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Inclusive Design
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Introduction: Inclusive Design Pedagogies and Practices

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In 1992, Sharon Sutton identified the studio culture of architecture schools as one of the roadblocks to diversifying the profession (Sutton 1992). Sutton argued that the central emphasis on aesthetics and celebration of the Howard Roark model of genius disenfranchised students with broader interests. In design programs where the starchitect model was held up as the definition of success, students interested in subjects like sustainable building technologies or community engaged design felt marginalized. As Sutton explained, “An exclusionary definition leaves the choice to become an architect to those few people who wish to practice a ‘gentlemanly’ art” (Sutton 1992, 67). Kathryn Anthony’s 1992 book, *Design Juries on Trial: The Renaissance of the Design Studio*, documented the culture of architectural design studios through over 900 interviews and surveys with students, faculty, and practitioners (Anthony 2012). Anthony’s study highlighted the uneven, yet rarely challenged outcomes of the architectural education methods. Educators were largely engaging in teaching practices supported by tradition rather than because they led to desired learning outcomes.

Thirty years after Sutton and Anthony called attention to the exclusionary culture of architecture schools, Chris Daemrich affirms that not much has changed,

writing that, “American architects are taught a pantheon of White supremacist patriarchs” (2022, p. 7). A 2018 survey on design studio culture by Erika Lindsay and Emily Kutil indicates, among other trends, that jury reviews are still perceived to be “unproductive and detrimental to learning,” and the master-apprentice model is still “harmful and problematic” (Lindsay and Kutil, 2019). Despite the revelations delivered by these studies, and the efforts of many to bring attention to equity, diversity and inclusion challenges - including organizations like the Association for Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Architectural Research Centers Consortium (ARCC), and faculty working independently - exclusionary traditions and practices persist¹.

Architecture curricula have certainly evolved in the last three decades, yet the dominant culture of the design studio and its pedagogy have remained too similar to the ones described by Sutton and Anthony in the early 1990s. In part, this stems from the fact that architecture faculty are not typically trained as educators and tend to replicate the educational culture and strategies that worked for them. As Lindsay and Kutil explain “few studio professors have received formal training in teaching methods, and we

¹ See, for example, proceedings from the ACSA 106th Annual Meeting, “the Ethical Imperative,” and the fall 2019 ACSA conference “Less Talk: More Action.”

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often find ourselves replicating the flawed models we experienced when we were students” (Lindsay and Kutil, 2018). What this argument overlooks, however, are the students that are not with us, the many marginalized voices long excluded by that very same educational culture. For example, still in 2020, less than one percent of licensed architects in the US were Black women (Nicholson 2020). While other factors may be at play when recruiting and retaining a diverse body of students, there is evidence that traditional architectural education methods are not working for everyone. Today, institutional as well as professional accountability demand much more. Ultimately, change may come about because of external forces, as Susannah Hagan remarks “the new urgency [environmental instability] may yet see architectural education take on new forms of teaching for new ways of practicing” (Hagan 2022, 100).

Recent initiatives and events indicate many architectural educators are developing evidence-based and innovative strategies for reinventing the design studio. The 2019 fall ACSA conference “Less Talk: More Action,” for example, brought together educators from around the world to share research and best practices on how to create a more inclusive architecture school culture. In 2020, the University of Oklahoma hosted “Schools of Thought: Rethinking Architectural Pedagogy”, which brought together over 100 designers and educators to share scholarship on such topics as how to decolonize architectural pedagogy and participatory design. At this conference and others, as well as in recent scholarship, we witnessed firsthand how educators from as far away as Iceland and South Africa and as near as Texas and Iowa were developing new strategies for transforming the design studio into a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Many educators, however, were working largely in isolation, unaware of the research being undertaken elsewhere or in allied fields. Certainly, more research is needed about the challenges encountered in envisioning, creating, and pursuing new approaches, along with testing their effectiveness.

This special theme issue of *Enquiry* aims to bring together and share recent scholarship that examines ways to break from the traditional architecture studio teaching practices by providing inclusive pedagogies and learning modes. A critical rethinking of all facets of design teaching is necessary if the profession of architecture is to ever become truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive. From the physical design of the

classroom and academic hierarchies to the scaffolding of learning objectives and assignments, and the implicit and explicit messaging of instructors, every aspect of design studio culture warrants reconsideration.

In the essays that follow, scholars question the physical setting of the studio and the hierarchies reinforced by it; the design content relative to accessibility and inclusion, the value or impediments produced by the curricular boundaries between research and design that remain part of the architectural education tradition; and how we might integrate research on learning and bias into a rethinking of the studio culture. They present some of the many ways we can interrogate and re-imagine design studio culture and practices.

In the essay “Evolving Design Pedagogies: Broadening Universal Design for Social Justice,” Lanteigne, Rider and Stratton explore gaps in the weaving of Universal Design into architectural education, identify challenges for Universal Design pedagogies in supporting social justice, and provide four recommendations in addressing these challenges for design teaching. Their argument is an extension of the work of Steinfeld and Maisel, who wrote, “Although initially focused on disability rights, Universal Design can focus on any civil rights issue because ultimately design for diversity is concerned with social justice for all” (2012, p. 40). Among the powerful recommendations made by Lanteigne et al. is to reframe Universal Design as Inclusive Design—purposefully emphasizing equity and social justice and moving beyond the universalizing aim of designing places for “everyone.” Design educators looking to adapt their existing Universal Design teaching to become more inclusive and social justice-oriented will benefit from reading this essay.

Where Lanteigne et al. explore inclusion through the context of Universal Design, Keslacy and Kruth write about rethinking research cultures informed by the work of Eyal Weizman (Weizman and Manfredi, 2013). Their essay, “Critical Proximity: Refiguring Research Cultures in the Design Curriculum,” offers a case study of a three-course sequence within a Humanities Lab framework at Miami University that puts into practice community-based research. This is an interdisciplinary approach where design, research and community engagement merge. The project offered faculty and students the opportunity to partner with the Cincinnati-based, grassroots organizing group, the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, in which the

students performed as designer-researchers and the community partners acted as co-creators. This type of project allows students and faculty to see how research and design can be leveraged in service to community members' goals, and how expertise and ideas have to be supportive and not leading.

In the essay, "The Design Lodge: Reflections on a Lexical Shift Towards Life-Centered Architectural Education," David Fortin describes the "teaching lodge" as a space of inclusive learning grounded in Indigenous teachings. Drawing on the teaching lodge paradigm, Fortin theorizes the Design Lodge as an alternative to the traditional design studio setting. Within the Design Lodge, Indigenous ways of knowing, ethics, collaboration, and a relationship with the land are privileged over individual authorship and competition. Whereas traditional studios enshrine "the authoritative and competitive patterns of American schooling and society" (Dutton 1984, p. 19), the Design Lodge counters this by integrating Indigenous epistemologies, including community-based values. Ultimately, Fortin suggests that the Design Lodge has the potential to help the profession of architecture "renew our priorities to love and care for our planet and each other."

Pilat and Person draw from recent research on developing expertise, motivating students, and countering stereotype threats in their essay, "Inclusive Design Studios: Rethinking the Instructor's Role." Taking a translational approach, they explore the implications of this research from education and social psychology for developing more inclusive design studios. Thus, their essay proposes a number of specific strategies that studio instructors can integrate into their teaching. For example, instructors can help students develop a sense of agency in their learning by developing positive mentoring environments, planning clear assignments and accompanying assessments, and intentionally scaffolding curricular components so students develop skills incrementally. Pilat and Person argue that each student can be successful, but that their paths to success may be different. Interestingly their analysis aligns closely with research conducted by an inter-university team of architecture faculty teaching in Africa on stressors and elements of well-being. In their search for a nurturing pedagogy, Olweny et al. found that there is "a growing misalignment of what is taught in schools of architecture, the expectations of the students, and validation requirements and processes" (Olweny et al., 2021, 76).

Taken together, these four essays illustrate the power of empathy, clear communication, and collaboration when developing more inclusive architecture curricula and design studio environments. They remind us that design educators don't operate in a vacuum—there are countless perspectives outside of architecture that we can learn from as we become more effective, inclusive teachers. This collection shows how the tough work of creating more supportive learning environments can be aided by diversifying the voices represented in our studios and classrooms—whether by opening doors, or by engaging community partners, Indigenous elders, or by pedagogy research from other disciplines.

These essays do not offer an overview of the field, although they do contribute an understanding about various areas. In the larger context of education, inclusive pedagogies are in a process of reinterpretation. The common point is that exclusion is their opposite. If inclusive pedagogies are about removing barriers and providing meaningful participation to all learners as Tim Loreman (2017) has argued, then much has to change. A good place to start is in exploring the question proposed by Garcia and Frankowski (2020): "If architecture schools have been center (sic) to some of the ideal projections of the built environment, who is allowed to dream these scenarios?" Moreover, it is imperative to conceive those inclusive spaces for teaching and learning and to put them into action. Finally, these essays demonstrate the need for research to assess the effectiveness of the adoption of a variety of approaches that break the structures that persist in maintaining the status quo system.

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