. He holds a master's in structural engineering and architecture from the University of Bologna and an MSc from the AA. He has worked with architectural and design practices, including Zaha Hadid Architects and Antony Gormley Studio, and is currently senior structural engineer in the Specialist Technology + Research group at Arup.

Juana Horcajo Rubí is an architect and an AA graduate. After working for several architectural practices including Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Hopkins Architects, she is currently a façade engineer at Atkins.

Alexandra Savtchenko-Belskaia graduated from the AA and works as a landscape architectural assistant, researcher and writer. Prior to studying architecture, she gained a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland, codirected an artist-run gallery and exhibited in New Zealand and Australia.

Pablo Zamorano Mosnaim is an architect and is head of geometry and computational design at Heatherwick Studio. He graduated from Universidad Central in Chile in 2004 and holds an MSc from the Emergent Technologies and Design programme at the AA. He has practiced in Santiago, Chile, New York and London.

The primary aim of History and Theory Studies (HTS) is to assist in the process of creating graduates who are independent, critical and inventive. To do so, the course must consider many aspects of architectural culture and discourse that are not directly addressed in design work.

Firstly, students need to not only understand but take a view on cultural and political questions that involve architecture such as ecology, housing and widespread inequality – issues with which it is imperative that architectural intelligence intervenes. Secondly, there are those questions that stem from within the architecture itself: the nature of contemporary practice, the possible career routes for trained architects and the responses of the profession to particular social issues and questions of public taste. Both dimensions form a critical component of the discourse at the AA and its translation of cultural issues into architecture. These are the principles around which the HTS courses operate throughout the school.

In the Diploma Programme, HTS offers a selection of specialised courses. In the fourth year, students are required to select two courses. In the fifth year, there is an option available either to take one course or, alternatively, to pursue a thesis; interest in this option must be registered in the fourth year. The thesis enables students to concentrate on a particular area of interest and, through regular supervision, to develop a more advanced piece of work.

### Afrorevivalism in Abeyance

Tutors:  
Richard Aina  
Álvaro Velasco Pérez

While we are beginning to witness a global appreciation of West African culture – namely through its music, artworks and cuisine – West African architecture is still largely underrepresented and underappreciated, and rarely inspires new forms of representation. Within this context, we posit the term ‘Afro-regressionisms’ in recognition of a trend that easily remains trapped in the lingering museification that clings to such cultures. We also acknowledge Afrofuturist attempts to bypass past trauma in utopian speculative escapes, yet we question these efforts’ tangibility. The course proposes and explores the concept of Afrorevivalism, grounded in the rich traditional socioreligious spiritual and constructive principles of specific African ethnic groups.

### Reimagining Global Modernism(s): Architecture and the *Long Sixties*

Tutor:  
Guillermo Arsuaga

This course will critically reassess the Eurocentric perspective in modern architecture, focusing on the 1960s – a time when alternate modernities flourished in the Global South in the wake of independence movements. Sessions will examine the dichotomy within these modernities, asking whether they were an epistemic imposition by the Global North, or instead tools of liberation for the newly-formed nations of the Global South? The course navigates the intersection of postcolonial and decolonial theory, race and gender studies to delve into the paradoxes of modernity, with an emphasis on the transnational and collective dimensions of ‘global’ architectural modernities. We will explore themes of solidarity and transnationality, while departing from a nation-state framework.

### Introduction to Queer, Decolonial, Feminist Theory

Tutor:  
Lina Ashour

While the terms ‘queer’, ‘decolonial’ and ‘feminist’ have become popular in both academic and social spaces, confusion remains around what they mean and how they apply to our everyday lives and practices. This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to explain these ideas. Social science disciplines such as politics, history, sociology, anthropology and ecology provide a wideranging view of the forces that shape the world we live in. The aim of the course is to develop a clearer understanding of our own identities and the less visible forces that govern our world. Sessions are designed

to demystify theoretical concepts and tie them into our material and lived realities, while cultivating a political imaginary to radically interrogate social and political structures.

### Architecture as an Apparatus of Government (1960s to the Present)

Tutor:  
Eleni Axioti

This course addresses the ability of architecture to participate in the practice of government. Architecture has the capacity to configure and orient our actions and behaviours as living beings, through its technologies, mechanisms, rationalities and norms. By functioning as a diverse and dynamic network, it contributes to the production of our subjectivities and mediates between political economy and the economies of the subject. Bearing this definition in mind, we ask: how have architectures from the second half of the 20th century to the present day facilitated the practices of government? How have they contributed to political and social changes, and the shift from liberal to neoliberal forms of government?

### The Fight for the City: Space, Power and Class Composition in Contemporary London

Tutors:  
Ben Beach  
Jamie Hignett  
David McEwen

This course argues that class struggle is the motivating force behind the development of the capitalist city, and will examine how working-class resistance can force capital into extensive programmes of urban re-engineering to retain (or regain) political control of contested territories. Through the lens of class composition analysis, we will explore how regeneration schemes are strategically deployed to decompose working-class organisation by displacing restive communities. Using territorial inquiry as our method, we will demonstrate how communities can fight for their right to the city. We will use seminars, walking tours and case studies in Canary Wharf and Tottenham to map out power relations, ownership and contested sites in the city; revealing the latent possibilities of architecture in the struggle for a better world. Students will submit a piece of propaganda in zine format, accompanied by mappings and illustrations.

### Ghosting

Tutor:  
Doreen Bernath

This course proceeds from Mark Cousins' proposition that 'space begins when someone else enters the room'. We will address who or what may be considered the 'someone else'. Rooms, buildings, objects

and places partake in this position of an 'absent other', functioning as the assumed content of architecture that we see as extensions of ourselves, as memory-marks of past inhabitations and projections of future lives. Daniel Heller-Roazen proposes that 'absence' diminishes the presence of someone whose place is obscured through acts of erasure and substitution; Hal Foster has called this 'ghosting'. Seminar sessions will trace spatial typologies of 'absentees', 'the haunted', 'shadows', 'noises', 'the double', 'prosthetics' and 'the magical'.

### Landscape History Futures

Tutor:  
Amica Dall

In the UK, an average of 10 calories of fossil fuels are used to grow one calorie of food, and around 2% of people are employed in land and agricultural work. This highly industrialised model of farming was exported from the US, introducing monocultures to vast tracts of land, pushing ever greater numbers of people into cities. In parallel to this, a highly romanticised conception of wilderness has underpinned the majority of modern conservation practices, which attempt to create zones of strict separation between human and non-human life. A wide range of regenerative land management practices now take the opposite approach, advocating for a future in which around 30% of the population will be directly involved in land-work. This course will explore the intellectual and scientific foundations of this vision, and consider its spatial, socioeconomic, political and cultural dimensions.

### Architectural Anthropology: Towards a Postcolonial Reading of Rituals and Architecture

Tutor:  
Francesca Dell'Aglio

This course addresses the relationship between anthropology and architecture – two disciplines that have a long, shared history. If the former looks at the history of humanity and the cultures that stem from it, the latter is an active and permanent component of that culture. For centuries, architecture has, however, approximated anthropology into a quantitative method, especially in recording the inhabitation of buildings and urban spaces. The tools of ethnography and data collection have distanced architects from their role as participants in a living, changing built environment. This course addresses new interpretations of anthropological means for architecture that allow architects to look at the city as an ensemble of fragmented subjectivities and spatial exceptions.

**Topographia / Topothesia**  
(the vivid description of a true place /  
the description of an imaginable  
or non-existent place)

Tutor:  
Jessie Fyfe

This course examines the theoretical, narrative and figurative frameworks that underpin the concept of landscape to uncover social, political and cultural histories of land and place – both real and imagined. Firstly, we will consider emerging and persistent interpretations of the concept of ‘nature’, and how the cultural ‘construction’ of nature has become a key topic within debates about landscape. Secondly, we will investigate the complex cultural histories of planned, cultivated and ‘natural’ landscapes and their relationships to structures of power. Thirdly, we will address the significant role landscape plays as places of memory, identity, conflict and justice. Finally, we will reflect on propositions to address the future of the city in the face of environmental crisis, climate change and social injustice.

**Counterpublic Consultations**  
(1960s to the Present)

Tutors:  
Julika Gittner  
Claire Louise Staunton

The course examines the history, theory and practices of ‘community consultation’, and works to develop alternative models for resident representation in architecture and planning. Community consultation is often a performance of public participation in consensus building, conducted by architects and planning professionals to satisfy legislative requirements with no genuine consideration of stakeholders’ needs and desires. The spatial injustices that resulted from these flawed consultation processes over the past 20 years of regeneration in London are evident in residents’ growing discontent. This course examines the theories and legislation underlying current methods of consultation, and considers what alternative political theories and urban practices can shape genuinely democratic decision-making processes.

**Conceptualising the Planetary, or How to  
Develop a Planetary Consciousness**

Tutor:  
Rosy Head

The era of the planetary is upon us. We can no longer ignore that we are deeply entwined with the processes of the earth itself, and the systems that govern us seem unable to envisage, let alone action, an effective response to the climate crisis. How, then, might we each reshape our own internal geopolitics to change our attitude to the world and how we function within it? What new conceptual frameworks can

establish a common ground between living entities who share the current predicament of habitability within planetary limits? What new descriptions form a basis for how we might design in the planetary era? This course will explore both the philosophical and practical implications of this scenario, and will consider how we might pursue what the political theorist Achille Mbembe encourages us all to develop: ‘a planetary consciousness from which our daily political life cannot be separated.’

**Writing as a Medium**

Tutor:  
Edwin Heathcote

‘A writer’, wrote Thomas Mann, ‘is a person to whom writing comes harder than to anybody else’. Yet we all need to be writers. Although we all are writers, whether we think of ourselves in that way or not, we might also want to think about the quality of our writing. Will anybody want to read it? Will they enjoy it? Architecture is often stuck in a loop of self-referential language, cod-philosophy and complex neologisms. The purpose of this course is to look at writing as a skill, for its own sake, as something to enjoy, to convey and to communicate. It is not an academic exercise but an escape from the constraints and conventions of academic writing.

**Intertwined Practices:  
A Lens on Architecture as  
Cultural Ecology**

Tutor:  
Marina Lathouri

This seminar series will critically examine the manifold objects, practices and subjects of architecture. Our initial premise is that architectural objects are not necessarily, or not only, bound forms or fixed typologies but instead a series of practical engagements with situated material conditions. Sessions will examine a series of key questions that provide a way of framing architecture as entangled with other critical spatial practices – a thread tying together histories of the land and people, or histories of people inhabiting a land.

**High-Rise and Invisible Cities:  
Architecture and Living in  
Contemporary Literature**

Tutor:  
Victoria Miguel

This course will explore how we use, inhabit and feel about architecture through its representation in literature, focusing on novels by VS Naipaul, Ayşegül Savaş, Georges Perec, JG Ballard, Italo Calvino and BS Johnson. We will read extracts from each novel, along with critical essays, to investigate

what home means to us, the aesthetics of living, the complexities of living together in close quarters in apartment buildings and the breakdown of communal living. We will imagine cities that never were, and explore the familiar streets of London through the eyes of would-be architects such as BS Johnson and Albert Angelo. Through our reading of the relationship between architecture and literature, we will engage with the real and imagined social impact of architecture.

### Forces of Production

Tutor:  
William Orr

Technological change appears like a force from beyond, unsettling and transforming societies in profound, seemingly irresistible ways while reinforcing and preserving them in others. Such ‘modernisation’ is an ambiguous force that delivers crisis and promises progress. New technologies present challenges and opportunities to architects and to the architectural discipline, but what do ‘challenges’ and ‘opportunities’ really mean? What political, economic and even existential struggles lie behind these euphemisms, and how are they felt differently by architects, architecture students and the public at large?

### Silicon Valley Pastoral: Architecture, Technology, Colonisation and Pioneer Subjectivity

Tutor:  
Maria Paez Gonzalez

Silicon Valley is a neural centre of the global economy: it melds military, state and corporate power, and represents the visible tip of a vast network of exploitative labour practices and material extraction. This network produces the electronic devices, platforms and services that mediate our experience of the world and how we communicate, work, live and love. Despite its centrality, the Valley itself is almost imperceptible. The cities stretching along the Santa Clara Valley in California are an illegible sprawl: rows of bungalows and ranch housing, industrial buildings, strip malls, office parks and campus-like complexes all seem to derive from a historical logic of extraction. This raises a key question that the course will address: how can a centre of design and architecture be devoid of Architecture with a capital A?

### Built Witness: How a Building Informs Us of a Crime

Tutor:  
Klaus Platzgummer

Equipped with tweezers, swabs and cameras, wrapped from head to toe in encapsulated suits, masks and gloves: forensic scientists are

actors in a knowledge practice that aims to both document and avoid contaminating the environments in which crimes have taken place. This course explores the different ways in which buildings, infrastructures and territories can act as records of events. Bullet holes on walls, dry blood on floors and debris after drone attacks all demonstrate architecture’s potential to act as a (built) ‘material witness’, in the words of Susan Schuppli.

### Social Form

Tutor:  
Irénée Scalbert

The idea of a social architecture cannot be taken for granted. To some, it is self-evident: is not all architecture defined by a human purpose? Others insist on the autonomy of architecture: social purpose and architectural form are independent, even incompatible terms. Architecture is now preferably collective, communal, even communitarian. The thought of a people’s architecture – or at least of a popular one – is no longer anathema. In some co-operative projects, the role and the visibility of the architect are buried within the collective; so much so that the art of the architect, and their skills in creating material forms, have become muted.

### Pillars of Critical Urban Theory: Marx, Foucault, Kropotkin, Bourdieu, Fanon, Butler

Tutor:  
Nick Simcik Arese

Much of contemporary urban studies tends towards highly specific contributions which remain tethered to a few core pillars of social thought – adding leaves to the trees of knowledge, rather than planting new ones. In this course we will climb down some of the most influential branches of theory, mapping genealogies of knowledge and demystifying theory along the way. By revealing and organising key traditions of radical thinking that are embedded in contemporary research, the course aims to empower students, giving a nuanced and distanced grasp of the foundational instruments of progressive scholarship.

### Monster Spacings

Tutor:  
Teresa Stoppani

This course continues its investigation of aspects of the monstrous, focusing this year on modes of spacing to ask how ‘monster’ makes space. The categories that have been constructed to grasp the monstrous never fully succeed, because the nature of monster changes, slips away, is other and othering – it moves. When these

categories focus on monsters' image and the aesthetic dimension, they miss the key challenge they pose: monsters produce the 'effacement of representation' and 'collapse representational "distance"' (Dorrian) as they move at, towards or against us in ways that defy logic, limits and established conventions. As such, the course explores how relationships with the other redefine space.

## Thesis Option

Tutors:  
Rosy Head  
Merce Rodrigo García  
Simon Withers

Fourth Year students wishing to develop their research into an extended written thesis may attend a series of seminars, workshops and tutorials following the conclusion of their HTS courses. These sessions are held during Terms 2 and 3, and serve as an introduction to the thesis option. They highlight the rigour required when undertaking scholarly work and help individuals to develop their research topic. Students then begin to develop their theses during the summer between the Fourth and Fifth Years. The thesis is based on individual work, supported by a series of individual tutorials, and is submitted at the end of Term 1 of the Fifth Year, in line with the Fifth Year HTS requirements.

## Staff Bios

Richard Adetokunbo Aina is a multidisciplinary designer and researcher who works in architectural, spatial design, architectural writing, furniture craft and conceptual filmmaking. His interests in amalgam typologies and liminal space drive his exploration of contemporary West African aesthetic expression. His thesis was awarded the RIBA President's Dissertation Medal 2021.

Nicholas Simcik Arese is Chair of History and Theory at the AA. He was formerly assistant professor of Global Urban Studies at the University of Cambridge and research affiliate in the Department of Anthropology, University of Oxford. He is an ethnographer and architect who combines economic anthropology and legal geography to understand how people repurpose planned cities.

Guillermo Arsuaga is an architect and PhD candidate at Princeton University School of Architecture, and was the 2022–23 Mellon Research Fellow at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He has taught graduate courses at Columbia University (GSAPP) and Princeton University, and his work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale 2018 and Gothenburg International Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Eleni Axioti is a lecturer in Contextual and Theoretical Studies at University of the Arts London and a course tutor at the AA. She holds a PhD and an MA in Histories and Theories of Architecture from the AA. Her research focuses on architectural history regarding issues of political economy, social policy and government.

Ben Beach, Jamie Hignett and David McEwen are cofounders of Unit 38. They provide architectural services to social movements, working on community-led development projects such as: the Wards Corner Community Plan in Tottenham; the 'Block the Block' campaign; tenant-led estate retrofits in conjunction with renters' unions in London and Manchester; and running the Pelican House social centre and co-operative workspace in Bethnal Green. Ben's research into the effects of political contestation to trigger urban regeneration was acknowledged in the RIBA President's Awards for Research.

Doreen Bernath is an architect and a theorist trained at the University of Cambridge and the AA. She is Executive Editor of *The Journal of Architecture* and cofounder of the research collective ThisThingCalledTheory. She is also founder-director of the interdisciplinary platform DEZACT and leads the AA Visiting School Uncommon Walks. She is a senior lecturer at the Leeds School of Architecture.

Nerma Cridge received her PhD from the AA in 2012 and gained an MSc and Diploma in Architecture from the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL). Her research publications include a monograph based on her PhD thesis on the Soviet avant-garde, *Drawing the Unbuildable* (2015).

Amica Dall is a researcher working on issues that intersect with architecture and the built environment, focused on climate adaptation and social justice. She was a founding partner of Assemble (2010–22), and coauthor of *Material Reform* with Material Cultures.

Francesca Romana Dell'Aglio is an architect, writer and educator. She currently teaches History and Theory Studies at the AA and runs design studios at the University of Cambridge and the Royal College of Art, where she is concluding her PhD on rituals, habits and collective space in London.

Jessie Fyfe trained as an architect after studying political theory at Queen's University in Canada and the London School of Economics, and received her PhD from the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge where she is an affiliate lecturer.

Merce Rodrigo García is an architect, a PhD candidate at Birkbeck College and holds an MArch from the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University. She has taught at Oxford Brookes University and Akita University of Art, and has been a research fellow at Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Julika Gittner practices and teaches in art and architecture. She has been a design fellow at the University of Cambridge since 2010, where she currently leads a design studio on the MArch programme at the Department of Architecture. Her AHRC-funded PhD investigates the role of sculpture as counter evidence in social housing campaigns.

Edwin Heathcote is the architecture critic of *The Financial Times*. He is an architect and designer and the author of several books, including most recently *On the Street: In Between Architecture and The Meaning of Home*. He is the founding editor of readingdesign.org, an online archive of writing on design, and the Keeper of Meaning at The Cosmic House.

Marina Lathouri studied architecture and philosophy of art and aesthetics. She has lectured at the University of Cambridge and has been visiting professor at the Universidad de Navarra and the Universidad Católica in Santiago. Her current interests lie in the conjunction of historiography and politics, writing in architecture, city, land and political philosophy. She is the author of *City Cultures: Contemporary Positions on the City* and has published numerous articles.

Victoria Miguel is a writer. She worked for the estate of the composer John Cage, and has created projects and performances worldwide. She has taught courses and workshops in contemporary art, performance, curating and writing, and is currently undertaking an AHRC-funded PhD examining Cage's creative writing at the University of Glasgow.

William Orr is a designer, theorist and historian. He studied architectural design at the University of Toronto and completed a PhD at the AA, where his research focused on political and architectural theory from the 1960s to the present.

Maria Paez Gonzalez is an architect, researcher, tutor and partner at Foster + Partners. She is a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art (RCA), focusing on the architecture of Silicon Valley and frontier dynamics as a paradigm of contemporary knowledge production. She has taught design and research at the RCA and the AA.

Álvaro Velasco Pérez is an architect and holds a PhD from the AA, where he previously studied History and Critical Thinking in Architecture. He has taught at the AA, the University of Hertfordshire, Leeds Beckett University and the University of Navarra. His work has been presented in educational institutions in London, Paris, Berlin, Seville, Lagos and Algiers.

Klaus Platzgummer teaches HTS at the AA, and has previously worked as a research associate in the Department of Architecture Theory at TU Berlin. He received an MA in History and Critical Thinking in Architecture from the AA and holds an MSc in architecture from ETH Zürich.

Irénée Scalbert is an architectural critic. He has held academic posts in schools of architecture in Europe, North America and Asia, and has published widely on housing and architectural theory. He is the author of several books including a recent collection of essays entitled *A Real Living Contact with the Things Themselves*.

Claire Louise Staunton is a curator, researcher and organiser. She holds a PhD from the Royal College of Art. As Research Fellow at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art/Teesside University, she addresses the intersection between art, politics and housing development. She was previously a research curator at MK Gallery and Inheritance Projects, and was curator and director at Flat Time House.

Teresa Stoppani is professor of architecture and director of architecture and interior design at Norwich University of the Arts. She is coeditor of the *Journal of Architecture* (RIBA/Routledge), cofounder of the architecture research collective ThisThingCalledTheory, and a member of the steering group of the Architectural Humanities Research Association.

## Architectural Professional Practice (APP2)

Programme Head:  
Theo Lorenz

Staff:  
Sarah Akigbogun,  
Edward Bottoms,  
Friedrich Gräfling, Hikaru Kitai,  
Maria Paez, Benjamin Ralph,  
Joe Robson, Rachel Taylor,  
Manijeh Varghese

Throughout the history of the AA, students have sought to reinvent and extend the scope of architecture, by developing alternative modes of professional practice that challenge the status quo.

This course develops the themes of Professional Practice (PP1) first introduced in the Intermediate Programme and encountered in work experience. Students in the Fifth Year will integrate this knowledge into a range of design processes and professional frameworks to gain a comprehensive overview of individual career development within architecture and related disciplines. It is also intended to provide a base of information from which students can draw in their professional lives after graduating from the AA.

Through a series of lectures, students will discuss and debate key issues relating to the varying professional contexts for design and construction, reviewing detailed examples of strategies for conventional and unconventional models of practice. Students also evaluate their own skills, strengths and weaknesses, discuss various organisational practice models, and explore methodological approaches to design and project execution.

The course helps students to develop and submit a viable business plan for their own ideal practice, by investigating the crucial relationships that architectural and creative projects rely on and by exploring methods of architectural production and construction frameworks. These final submissions are supported by comprehensive references and relevant case studies aligned with their professional goals. The proposals are also informed by an analysis of pertinent economic, legislative and social frameworks that impact their feasibility.

Every year, the programme awards an AA Professional Practice Prize, which has been initiated to support the most outstanding proposals.

Electives are specialised courses for Fourth Year Diploma Programme students that extend the range of Core Studies and offer students the opportunity to integrate self-selected knowledge into their individual development. They provide a means of engaging with the cultural and scientific discourses of architecture in new ways, from which a deeper understanding of interdisciplinarity is gained.

### Drawing the War: Weapons of Architecture

Tutor:  
Nerma Cridge

This course will focus on architectural representation and proposals that directly engage with notions of conflict, while questioning the role of the architect within this process. As the world becomes ever more embroiled in war, we will test the suggestion that architectural technology inevitably lags behind, yet learns from, the weapons of war. The seminar explores the relationship between drawing, the architectural history of war, the military and politics, and debates whether and how architects should even be involved in such matters. We will consider politics, space, abstraction and representation in an effort to dismiss simplistic interpretations and misconceptions of war. Participants will be encouraged to create their own drawings and to test whether and how an essay can be purely drawn rather than written.

### First Hand

Tutor:  
Juliet Haysom

Observational drawing is a method of enquiry that can produce, record and share knowledge. By engaging with close observation, this seminar approaches representation not as an act of replication, but of revelation. Each session focuses on an unfamiliar object or material, and explores episodes from the history of science, historic and contemporary drawing practices, and methodologies from the fields of anatomy, archaeology and geology that similarly seek to reveal and explain. Using hand tools, we will test how we might communicate our observations through a range of media, techniques and drawing projections. The seminar emphasises the role and value of drawing in translating and communicating first-hand observations.

### Exquisite Corpse: Architecture Assembled

Tutor:  
Hamed Khosravi

The tools of assemblage, which were originally developed within the Dada movement, have long been central to the production of both drawn and built architecture. Through close readings of key examples, this seminar revisits the historical evolution of architectural drawing and representation as autonomous entities, aiming to reclaim the agency of architectural drawing as a project. Students will work closely with the AA Archives and will view actual donated drawings of the discussed projects or practices. The seminar concludes with a design exercise in the form of a set of drawings or models, developed alongside an analytical essay discussing the project, the process of making and references.

## The Future of Collaboration

Tutor:  
David Kohn

This seminar will explore how architects have historically worked with other disciplines and stakeholders, and will question the role of collaboration in contemporary and future practice. Using examples from medieval craft guilds to the Arts and Crafts movement, and from the *gesamtkunstwerk* to community engagement, we will build an understanding of how shifting disciplinary boundaries, questions of authorship and knowledge acquisition have reflected societal changes. In the present context of environmental collapse and the prospect of AI becoming increasingly prevalent in architectural decision-making, we will question what models of collaboration might prove most appropriate and adaptable for the future architect.

### WHICH? (Why has it come here?)

Tutor:  
David McAlmont

Sometimes art stays in the location for which it was created. However, the economies of art – its purchase, provenance and ownership – dictate the locations in which we find it. These locations can be either appropriate or controversial. London contains an embarrassment of art riches from all over the world, but what are these works doing here? This seminar series focuses on stories that can be told about the journeys taken by artworks, their contemporary locations and the manner in which their efficacies of origin are impacted. We will visit the British Museum, Tate Modern, the Wallace Collection and the Saatchi Gallery, and will then participate in three discussions, so that participants can examine artworks in situ and determine what their accompanying plaques reveal and withhold from the viewer.

## Climate and Ecological Systems in Design Science

Tutor:  
Michael Weinstock

Various models, methods and techniques based on the sciences of climate and ecology have been developed over time to address systems and design strategies at different urban and architectural scales. These models quantify, examine and analyse the dynamics of energy, information and material flows within climatic and ecological systems. This seminar introduces scientific inquiry and ecological systems thinking and modelling into design science and design research. Students develop a structured paper that addresses the ambitions of an imaginary design project set in a specific ecological, climatic and social context of their choice.

## Conservation Conversation

Tutor:  
James Westcott

Some form of conservation regime currently protects 15% of the planet's surface, and non-government organisations (NGOs) are lobbying for this to increase to 30% by 2030. Meanwhile, the extinction and climate crises continue to intensify. Conservation feels more urgent than ever, but it may actually be part of the problem: capitalism and conservation have always been two sides of the same coin, with one facilitating the other. This seminar examines fortress conservation – the dominant mode today – which is rooted in and continues the colonial practice of displacing indigenous and local people, who are far better guardians of biodiversity than NGOs. We will explore how to reconceive conservation as an inherently inclusive and integrated (design) practice, rather than something which happens 'over there', to other people, simply to mitigate business-as-usual capitalism.

## Contested Grounds: Spectacles and Temporality in the Public Realm

Tutor:  
Darius Woo

This seminar examines the relationship between 'spectacle' and the changing natures of public space under the pressures of capitalism, civic uprising, social inequality and the climate emergency. Spectacle has always been fundamental to urban life, and its political aspects have long played an important role in the construction of legitimacy and social control. We will use case studies to explore the interconnection between architecture and politics, tracking how the notion of spectacle has transformed the nature of public spaces over time. The seminar introduces students to theoretical and thematic debates that challenge the notion of public space as a neutral terrain, questioning who holds the power to define it, as well as the roles of class, ethnicity, identity and politics in our understanding of the public.

## Staff Bios

Nerma Cridge received her PhD from the AA in 2012 and gained an MSc and Diploma in Architecture from the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL). Her research publications include a monograph based on her PhD thesis on the Soviet avant-garde, *Drawing the Unbuildable* (2015).

Juliet Haysom trained in Fine Art at the Ruskin School, University of Oxford and the Royal College of Art, and later completed RIBA Part 1 at the AA. In 2021 she and architect Aude-Line Dulière produced *Placeholders* for the London Design Festival at the V&A.

Hamed Khosravi is an architect, researcher and educator. He studied architecture in Tehran, holds a master's in Urbanism from TU Delft and IUAV, and gained his PhD from within 'The City as a Project' programme at the Berlage Institute and TU Delft. He is the co-head of the Projective Cities Programme at the AA, and a senior lecturer at LSBU.

David Kohn is director of David Kohn Architects. His current projects include a campus for New College, University of Oxford, an architecture faculty for University of Hasselt, Belgium and new market halls for Birmingham. Before teaching at the AA he was visiting professor at KU Leuven, Belgium.

David McAlmont is a singer, recording artist, lyric consultant, singing teacher and workshop facilitator. He holds a degree in History of Art from Birkbeck University of London. His recent works include the album *Happy Ending* with Hifi Sean, and an article on the history of the word 'Ghetto' for *Mousse* magazine.

Michael Weinstock is an architect, researcher and AA alumnus who has taught at the school since 1989. He is chair of the Academic Committee at the school and founding director of the Emergent Technologies and Design postgraduate programme. His body of published work includes *The Architecture of Emergence: The Evolution of Form in Nature and Civilisation* and *Emergent Technologies and Design – Towards a Biological Paradigm for Architecture*.

James Westcott teaches Diploma 18 at the AA, a unit exploring how to facilitate the reuse of materials and ways to design with them. He has edited the books *Ad Hoc Baroque* on the Belgian architect Marcel Raymaekers and *Elements of Architecture*, by Rem Koolhaas/AMO.

Darius Woo is an architect and entrepreneur. He is a partner at Kasawoo and currently teaches undergraduate design studio at the University of Cambridge. He also serves as a director on the board of NW3 Community Land Trust, a registered community benefit society working towards the provision of affordable housing in the London Borough of Camden.

## Timetable

All programmes listed in pink are part of the AA Public Programme and support the compulsory courses for the Diploma Programme.

### TERM ONE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
HTS	Unit Day	HTS	HTS	Unit Day Symposia
Diploma Electives		Fifth Year APPZ		
			Gender and Objects Lecture Series	

AM Session

PM Session

Evening

### TERM TWO

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Fourth Year ETS	Unit Day	Fourth Year ETS	Fourth and Fifth Year ETS	Unit Day Symposia
			Education Lecture Series	

AM Session

PM Session

Evening

### TERM THREE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Unit Day	Unit Day	Unit Day	Unit Day	Unit Day Symposia

AM Session

PM Session

# How to Apply

We encourage applications from prospective students who can demonstrate initiative in entering into the public forms of presentation, collective discussion and productive debate that permeate the AA, the architectural community and the world at large. We are keen to hear from independent, motivated and respectful individuals with the curiosity and ambition required to define their own unique path through a school that fosters a multitude of educational methods and agendas.

The AA is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and is the oldest independent school of architecture in the UK. As an Approved Provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS), England's independent regulator of higher education, the AA is a designated recognised body with the authority to grant its own taught degrees (Foundation, Bachelor and Master level), and is a licenced Student Sponsor registered with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). The AA is not a member of UCAS and all applications are made directly to the school. The application procedure is the same for all prospective students.

If you would like to apply, please read the information on our website about the AA's Academic Programmes and visit the admissions pages listed below for up-to-date entry requirements and application deadlines. There is one point of entry each year, in September, for all of our courses and programmes.

## Open Days and Open Evenings

Throughout the year we hold Open Days for prospective undergraduate, postgraduate and visiting students.

To find more information, see full event details and to register your interest in attending, please visit [www.aaschool.ac.uk/openday](http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/openday)

Dates for these are as follows:

### Open Days

**Friday 13 October 2023**

Foundation Course, Intermediate Programme and Diploma Programme

## Entry Requirements

To learn about academic entry requirements and for more details for each programme, please click on the relevant 'Find out more' link below, which will take you to the AA website.

### Diploma Programme

#### MArch/AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2

The two-year MArch/AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2 programme leads to the AA Final Examination (ARB/RIBA Part 2) and the AA Diploma (AA Dipl). Prospective students can only apply to enter the first year of the Diploma Programme.

[Find out more](#)

## Fees and Financial Assistance

The Architectural Association is committed to ensuring that the most talented students from around the world have the opportunity to study at the school. Approximately one in five students currently receive financial assistance from a scholarship, bursary, hardship fund or assistantship.

[Find out more](#)



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