


LOBBY

No 2 | Spring 2015 | The Bartlett School of Architecture



Clairvoyance

Contents

	Reception
8	Editor's Letter Words by Regner Ramos
10	Visions With Purpose Profile by Regner Ramos
17	Pushing Forward Profile by HLM Architects
	The Exhibition Space
20	Approaches to Tomorrow Words by Patch Dobson-Pérez
23	Future's Tense Words by Kyle Branchesi and Shane Reiner-Roth
24	One of a Libeskind Words by Regner Ramos
31	The Tabernacle Words by Joshua Broomer and Louise Bjørnskov Schmidt
34	The Floating Cathedral in the City of Sleep A Project by Woojung Kim
36	Back to the Future and Back Words by Marcela Aragüez
38	Night Sky Observatory A Project by Laszlo Dohnanyi
40	Riots Words by Fani Kostourou
42	Digital Detox A Project by Laurence Blackwell-Thale
44	Preparing for Apocalypse Words by Hannah Wood
46	Seeing is Believing Words by Lachlan Anderson-Frank
48	My Willy Words by Petr Esposito

	The Seminar Room
	Micro Readings of Macro Conditions:
53	Crowds and Power Reprinted Text by Elias Canetti
55	Civic Depth Reprinted Text by Peter Carl
	Visions of the City and the People Therein:
57	This is Water Words by Sam Jacob
58	The Unhappy Pursuit Words by Adam Nathaniel Furman
59	The City Scale Narrative Words by Giovanni Bellotti and Alexander Sverdlov
60	Depth Charge Words by Patrick Lynch
61	La Foule Words by Shumi Bose
63	Seminar Discussion James Taylor-Foster in conversation with Giovanni Bellotti, Shumi Bose and Patrick Lynch
	The Lift
68	Ghost Landscapes A Project by Ivo Tedbury
70	Going Dutch Words by Lachlan Anderson-Frank
72	Eye Catcher A Project by Lin Zhang and Ran Xie
74	Building Opportunities Words by Heidi Au Yeung
76	Following Christian Norberg-Schulz Words by Anna Ulrikke Andersen
79	No Guilt Words by Felipe Lanuza

	The Crit Room
84	Jus' Like That? Words by Alan Penn
87	PoohTown A Project by Nick Elias
90	Fragile Thresholds A Project by Eliza de Silva
93	Resourceful Fallibility A Project by Wangshu Zhou and Jieru Ding
96	The Sublime Wilderness Institute A Project by Xuhong Zheng
	The Staircase
100	Reversing to the Future Words by Ilkka Törmä
103	Déjà Vu Words by Laura Narvaez
106	A Forest of Experiences Words by Benni Allan
109	Learning From the Past Words by Fernanda Lima Sakr
112	Jane Jacobs Revisited Words by Martin Traunmüller

	The Library
116	The Clear Sight of an Architectural Historian Words by Stylianos Giamarelos
120	The Naked Architect Words by Gregorio Astengo
122	Back to the Future of Formalism! Words by Emmanuel Petit
123	Historico-Futurism in a Clockwork Jerusalem Words by Sam Jacob
126	Branding Remaking on the Urban Scale Words by Neli Vasileva
128	Queering Architectural History Words by Stylianos Giamarelos
130	Far From Predictions Words by Blerta Dino
	The Toilets
133	Slow Metabolism Words by Nikos Magouliotis
141	Hide and Seek Words by Max Colson and Mrinal S. Rammohan

LOBBY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Regner Ramos

DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION studio 4

Editorial

The Exhibition Space _____ **Regner Ramos**
The Seminar Room _____ **James Taylor-Foster**
The Lift _____ **Nito Ramírez**
The Crit Room _____ **Nahed Jawad-Chakouf**
The Staircase _____ **Laura Narvaez**
The Library _____ **Stylianos Giamarelos**
The Toilets _____ **Mrinal S. Rammohan**

Editorial Assistants Ana Alonso Albarracín, Yoranda Kassanou, Daniel Stilwell

Contributing Writers Benni Allan, Anna Ulrikke Andersen, Lachlan Anderson-Frank, Gregorio Astengo, Marcela Aragüez, Heidi Au Yeung, Giovanni Bellotti, Louise Bjørnskov Schmidt, Shumi Bose, Kyle Branchesi, Josh Broomer, Max Colson, Blerta Dino, Patch Dobson-Pérez, Petr Esposito, Adam Nathaniel Furman, Sam Jacob, Fani Kostourou, Felipe Lanuza, Patrick Lynch, Nikos Magouliotis, Alan Penn, Emmanuel Petit, Shane Reiner-Roth, Fernanda Lima Sakr, Alexander Sverdlov, Ilkka Törma, Martin Traunmüller, Neli Vassileva, Hannah Wood

Photographers Anna Ulrikke Andersen, Marcela Aragüez, Heidi Au Yeung, Max Colson, Patch Dobson-Pérez, Yoranda Kassanou, Jurgen Landt-Hart, Felipe Lanuza, Frankie Meinhof, Ben Sykes-Thompson, Josh Redman, James Taylor-Foster, Märta Thisner

Illustrators Giovanni Bellotti, Sam Jacob, James Taylor-Foster, Kaiser Ulla

Cover Illustration Sara Andreasson

Published Student Work by Laurence Blackwell-Thale, Jieru Ding, Laszlo Dohnanyi, Nick Elias, Woojong Kim, Eliza de Silva, Ivo Tedbury, Ran Xie, Lin Zhang, Xuhong Zheng, Wangshu Zhou

Contributors Hussam Chakouf, Jorge X. Méndez-Cáceres, Seda Zirek

Copyeditor Nicola Kavanagh

Social Media Assistants Madalina Hanc, Carrie Lai Tieng Leong, Daniel Stilwell, Jacob Westmoreland

Marketing Assistants Felicity Barbur, Shneel Malik

With Special Thanks to Our Benefactors Factory Fifteen, HLM Architects, KIRBY, Le Royal Hotels & Resorts, Mecanoo and PLP Architecture

The Bartlett School of Architecture
140 Hampstead Road
London NW1 2BX
info@bartlettlobby.com

LOBBY is printed by Aldgate Press

ISSN 2056-2977

www.bartlettlobby.com
facebook.com/BartlettLOBBY
twitter: @BartlettLOBBY
instagram: @BartlettLOBBY

Contributors

In the spirit of all things clairvoyant, we asked four of LOBBY's team members to open up their third eye and give us a prediction: **You look into a crystal and it reveals an image of London in 2115. What do you see?**

Patch Dobson-Perez, Contributing Writer



A third year undergraduate student at the Bartlett School of Architecture, hailing all the way from Stoke-on-Trent, Patch is working with LOBBY magazine for a second year running. And this practically makes him a veteran. When he's not maniacally trying to print out portfolio sheets the night before hand in, he can be found in a kimono playing with Bonny, his pet royal python. Patch's hobbies include rock climbing and writing about himself in third person.

"A monolithic concrete statue of Kim Jong-Un surrounded by a huge stage on which a botox-ridden, immortal Justin Bieber mimes a dictatorially-approved anthem about world domination. The Shard is dwarfed by enormous nuclear cooling towers and the London Eye has been modified to become an enormous hamster wheel on which any opposers of the realm have to jog for all eternity."

Daniel Stilwell, Social Media
@danieljstilwell



As well as being a writer with a keen interest on etymology and lexicography, Daniel is a beard enthusiast and wannabe farmer. After graduating from his under-graduate degree at Canterbury School of Architecture, he now resides in the Garden of England —aka Kent—where he works in Conservation. Daniel's work, both design and written, stems from a fascination and intrigue into the notions and themes of context, ecology, nature, the environment and the multi-sensory. He can usually be found not too far away from a nice slice of watermelon.

"At this rate just darkness from the million towers ego-ing for light to shine like a bunch of wilting sunflowers. We would have run out of 'good' names for these buildings too so they'd be called 'the Whisk', 'the Pizza Cutter' and any of those obscure kitchen utensil used rarely, like the pestle and mortar—although those forms would be yet more travesty to the skyline."

Yoranda Kassanou, Editorial Assistant



Yoranda studied Architecture in Athens, Greece. Her eagerness to experiment with new technologies in architecture in a more interdisciplinary environment led her to the MSc. Adaptive Architecture and Computation at the Bartlett School of Architecture in September of 2014. She is a detail freak and is often being referred to as a 'Duracell Bunny'.

The speed at which she works at has led our Editor-in-Chief to describe her as having fingers that have "tiny little rockets attached to each of them."

"I look into a crystal ball, and I gaze through a window. A man wakes up, has a shower. He eats breakfast, dresses up in his good suit and goes to work. He sits at his desk, starts working on his computer, has a lunch break and a cigarette. The hard-working man talks to a co-worker, whom he is secretly in love with, and goes back to his desk. The time is now 5 pm—time to go home. He cooks and eats dinner in front of his TV. It is now 9 pm; time to sleep. The year is 2115, and it is an ordinary day, just like any other day."

James Taylor-Foster, Seminar Room Guest Editor
@J_Taylor_Foster



Although James has one foot in architectural research and the other in writing, he also has one hand in spatial design and another in 20th Century art history. He's an Editor for ArchDaily and currently works as a practice researcher for Mecanoo in Delft. In between, he contributes to research collectives in Rotterdam whilst

trying desperately to pursue a sideline as an art historian in London. People tend to wildly miscalculate his age (which we won't disclose here). James can also be found trolling art shops pretending to be wealthy enough to buy pieces he can't afford.

"A country within a country, a place that it no longer resembles a capital city but more of an enclosed city-state. A place where you can point at certain areas on a map and state: 'I'll never live there. It's too nice.' At least that's the dystopian nightmare."

The Clear Sight of an Architectural Historian



Photography: Frankie Meinhof

Objects, desires, words, buildings, materials, culture: In his lifelong trajectory, Adrian Forty has added whatever it takes in the mix of architectural historiography, in order to help us see our profession as clearly as we possibly can.

Words by Stylianos Giamarelos

Adrian Forty needs no introduction. Almost synonymous with the Architectural History & Theory programmes at The Bartlett School of Architecture, his research and teaching trajectories have certainly left his unmistakeable mark on the discipline at large. Recently retired after more than four decades of intense academic activity, Forty agreed to be interviewed by LOBBY on the occasion of the publication of the aptly titled *Forty Ways to Think about Architecture* anthology, compiled and edited by some of his many distinguished colleagues, friends and students over the years.



Did this book really come as a surprise to you?

I knew nothing about it until I was rather mysteriously led into a room one evening last June. I thought I was being taken to something organised by the students of the MA programme. But instead the room contained about 20 people, many old friends, and I was presented with this book. I never guessed that they had been putting this together—it was one of the nicest surprises I have ever had in my life! All those people had written such generous, thoughtful pieces. I was overwhelmed!

What do you think of the book itself?

It's a very nice format, with very short pieces—1000 words or so—and that allows, you know, for a lot of variety. Some of them are directly about me, others are not about me at all, but somehow they all relate to things that I have been interested in or worked on.

Did you find anything you didn't really expect in those pieces, in relation to your work, your thinking and their impact on other people?

Yes, people recalled things that I had forgotten about or they have interpreted things in ways that I could not have anticipated. I can't speak about any individuals, but what struck me was the way in which some people seem to have understood what I have been interested in, without necessarily referring to my work at all, and to

have written pieces that were nothing to do with to my work, yet corresponded to my interests. I have always liked thinking of objects in relation to theories—what does the theory say about this object, but also what does the object say about the theory? I think that the book manages to reflect the fact that my work has been neither entirely empirical, nor entirely theoretical.

How did you see your own work evolving over time? Do your three major books form part of a common research project? Is there a common thread that goes through all of them?

My work has always been about situating architecture within some kind of a social process, and trying to figure out what goes on in that process. All the books I have worked on have really been about that. It's true that I have also sometimes looked at architecture as a practice in its own right, but that has never been a primary concern of mine. I always wanted to know how architecture operates as part of the glue—or is it the lubricant?—of social life. For everyone, whether they are producers, users or consumers, what are its consequences? What does it say about relationships between people, between people and objects, and about people themselves? I have never seen the study of architecture as being just about buildings.

Does this approach relate to your original academic training as a historian?

Partly, yes. Never having formally studied architecture, I suppose I always felt I was an outsider within the field of architecture, and that gave me a slight critical distance.

What was the state of the profession when you took up the organisation of The Bartlett Master's programme in architectural history in the late 1970s?

Well, architectural history was then largely taken up with what architects did—and that still to some extent continues to be true. So my interest in applying Marxist thinking to architectural history was to get away from that. I wanted to find ways to think about architecture in the expanded cultural field. It wasn't obvious how one was to do that, certainly at the time when I started there were rather few precedents. There was this 'factory' in Italy around Manfredo Tafuri,

which was locked into an internal discourse within architecture. Although it claimed to be a Marxist project, it seemed to be more concerned with interpreting architecture within its own terms. Some of what they said was interesting, but it didn't strike me as the way to go.

How did you embody that programme in a certain academic curriculum?

What we did was to look at many different things, you know, I didn't want to teach an orthodoxy, but instead to rethink critically the possible alternatives. I have never been doctrinaire in the sense that 'no, you have to do it like this'. I have tried to be open, looking at different

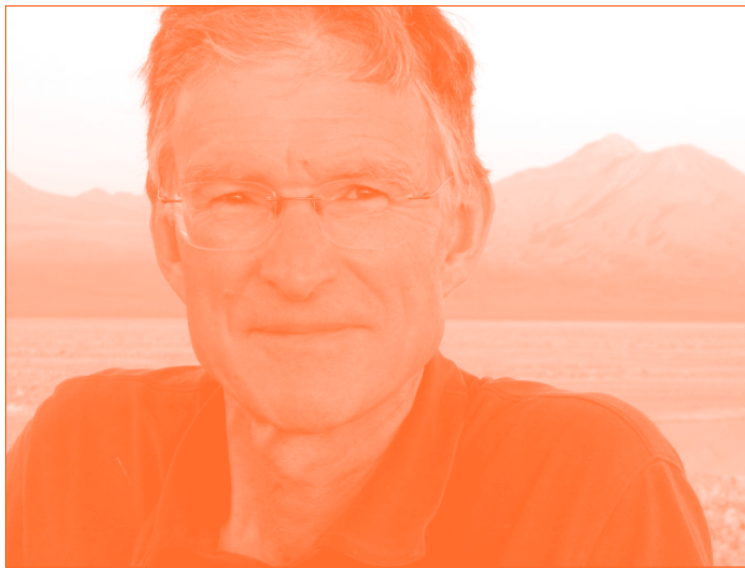
“I wanted to find ways to think about architecture in the expanded cultural field.”

schools of thought in addition to those of traditional architectural theory and history—and not to fix upon just one, ultimately restricted point of view.

I never found that appealing.

And how did you approach teaching first-year students?

I always enjoyed teaching first-year students because you are talking to young people when they are at their most receptive, before their ideas have started to become fixed. I wanted to see if I could show new students starting out how to interrogate buildings and cities, to indicate something of the range of ideas that it is possible to have about them. Objects, buildings are not entirely mute, passive. But what are the means we have in order to think about them? I think I was both modest and probably over-ambitious with this programme. I wanted to introduce students to a field about which there were many different ways of thinking, not all of them now fashionable. That meant returning to texts by people who have been thinking hard about these



“What I have tried to do was to discourage architects from thinking that only architects make architecture.”

matters for at least the last 500 years. Let's enjoy this treasure chest of thought, and find out what's in it, what have all those people had to say? Has it all been futile? Hopefully not. I used to introduce the course was by saying, 'If you were students of medicine, the first thing you would do is to dissect a cadaver. You take a dead body and you cut it up and you learn about anatomy. Well, what would be the architectural or urbanistic equivalent of dissecting a cadaver?' In a way, I offered them an analysis of those elements of our built environment (doors, walls, boundaries, etc.) that are something like the body's organs, but an analysis that used the techniques of history, rather than those of anatomical dissection. What you need to know is what questions to ask when you are confronted with any one of those objects. I think there is a set of skills you can acquire, and then you can familiarise yourself with all the alternative ways of thinking that go along with those skills.

How did the Master's programme evolve over the course of more than three decades?

Well, I think it's become more diverse and open as the programme has very much followed the interests of the people who have taught on the course. For example, when Iain Borden arrived, and he was interested in Lefebvre, this added a whole new dimension to what we read and talked about. And then Jane Rendell joined the

team and introduced feminist philosophy into our discussions of the built environment. So the programme has developed and expanded as a result of those interests—and that is good, because, you know, this programme has always been a loose container, into which people can bring new enthusiasms. This is the advantage of not being doctrinaire.

Do you feel your own research interests shifted along with the MA programme? How did your research relate to your teaching?

I used to keep my research separate from my teaching. The thing about teaching is that you have to have a certain degree of certainty, you have to know what you think in order to teach. Whereas in research, it is all about *not* being sure what you think and being open to doubt. I never really found the two compatible, because each requires a different state of mind. So I would not say there has been any direct relationship, but obviously things that I read and talked about while teaching provoked me and guided me in my research.

What do you yourself think of your earlier work now, in the light of your subsequent development? Is there something you might have done differently?

Well, my earlier works belong in a moment in time, they are of their time, and they should be seen as the result of that. If we think about *Objects of Desire*

(1986), for instance, I started working on it when I was teaching at a School of Design; and I was aware that there was no discussion about the history of the activity within which students were involved except in terms that were moralistic—according to which, you know, design was expected to be 'good' for people somehow (though nobody ever seemed to be able to say what the 'good' was). This ethical view dominated all the discussions about design and I thought it would be very helpful to find another way of thinking about design as a process which changed things in ways that, while they might be good for some people, could also be bad for others. So what I wanted was to offer a view of design as a social process. *Objects of Desire* is not about design as a means of making life more beautiful or stylish, but about design as a necessary stage of production. I wanted to talk about the way in which design is generated through productive processes, and at the same time itself generates processes of production. The book was less about the other end of the process, about users, everyday cultures, it was more about the way design has been used instrumentally by producers, and ultimately capital, in order to shape the world as we know it. The main criticism of the book was that I didn't pay enough attention to consumers, to the extent that culture is made by people in the course of their daily lives. While I acknowledge this

criticism, it is important to stress that at the time when I started, there was no critique at all of design as part of the process of production, and without that, it would not have been possible to go on and present an alternative view of design in terms of the culture of consumption. **Since you mentioned that this all started from your teaching at a School of design, I was wondering what is your take on the relationship between architectural history and practice?**

Well, what I have tried to do was to discourage architects from thinking that only architects make architecture. I'd like people to be able to accept that as a reality, without causing them to panic or be plunged into depression. I wanted architects to understand what their part in that process could be, and where there might be room for them to be effective amidst all the things that happen—many of them quite independently of what an architect may intend or desire. I really wanted people to have a sense of the activity of architecture as being part of a larger process. And I suppose the point about *Words and Buildings* (2000) is to show that architects don't control language; language is produced by language users. And that could be taken as a parable for the whole world of architecture—architecture is not made only by architects; it is produced socially. I always wanted architects to see what the consequences of that are for architecture. At the same time, I recognise that if you say to people 'you know, all these things are outside your control', it produces a sense of despair and hopelessness, a reality in which most practising architects live. So, at the same time, people need to have a feeling that what they do is anchored somewhere and is not necessarily entirely pointless or futile. I'd like my students to find that balance and measure the reality of practice against knowledge of the wider processes through which buildings are produced.

Was there a similar drive behind your *Concrete and Culture* project (2012)?

Well, in that case, I was struck by the fact that a group of professionals could be so enthused about a substance—concrete—that was so detested by the general public. How could there be this discrepancy between the professionals'

set of values and beliefs and those of a non-professional public? This mismatch was interesting to me as it has also been a feature of modern architecture in general. I say this to stress that *Concrete and Culture* is not so much about concrete itself as about relationships between groups of people. Concrete as a barometer, if you like, of how values are formed and sustained. The book is about concrete as a belief system; about the place concrete occupies inside our heads, and the way it has caused us to organise our minds.

In a way, this goes back to what has probably been the biggest theoretical influence on me, the work of Roland Barthes. In *Mythologies*, which is the first book of his that I read, he says, "I am not concerned with what things mean; I am concerned with how they mean." That really struck me. How is it that some things have meaning, how do they acquire that meaning, and what is the system within which meanings circulate? These questions have always stayed with me.

In one of your recent keynote speeches, I remember you remarking that architectural historians have not yet found a common disciplinary way to treat time in their work.

Works of architecture have a peculiarity as historical objects in that they exist in the present and are in familiar use in the world that we live in, yet also had a possibly quite different existence in historical time. So, you have to deal with two or more temporalities. People often assume that because buildings exist in the present, that is the sum total of their existence, but that is not the case. You have constantly to mediate between these two different forms of existence for buildings—as they are to us now and as they were at all previous times. I don't think that on the whole architectural historians have found a way to deal with this problem very satisfactorily.

I would like us to close with your thoughts about history and the future of architectural practice.

Over the last twenty years, architecture as a practice has become much more open to historical research. When I started, architectural history was basically regarded as an irrelevance. Many

practising architects and theorists didn't like history at all, they thought it would contaminate people's minds. I can see now that they were afraid it might undermine their attempts to establish architecture as an agency for social change. Too much looking at history might lead people to realise that architecture's record as a means of bringing about changes in society hasn't been that great. At the time I started out, the confidence of the profession had just climaxed and architects were still regarded as powerful. Well, now architecture is in a more desperate state—people are open to anything that might save architecture. To think about architecture as a discipline with a history no longer runs the risk of damaging its reputation and might even allow us to make a little more sense of what is happening to architecture now.

And what about the future of architectural history itself, especially in the light of recent developments like the last Venice Biennale of Architecture taking the form of a historical research project?

I was at a book launch at the Biennale last summer, and the publisher of the book, the respected Norwegian publisher Lars Müller, said outright, "The architectural monograph is dead." I never expected to hear an architectural publisher say that and certainly not so categorically. He thought that the only way for books to go was to present architectural history through collective, plural voices. And yes, that was the purpose of the Architecture Biennale: to look for other ways of approaching architecture's history. Koolhaas's manifesto for the Biennale was a very inspiring and interesting one. And though the response of the various participants was uneven, I would say that the idea behind the Biennale was important. If it means architectural history becoming non-monographic, then I would subscribe to that. ◇