



Practice
Research
Symposium



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Barcelona
23-26 November
2017

Candidate
Abstracts &
Images

PRS Barcelona



November 2017



Guests:

Prof Jonathan Hill
Dr Yael Reisner
Prof Kester Rattenbury
Mr Louis Kruger
A/Prof Boris Broman Jensen
Ms Nancy Cogswell

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Introduction from Chair

Dr. phil. habil. Marcelo Stamm

“THE BARRIO IS HOT” proclaims a bill-board in Poblenou, the Barcelona District hosting the November 2017 RMIT EU Practice Research Symposium. A particular sense of ambition, of driven transformation and innovation, but also a sense of daring speculation and nostalgia contribute to the district’s present micro-climate. In its very heart RMIT Europe has recently opened its new premises in the iconic MediaTIC building.

In order to celebrate this significant addition to the HOT BARRIO, but also in order to open its new doors to the European PRS Community of Practice, RMIT Europe is hosting the PRS Keynote, our traditional PRS Opening Lecture, in MediaTIC.

The Practice Research Symposium as such is once again unfolding at BAU, the hugely successful Barcelona Design College, which itself epitomizes the vision of Poblenou as the “Innovation District 22@”.

“THE MODEL IS HOT”: Arguably, no other model redefines the concept of ‘embedded research’ quite as radically as the PRS model. This game-changing research paradigm aims to release the ‘sealed cognitive research capital’ in the creative practice of venturesome practitioners as it seeks to make explicit and voice research knowledge which is per default implicit and tacit in ongoing design practice.

The result is also a paradigm shift in the way of bridging the gap between the private and public sectors, industry and academy. 100 participants from 18 different countries turn the Nov 2017 European PRS into an international polyphonic event.

The wide range of established and emerging design areas and creative art practices involved take the PRS EU to its next level as a unique multi- and trans-disciplinary research platform.



Contents



Events

- 06 Book celebration – *Robin Boyd: Spatial Continuity* by Mauro Baracco and Louise Wright
07 Opening Event – *The Barrio is Hot* (RMIT Executive Director, PRE EU Director, Dean, School of Architecture and Design)

PhD Examinations

- 11 Peter Cody *Practical Fiction*
12 Alice Casey *Tangible Thinking: Methods in the work of TAKA Architects*
13 Cian Deegan *Decorum, Exotica and Pragmatics. Motivations in the work of TAKA Architects*
14 Denis Byrne *The Purposeful Frame, Sociality and Space Formation*
15 Colm Moore *A Space of Encounter*

Progress Reviews

- 18 Mohammed Ali *Marginal energy speculations*
19 Mark Baskinger *Archaeocentric Design*
20 Carla Boserman *Experimental cultures and material research. An approach to the production of epistemic objects in art and design*
21 Marta Camps Banqué *Teaching experiences in a workshop – Coexistence of regulated knowledge and wild practices in learning*
22 Damiano Cerrone *Urban metaMorphology. Revealing the intangible forms of the city*
23 Gyungju Chyon *Embodying Betweenness: designing lively artefacts through imperfection, impermanence and incompleteness*
24 Donal Colfer *Overlapping Knowledge*
25 Matias del Campo *Autonomous Tectonics, points, lines and mass*
26 Dermot Foley *Small imperfections*
27 Graham Ford *Pavilions, Parks and the Picturesque*
28 Enric Ruiz Geli *It's All About Particles*
29 Mark Hackett *Parallel Practice. Architecture and Urbanism with Social Purpose*

- 30 Karin Helms *The facilitator method in anticipatory large landscape strategies*
31 Emma Jackson *Turn and Face the Strange*
32 James Langdon *What is an isomorph?*
33 Josianito Llorente *On Making Sounds (OMS). Music Tinkerers, sound artifacts and technological innovation*
34 Karli Luik *The dark context and its tacit dimension*
35 Tarla MacGabhann *Design Development and Connections to Landscape*
36 Sandra Manninger *Sketching with software*
37 Keiran McGonigle *Abstraction and Landscape in the work of McGonigle McGrath Architects*
38 Manuel Muehlbauer *Typogenetic Design*
39 Fraser Muggeridge *A Knowing Wrongness*
40 Amy Muir *Curating the observed*
41 Siobhán Ní Éanaigh *unearthing ground – form...pigment...something 'other'*
42 Claudia Pasquero *Polycephalum 0.4*
43 Sille Pihlak *The materialization of the digital society: algorithmic processes in timber architecture and design*
44 Anna Pla Catala *SuperBlock_SmartGrid and the Architecture of the Ill-Tempered Environment*
45 Marco Poletto *Systemic Architecture. Polycephalum.City*
46 Eva Prats *"To observe with the client, to draw with the existing"
Three cases of architecture dealing with the As Found*
47 Mark Raymond *Practice as project: an eidetic survey*
48 Simon Spain *All that we are: All that I am: All that we can be*
49 Johan Tali *Exhibiting, Designing and Governing Environments: Public Behaviours From White Cubes to Future Societies*
50 Siim Tuksam *Organised Chaos*
51 Gill Wildman *Making spaces for people to play: Designing for Incompleteness*

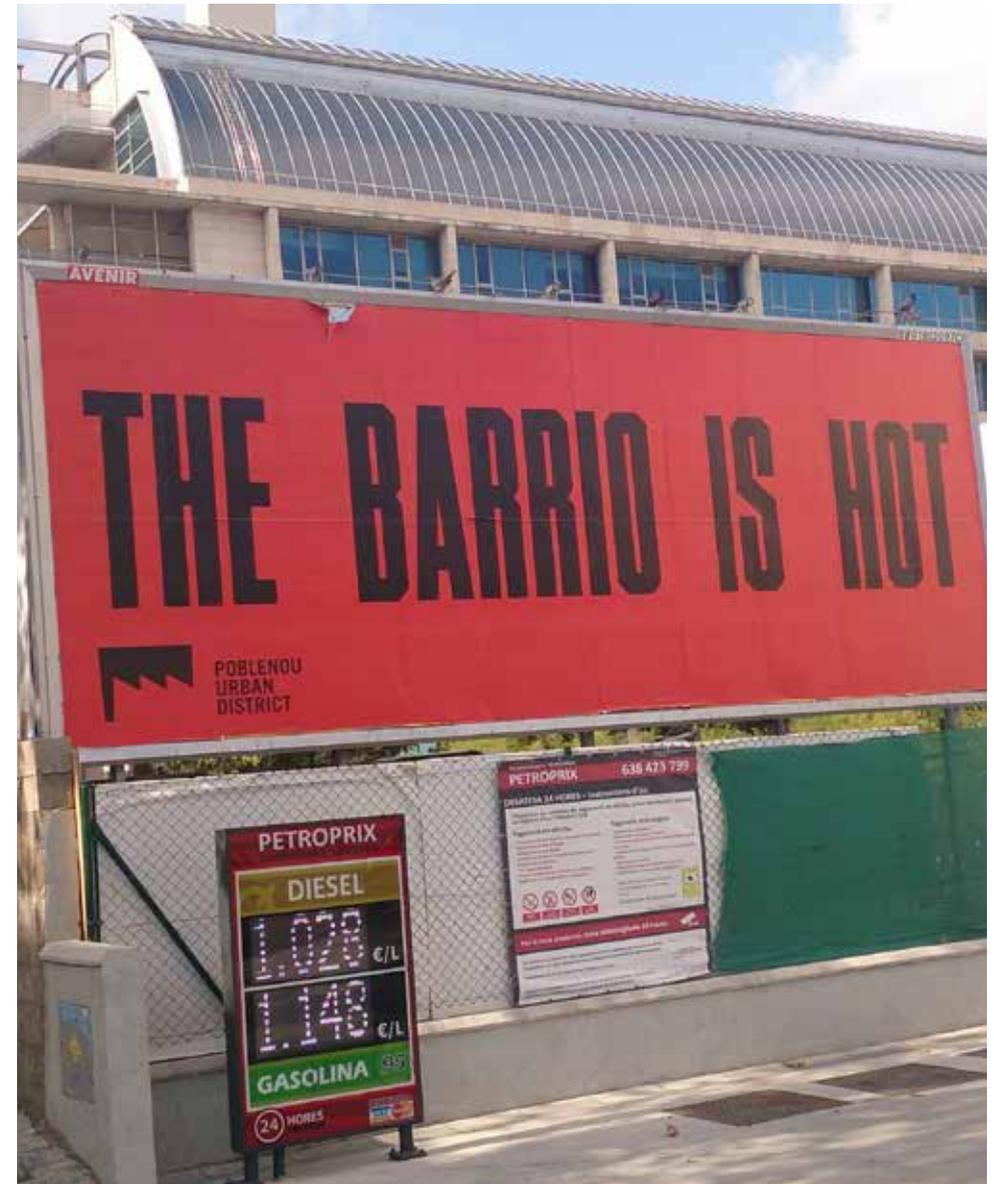
Maps

- 54 Maps of PRS venues

Robin Boyd: Spatial Continuity

Australian architect Robin Boyd (1919–1971) advocated tirelessly for the voice of Australian architects so that there could be an architecture that might speak to Australian conditions and sensibilities. His legacy continues in the work of contemporary Australian architects yet also prompts a way forward for architecture. A quality of continuous space is found in his work; this is particularly evident in relationship to the landscapes they inhabit – where the buildings are spatially reliant and sympathetic to the places they occupy.

A selection of 22 projects are documented comprehensively in this book for the first time. This slice through Boyd's body of work reveals a gifted, complex and contemporary thinker.



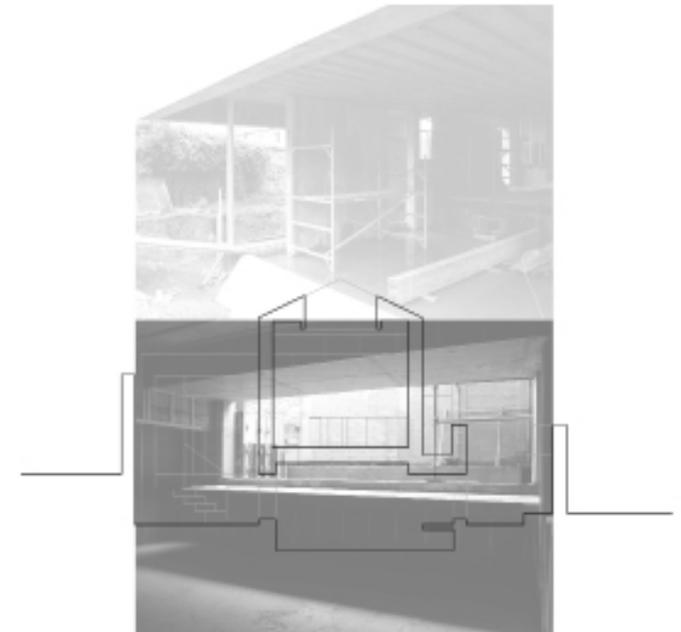
**PhD
Examinations**

**November
2017**



Practical Fiction

My interest is the space that arises between how things are made and how they are made up. The overlap and interplay between the execution of a work through the application of technique, the resolution of detail on the one hand, and the processes of thought that circulate around the project on the other. A fictional narrative that both underpins and scaffolds the project, allowing for the case specific creation of a value system in which otherwise seemingly arbitrary decisions can find meaning and resolution through what is described as, a '*precision of atmosphere*'.



Alice Casey
PhD (Architecture and Design)
RMIT University

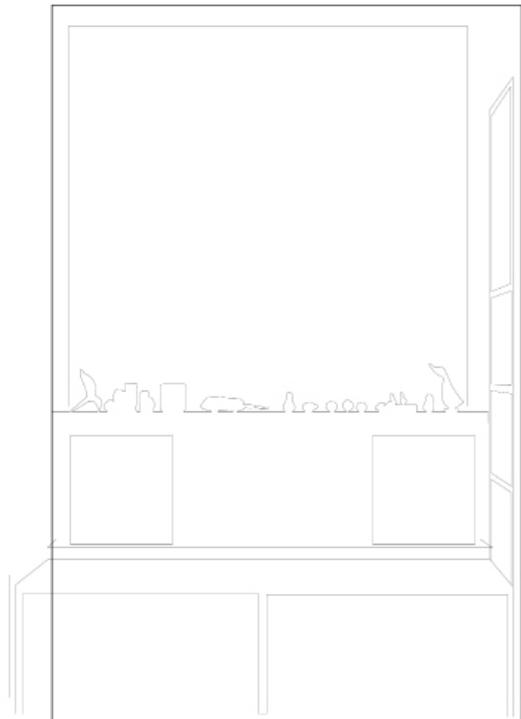
Thursday 23 November, 14.00 - 16.00 GMT 14
BAU, Carrer de Pujades 118
Examiners: Prof Kester Rattenbury, Mr Louis Kruger
Chair: Prof Vivian Mitsogianni
Supervisors: Prof Richard Blythe, Prof Johan Van Den Berghe,
with special support from Prof Leon van Schaik

Tangible Thinking: Methods in the work of TAKA Architects

I have reflected on our Practice by looking closely at the things we make – be they drawings, photographs, technical details or the buildings themselves. The purpose of my research is to show that the tacit or unarticulated aspects of a creative process (in this case the creative process of TAKA architects) can be clearly demonstrated through a close examination of the artefacts it produces.

I have looked at the things we make, to try and see them as they are and, from there, to try and understand how they came to be that way.

My research is about HOW we look; and, as a result, HOW we work, research, practice and design. I have examined the relationship of the drawing to the building and the photograph, and how that inflects our design process; how we practice through 'learning by doing' and 'trial and error', with specific reference to the use of concrete in our practice; the development of research and drawing methods to illustrate our design thinking; and how we design through distillation, exaggeration and intensification.



Cian Deegan
PhD (Architecture and Design)
RMIT University

Thursday 23 November, 17.00 - 19.00 GMT 15
BAU, Carrer de Pujades 118
Examiners: A/Prof Boris Broman Jensen, Ms Nancy Cogswell
Chair: A/Prof Paul Minifie
Supervisors: Prof Leon van Schaik, Prof Johan Van Den Berghe, Dr Jan van Schaik

Decorum, Exotica and Pragmatics. Motivations in the work of TAKA Architects

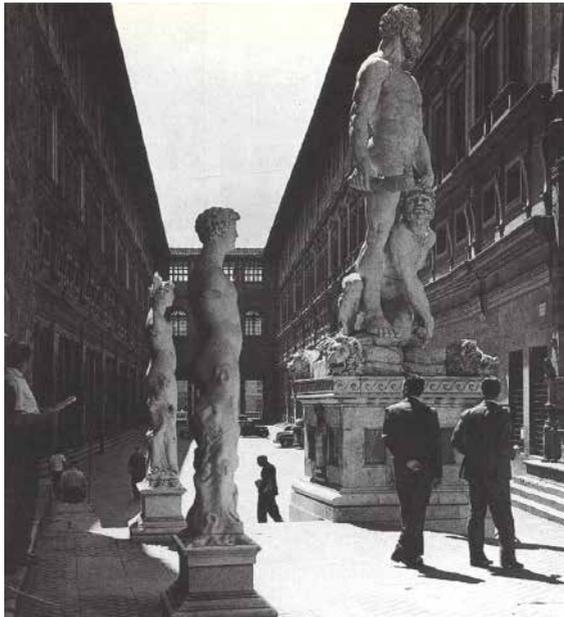
This examination intends to share the insights into our practice that I have made through the vehicle of this research. In it, I intend to explicate the particular sensibilities which drive the work of the practice and to show how these were formed, and how they operate in the architectural work of TAKA Architects. The examination focuses around three dominant discoveries made through this research – *Decorum*, *Exotica* and *Pragmatics*.



The Purposeful Frame, Sociality and Space Formation

This critical practice PhD presentation, by focusing on my work through the prism of the Practice Research Symposium process, frames the twin concepts of architecture and society and examines their relationship to each other. It particularly focuses on the architect's role in society, what opportunities that role might offer, and identifies activities and ideas where the architect may make a contribution to the twin concepts. With that in mind and firmly noted as the ground of this PhD, it explores my work and ideas and aims to show where these contribute to a greater understanding and wider appreciation of the social engagement possibilities inherent in the profession of architect.

The PhD introduces several concepts that constellate the two powerful human ideas of Architecture and Society and places them within, what I have called The Purposeful Frame. The concepts introduced include three main ideas – Significant Movement, Social Attitude and Social Potential, with other spin off thoughts, and these will be explored more fully in the presentation, through an examination of my work and ideas, and those of other people.



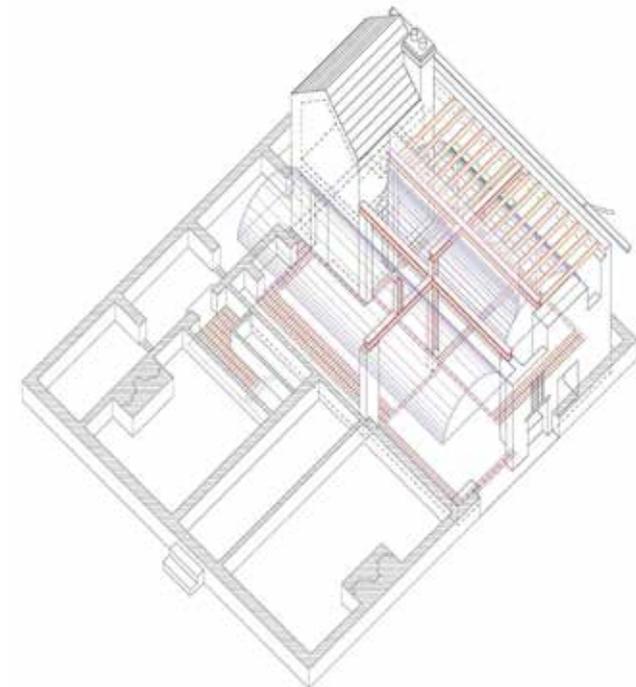
A Space of Encounter

This research has been focused on the kinds of conversation that house the creative practices of Clancy Moore Architects. It describes an evolving working process documenting a tension that sits at the heart of our practice, between a determined 'will to order' and a growing embrace of the indeterminate; a dialectic between the ideal and lived space.

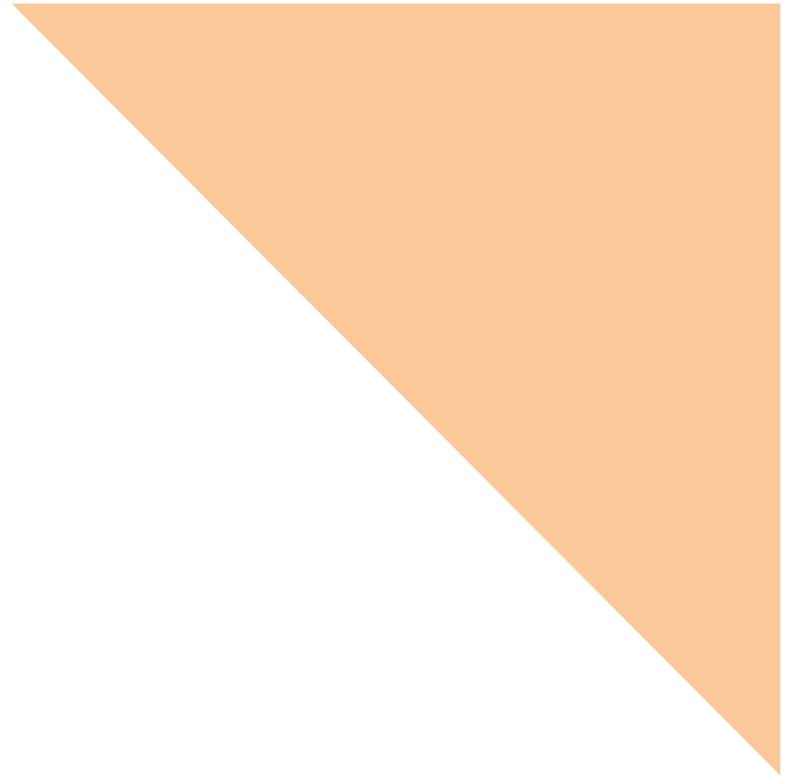
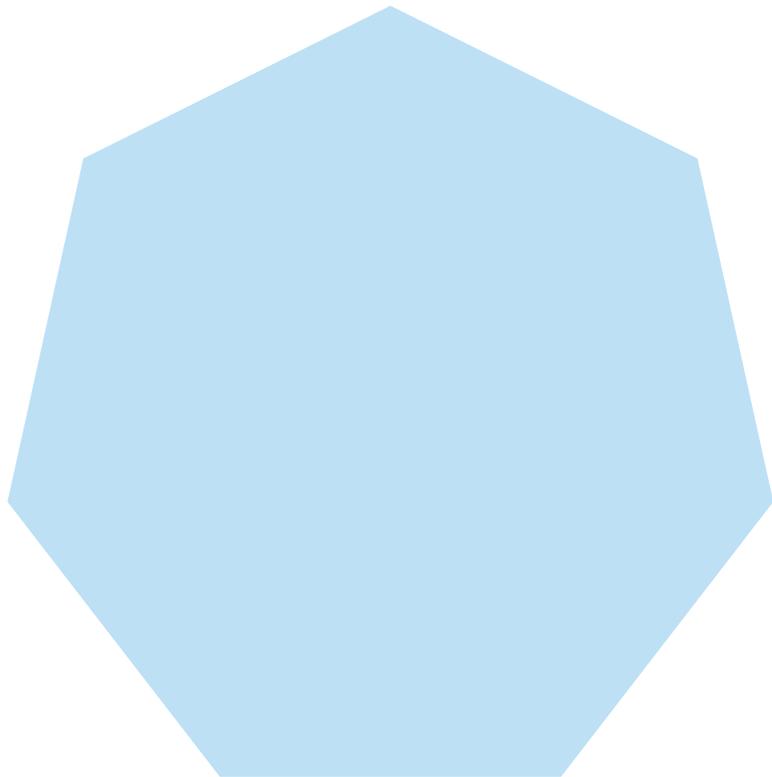
Accepting that all work is born in a network of relations the research examines the development of a relational design approach that commands the resolution of multiple contingencies in an open process rather than

the imposition of any unifying system. In doing so, in our work, we seek to establish a space of encounter that allows for meaning to be elaborated collectively.

Drawings and models are used as a tool to explicate the evolution of various projects demonstrating a design methodology of fragmentation and figuration. Conversation is central to this process as is the moment when construction becomes animate. When architecture gains a voice. It is a process of joining things and allowing them to speak, both individually and together.



**Progress
Reviews**



**November
2017**

Marginal energy speculations

Through time, our societies and cultures have accumulated multiple layers of complex energy relationships. Rethinking and redesigning this entangled stratified morass has been problematic, as it requires overturning decades, centuries or millennia old ways of thinking and practice, where multiple incremental changes are slowly absorbed one on top of another. Humanity has exploited energy external to that produced by our bodies in many different ways for perhaps a million years. Campfires have sustained us for the majority of this time, but since the beginning of agriculture, our societies and economies have needed ever increasing amounts of power. Much of that energy has been generated in a limited number of ways, constrained by productivity

models. The necessity for renewable energy now introduces the possibility for speculative interventions to happen at the margins. It is at these unprofitable places, previously unimagined generation methods can be used. In addition, the research aims to promote different models through which this energy can be consumed by rethinking the nature of use.

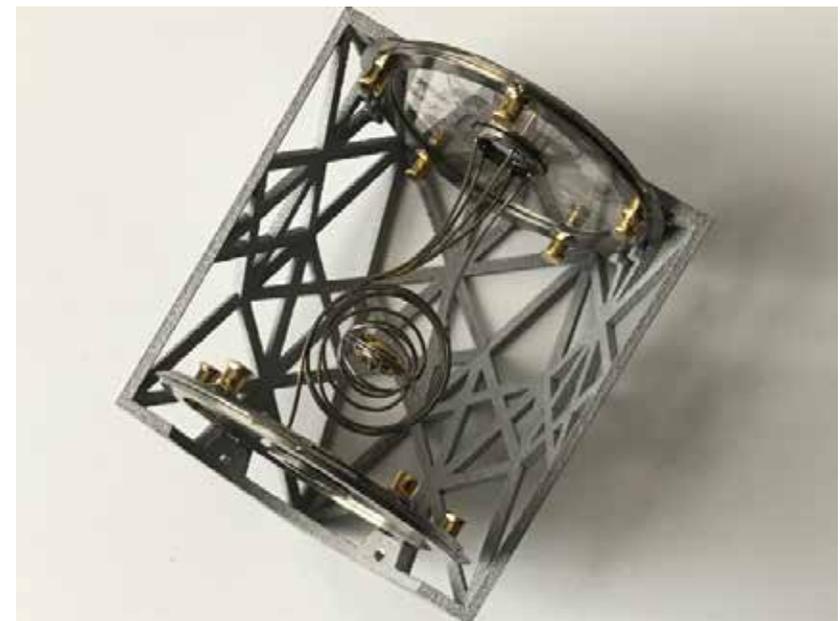
Since energy is the medium through which the research is conducted, there is much work that could be done, speculating at different scales in the local environments and communities where the investigations take place.



Archaeocentric Design

This creative practice research project operates across the fields of industrial design (artifacts) and communication design (systems) informed by an interest in archaeology. The intention of the research is to situate industrial design practice in the context of 21st century design concerns and within the emerging field of Transition Design. The research introduces and explores a new archaeocentric design frame as a metaphor that considers the temporality, phenomenology, and materiality of objects. Project-based propositions serve as the primary means to investigate objects/artifacts as systems of communication, whose reach can extend beyond a human

scale of time into the very distant future. The work synthesizes and extends research and pedagogy within industrial design curricula that focus on communication as a fundamental concern and aims to influence contemporary industrial design education and practice for a disciplinary pivot and alignment with Transition Design. Building upon Goethe's concept of the *Ur-phenomenon* and Morton's *hyperobjects*, this research asks 1. What are the tangible and conceptual touch points to connect an archaeocentric frame with Industrial Design and Transition Design? and 2. What are the material properties of objects designed for temporalities beyond a human scale?



**Experimental cultures and material research.
An approach to the production of epistemic objects in art and design**

This work explores forms of experimental culture and material research in contemporary art and design practices. My focus is on the production of epistemic objects and how these operate in these areas. Objects that materialize that which we do not yet know, what is still to be known. In this second year of my research I have taken the "laboratory studies" as a frame of reference and analysis. In my work I move from scientific laboratories to pose my gaze on forms of experimental culture in art and design and the spaces, artistic laboratories. To do so I have developed part of my fieldwork this year at Hangar.org, a contemporary art production centre, where I have been able to continue exploring graphic research methods

that allow me to become sensitive to my object of study. During this fieldwork and in my daily teaching practice, I approach the epistemology of things, aiming to detect and analyse the creation and production of epistemic objects in art and design. Some of these extravagant objects are self-made, others have appeared in the classroom, some are probes, others are material fictions, mediating models, empathic drawings, invented tools, etc. They share in common that they help us understand the role that art and design have in the production of knowledge.



**Teaching Experiences in a Workshop –
Coexistence of regulated knowledge and wild practices in learning**

The current research project explores, from a pedagogical perspective, the tensions between regulated forms of knowledge and wilder forms of wisdom and learning that take place in the context of the art workshop or studio based practices. This work looks into hybrid spaces of knowledge where the epistemological foundations inherited from modernity can be shaken and put into question. Challenging the binary logic that still today structures our cultural and pedagogical practices, which create a rift between

thinking from doing, deduction and intuition, presentation and representation, nature and culture, subjects and objects, etc. It is in this context that I analyze the art workshop as a playful space that opens the possibility to displace the scientific paradigm as a locus of knowledge allowing other types of wisdom to emerge. I will introduce key concepts of my current research through a specific practice, the construction of color taxonomies, which I have developed as a workshop.

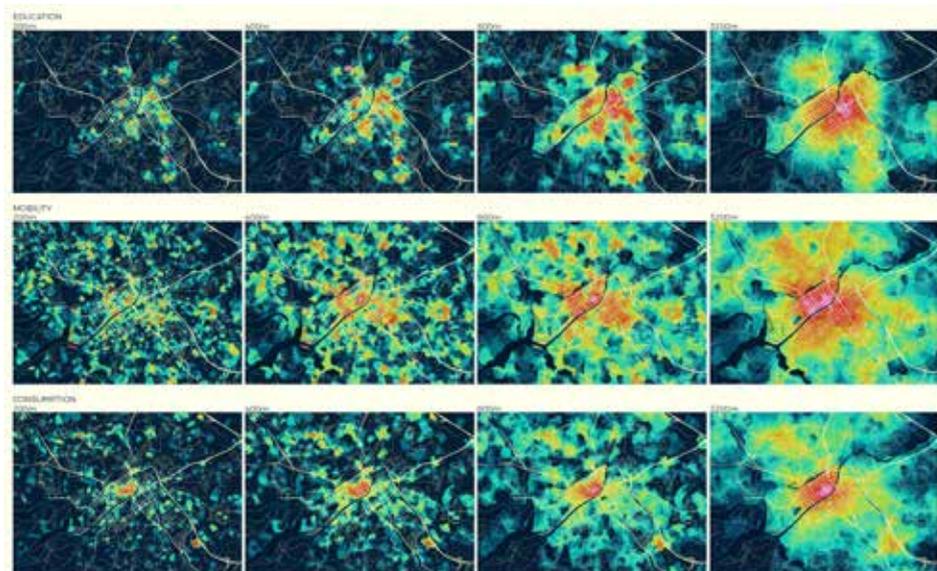


***Urban metaMorphology.
Revealing the intangible forms of the city***

Digital connectivity has challenged the power of physical space. As the body is becoming marginal for social interactions and labour, so does public space. Life in the city is no longer dependent on the configuration of physical space only but there are new dynamics of interaction between people and between people and the city. Consequently, a whole new set of local, urban, regional patterns of use are emerging and they are visible through social media data.

In my PhD I present the metaMorphological approach, a method and a toolbox that analyses Spatial Accessibility, Activity Patterns and Socio-economic values to gain a novel understanding of the intangible processes underneath the urban fabric. I developed my practice as principal at SPIN

Unit, a transnational R&D deploying the metaMorphological approach for the study of 100 cities in Europe and Russia, consulting both public and private enterprises. In parallel, I generated a circular exchange of knowledge between academy and practice. I have developed the metaMorphology approach starting from urban theories which were tested and transformed to practice. Knowledge gained from this exchange was shared back to the academy through the metaMorphology Lab, taught in different universities in Europe and Russia. Eventually, this experience is generating a continuous circular process between Theory, Practice and Education, sharing and producing knowledge between all the institutions and practices involved.



Activity patterns in the city of Turku based on location based social media data.

Embodying Betweenness: designing lively artefacts through imperfection, impermanence and incompleteness

Embodying Betweenness investigates tendencies within the *interactive* field of materials, environments and makers, and their latent qualities of making artefacts that feel alive.

Despite often appearing to be self-contained, artefacts exist in dynamic, relational fields. This research project began with an interest in how things appear *lively* and how this might connect with the ways in which they engage fields of relationality. Approaching artefacts and materials with a heightened sense of their relationality, this design research explores ecologies of interactions between materials, environments and maker, through a series of projects.

While working with this ecology of interactions, qualities of the *impermanence* of assemblages, the *incompleteness* of materials, and the *imperfectness* of interactions are celebrated and brought forward. These are tendencies of *betweenness*, a notion developed from the concepts of *wabi-sabi* and *ma*, that arises between materials, environment and maker.

Embodying *betweenness* in artefacts may offer an approach to designing artefacts that generate a sense of 'aliveness'. If so, are there communicable ways of approaching design practice to these ends? These questions are explored through reflecting on past projects, and working on new projects with a wide variety of materials such as algae, fog, sensors, ceramics, and textiles.



Overlapping Knowledge

My attitude to practice has evolved through working on a diverse body of built and unbuilt projects in Dublin city and its suburbs. This has resulted in the development of an approach to agency in a particular environment that is informed by established relationships. Ideologies have been tested around a framework of partners.

In 2013 I was invited by my family's community of Hook Head Peninsula to work in partnership with Wexford Co. Council on the regeneration of Slade fishing village. Involvement in this ongoing project has led to further speculative private design projects on this promontory on the south-east coast of Ireland.

This research hopes to examine the impact of repositioning geographically specific knowledge. It looks to document how possible social tensions could arise as a local architectural culture is challenged. This would also examine necessary revisions to a developed approach to critical practice while incorporating new networks and sensibilities.



Autonomous Tectonics, points, lines and mass

The thesis of this PhD is primarily interested in the application of points and lines in the era of computational design. The author would argue that the application of Metaballs in architecture can be described as one of the earlier attempts to apply a point driven, algorithmic process, to describe mass. As for the combination with computer controlled machines one specific effect has to be kept in mind: Every computer controlled machine relies on a tool path – a line – to describe forms in space.

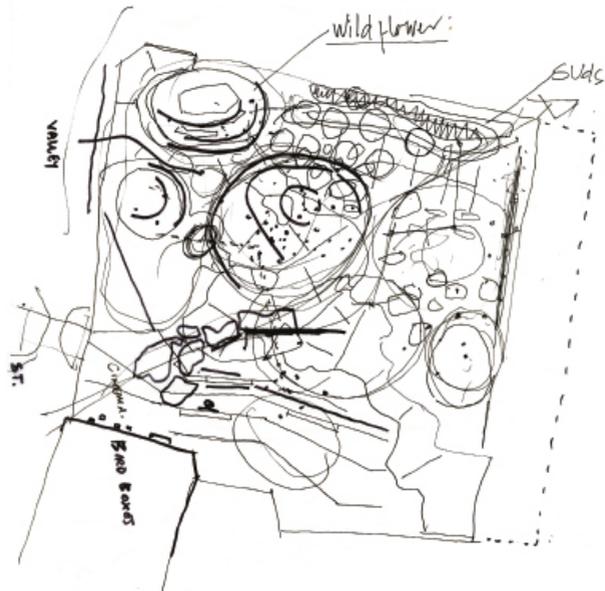
The emergence of Big Data as a forming agent in architecture poses a paradigmatic shift in the idea of architectural tectonics. The motion away from the preoccupation with the amassing of volumes in favor of an alternative that deals with points and lines as coordinates of origin of architectural objects poses a paradigmatic shift. This idea describes a synthetic ecology that forms a natural habitat for ideas oscillating between computational environments and computer controlled fabrication methods.



Small imperfections

The practice is evolving new geometries as a response to the research, both in terms of a heightened consciousness of the characteristics of past work and a desire to find new ways of working. Small imperfections are being recognised as determining factors in the design process and are giving rise to new configurations and aesthetics. Recent activity in the practice

attempts to develop work which lies between drawing in-the-office and action on-the-ground. PRS 4 includes an exhibition of plan drawings from the practice which identifies influences over time, a disclosure of new practices and new geometries as well as a discussion of ongoing demonstration projects.



Pavilions, Parks and the Picturesque

In this PRS I will develop and expand on our interpretation of the landscapes we have encountered in our work. Kew Gardens, Hyde Park and the Lee Valley are part of the great system of estates and parks that together with the country houses, pavilions, temples and boathouses, lakes and canals create a complete environment that can be interpreted and 'read'. Our new interventions form a new layer onto this rich history.

In contrast to the interventions in large scale landscapes numerous collaborations with large practices on mega projects including Masdar City and the London 2012 Olympic Games will be discussed. I will present how our practice has collaborated in the design

development of building systems including furniture, door systems, wall systems and display elements used in these projects.

We seek to work across scales from interiors to landscape. In this way we are building a more complete understanding of the historic and technological continuum; how the large scale infrastructure such as the railway was supported by the building infrastructure; how the landscape was transformed by engineering and design and how artefacts were constructed in the past and how these artefacts should now be preserved or adapted and changed.



It's All About Particles

As the beginning, the thesis is presented at Venice Biennale of Architecture 2012. Science: Physics of Particles. The architecture of Enric Ruiz Geli is articulated by particle theory, from the visualization of landscape – as a global concept, the sum of space plus social relationships – to the design and construction of projects. This theory interprets reality at the level of the particles, which provides it with information, designing strategies over time for the interpretation both of the tectonic or material (territory, buildings, people) and of the climatic or incorporeal (light, temperature, relative humidity, rain, wind, salt, CO², photosynthesis).

Using 3D laser scanning technologies and sensors installed on site, the landscape is recorded at the level of particles. These particles reproduce a condition of a landscape that maintains direct link with the territory. Work with particles behaviour over time, acting from the exterior morphology to the performance of parts. The most innovative manufacturing methods allow direct transposition from the 3D file to the construction. In this way, the reality is understood as performing particles inside an empathic society in which human beings and nature speak a common language, that of Particles Architecture.



***Parallel Practice
Architecture and Urbanism with Social Purpose***

The study will firstly document and analyse the architectural and urban practice which has operated in parallel for over 10 years. Whilst these modes of practice seem dislocated from each other, the methods of both are reflective and seek to develop architecture with social purpose.

The architecture has a strain of spatial and sectional concerns that seek public space and responsibility regardless of the programme. This will include a review of seven theatre and performance spaces and development of a number of terrace street typologies adapted to the city.

Both modes of practice are largely carried out in Belfast, its fragmented urban, political and social environment is mirrored in the modes of practice, the introduction will consider the modes of survival in this context. The urban work has developed over four phases, whilst these have been published the first chapter will give an overview and clarify recent urban roles and purposes.

I want to examine how these modes of practice can be presented publicly to different audiences. In part, this concern relates to how the practice is 'marketed', how it is perceived and how it presents itself.



The facilitator method in anticipatory large landscape strategies

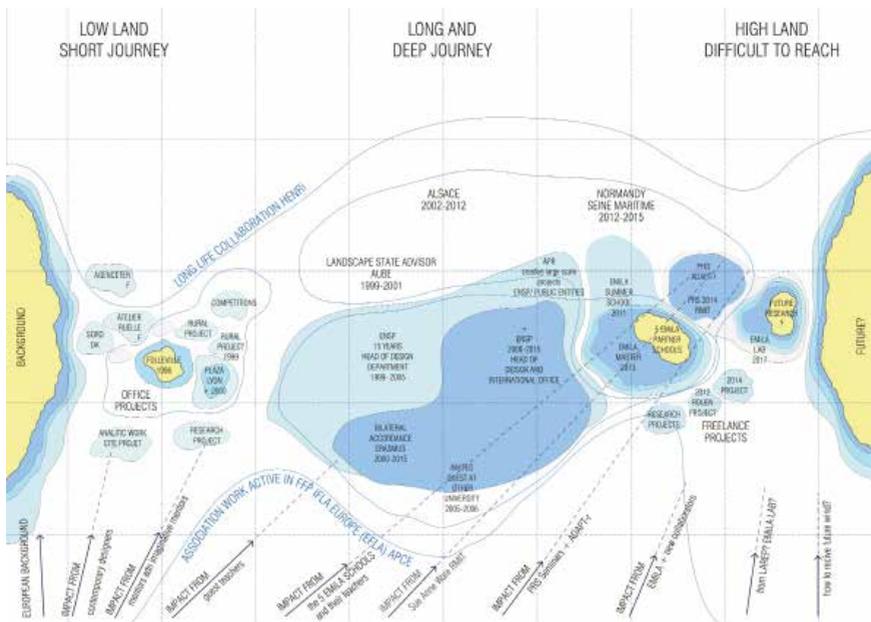
Europe's cultural landscapes are under pressure due to economic and social developments – and more recently due to a much faster pace of climate change than in the past.

As a landscape architect I work with local actors or students to imagine their futures.

My contribution to the topic has been to use design to draw up a proactive strategy for preparing future changes, transformations, an acceptance of disappearances and the integration of new artefacts in large cultural landscapes. Since the last milestone review, I have 'decrypted' through new projects and a self conducted workshop what is the method I'm using to 'activate' landscape transformations.

The method draws on tacit knowledge and interpretative landscape reading to develop a five-step method – the research methodology involved a self-conducted project in Northern Normandy with local actors and administrative as well as reflecting on various teaching experiences during different European workshops.

My contribution to the discipline is to highlight two factors – the role of a facilitator in designing large landscapes for and with locals, and the testing of a tool used to activate landscape processes on a large scale.



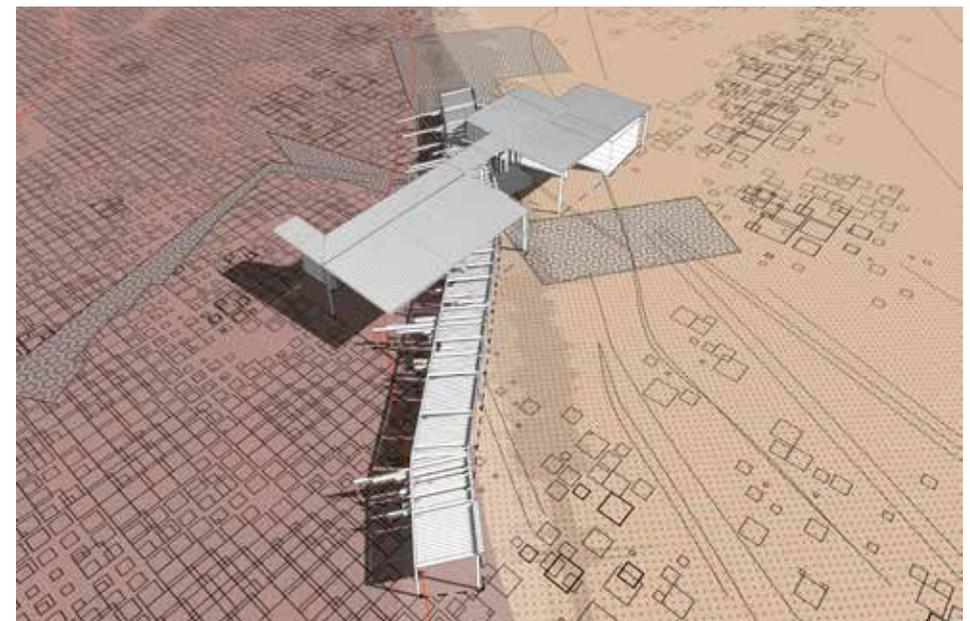
Turn and Face the Strange

In biblical terms the desert represented a place inhospitable to humans. It was a home to Satan and wild creatures and if Jesus was present, angels. The writer Bruce Pascoe remarks that 'desert' is a term Europeans use to describe areas where they can't grow wheat and sheep. Conflicting histories and understandings of Australia are the territory I locate my practice in.

The research leverages off various initiatives to grow populations outside of Australia's main cities. Royalties for Regions in WA is one of those initiatives and aspires to grow viable cities in the Pilbara that are economically independent of mining. This position is not judged for its credibility, but rather engaged with wholeheartedly as an opportunity to

engage with some of the many things that have not been acknowledged about the North.

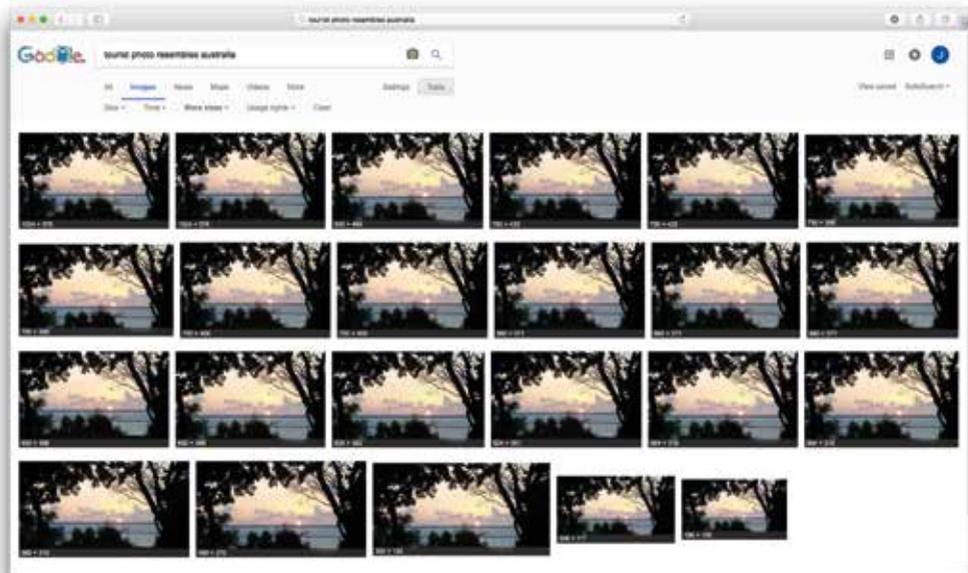
The cultural significance of the desert, the remoteness and volatility of the Pilbara are used as design processes in the research. The unassuming towns in the Pilbara that await their civic promotions become ideal incubators to test a spectrum of imagined futures about the Australian city. Design opportunities lie dormant in the anxieties and instability of isolation. Unsettled histories await agitation to find form.



What is an isomorph?

I am interrogating the mathematical concept of 'isomorphism' as a graphic design strategy. According to Wolfram Mathworld, "The word derives from the Greek *iso*, meaning "equal," and *morphosis*, meaning "to form" or "to shape". ... Informally, an isomorphism is a map that preserves sets and relations among elements.' The term is used in a design context following the English designer Norman Potter (1923–1995). I am presenting works that make isomorphic moves to

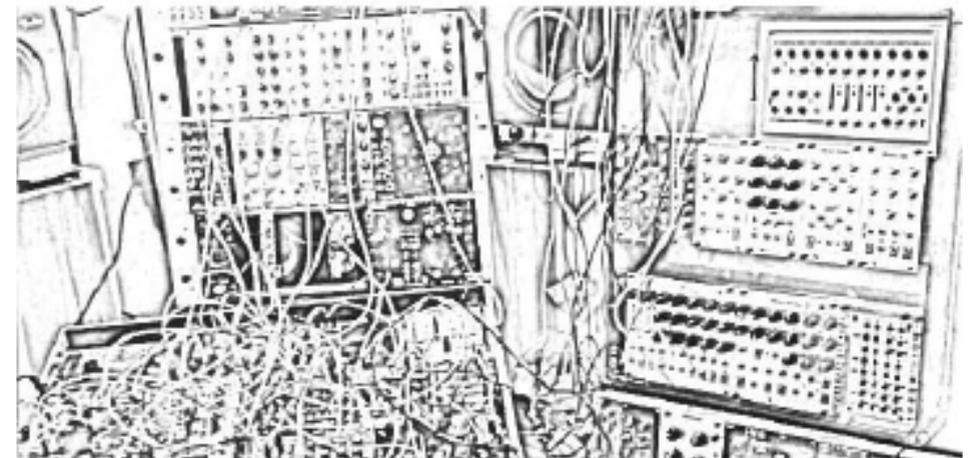
represent the work of contemporary artists in publications, typically books. In this context an isomorph is understood as an approach that imaginatively relates design decisions of a material, procedural, relational, or graphic nature to defining conceptual propositions in the artistic practices being represented, ideally to emphasise the meaningfulness of those propositions.



***On Making Sounds (OMS)
Music Tinkers, sound artifacts and technological innovation***

This research project explores the relationships between the practices of electronic and digital craftsmanship within the musical field and the processes of technological innovation. It studies designers and communities of builders trying to know the conditions of possibility – epistemic, socio-technical, organizational and economic – under which they generate sound artifacts and artistic practices with a capacity for

critical and collective social transformation. To achieve this, I develop an ethnographic field work that has two key elements: A "material", post-human and multisituated approach that attends to the sound objects as creators of social reality and a performative self-ethnographic process where I construct the artifacts of the communities I'm investigating.



The dark context and its tacit dimension

The research of my practice has so far relied on mostly three different concepts that I have seen as triggering and relevant throughout my work: the political(ity), the abject, and the umwelt.

1. political(ity) – with the focus of the amount of impact architecture can really have. It is the articulation of the intention of producing architecture that would be subversive, a desire to create spaces capable of contesting the norms.

2. abject – referring to Julia Kristeva's writings with the focus on bodily experiences provided through architecture. The subversion that is tactically addressed towards the users. A personal body politics.

3. umwelt – with the focus of how the designs relate to the local context and how contextuality could be defined with regard to my practice. Coming from Jakob van Uexküll it stresses the arbitrariness of contexts, especially relevant in spatial realm.

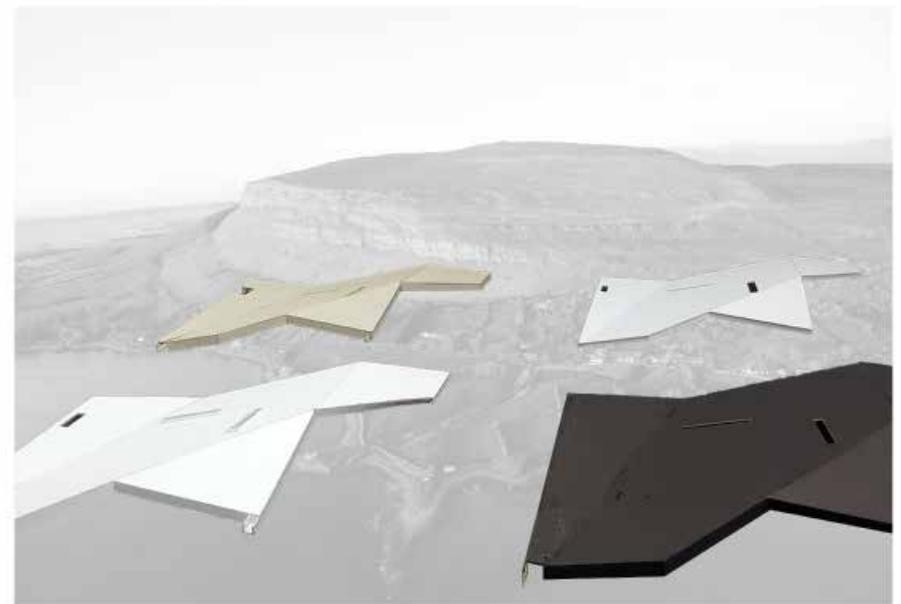
Through these terms I have developed the concept of dark context(uality) that I can see as the key element capable of opening up the tacit dimension. It is borrowed from astrophysics (dark matter) and ecology (dark diversity) to become a tactical dimension in architecture – the physical quality of absence.



Design Development and Connections to Landscape

In PRS 1, I investigated how Liam McCormick's churches stood the test of time 40 years after completion, while for PRS 2, I investigated how MacGabhann Architects Public Services Centre stood the test of time 15 years after completion, and how design strategies and elements influenced by McCormick informed that design. Now for PRS 3, I will consider other designs from MacGabhann Architects and what methods were deployed in the design strategy of those other buildings.

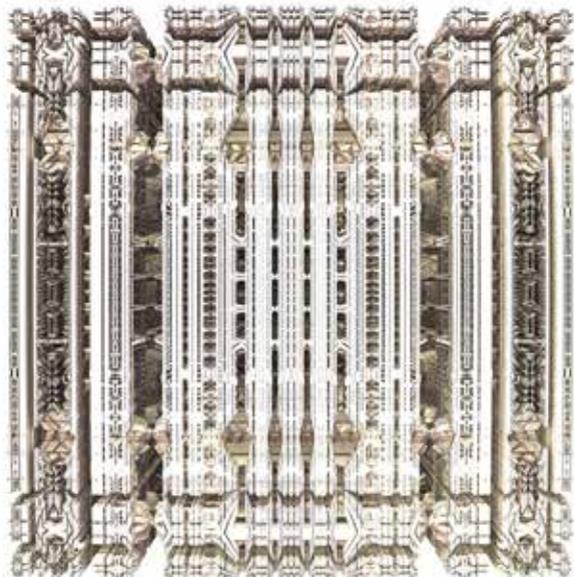
This will involve examining the design development via models, the decisions and editing process employed to arrive at a design and its connections with the landscape and topography. As part of this I will examine how the design ambition compares with the built project, and by developing a self-critique of other projects in the office I hope to formulate more specifically design speculations for the future.



Sketching with software

The architecture of SPAN del Campo Manninger Architects orbits around the rigorous application of geometries in the generation of their designs. Based on a catalogue of recent projects the author introduces specific sets of geometries and how they are applied in SPAN's office. Sketching with computational fabrication. The research question will observe how

new fabrication strategies are influencing the design approach and its immediate, intermediate, and long-term results, from detail to data. This section will introduce how the application of computational tools has shaped the author's current investigation in computational tools and fabrication and the necessities and changes in designing design protocols.



Abstraction and Landscape in the work of McGonigle McGrath Architects

The 5 Year House.

The research investigates abstraction and landscape in the work of McGonigle McGrath Architects.

Previously, I have identified strands of thought relating to the use of proportion, the relevance of landscape, and the role of narrative within our practice. Knowledge of proportion is the constant that helps the practice navigate through the process of making architecture, from landscape (position, plinth), to artefact (building), to object (detail), returning again to the landscape, often observed as a translation of lines.

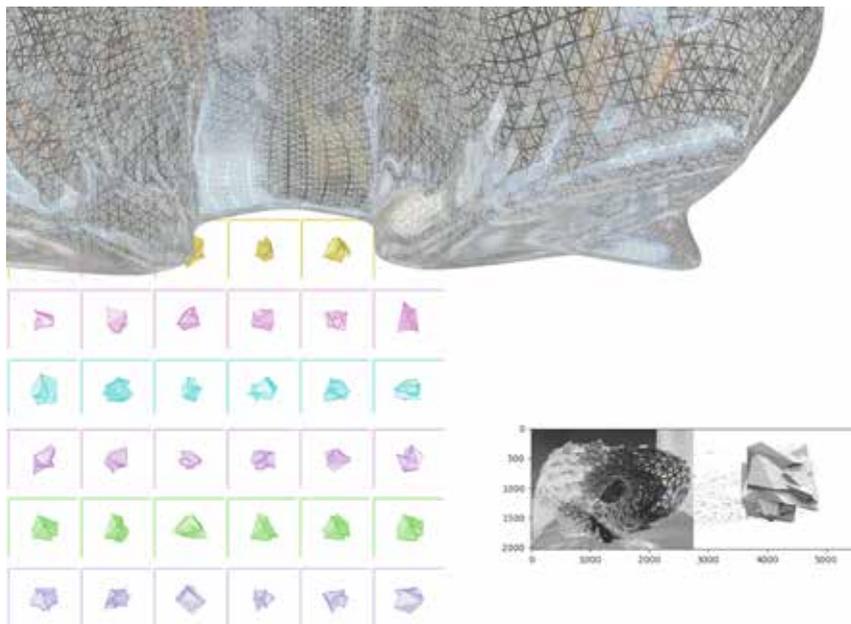
I have continued the research by returning to the home of the author, 'The 5 Year House', a partly experimental project and the first project in the practice where the accumulation of a knowledge of proportional ratios was employed unhindered as a means of composition. Examination of this project through resurvey has led to an unravelling of translations, tolerances and application which can be related to this and subsequent projects both built and in progress, and to a developing methodology within the practice.



Typogenetic Design

Intelligent systems impact on a variety of fields and provide a wide range of opportunities to reinterpret processes and increase productivity. This research investigates the use of cutting edge intelligent systems methodology to find out how it can increase the performance of computational design through cognitive augmentation. This research established an adaptive framework for performance-based creative design and explored novel approaches to increase productivity of designers by augmenting human decision-making capabilities with intelligent systems. In reflection on the major projects conducted during this research, systems practice in architecture as a practice for the systems design and structured understanding

of performance-based creative design were developed. On the strength of machine capabilities, the developed human-in-the-loop system integrates performance trade-off extending the operational performance of generative design in initial stages of architectural design. Integrating designers in iterative design systems interactively allows to address the complexity of design processes in respect to multi-factorial decision making processes. Integrating the adaptive framework for performance-based creative design enhances the capability of architectural designers to explore large design spaces for structural solutions. The approach offers novel trajectories to improve and test machine-interaction aspects of generative design.



A Knowing Wrongness

How can 'a knowing wrongness' of typographic experimentation and print processes lead to new forms in typographic and graphic design practice? With designers using the same tools, visual references and production techniques, how can work contain elements of bespoke and creativity? Stephen Heller wrote in his essay, 'Cult of the Ugly' (Eye, No. 9, Vol. 3, 1993) that 'ugly design, as opposed to classical design

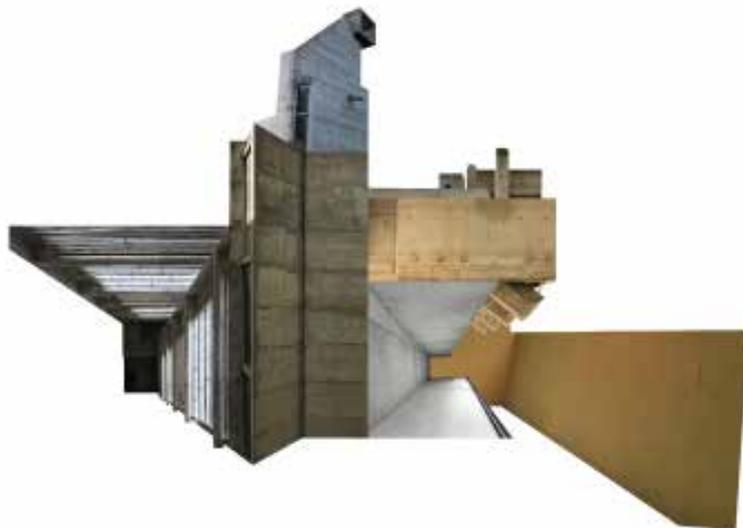
(where adherence to the golden mean and a preference for balance and harmony serve as the foundation for even the most unconventional compositions) is the layering of inharmonious graphic forms in a way that results in confusing messages.' Can ugly and beauty exist at the same time?



Curating the observed

This PhD reflects on the architecture, teaching and research based practice of Amy Muir. This practice is described through five years of teaching and a collaborative practice MUJR. The practice is described through a limit of requirement. The stripping back. The remnant. The observed conditions and constraints that are then defined. The narrative. Site, context and place are used as conditions and devices to frame the work of the practice. The embracing of constraints. Sculpturing that what limits us. Nuances are observed and reconsidered. The abstraction of these parts are brought together to make a whole. The carved, the cast forms a line of enquiry. How are the conditions that inform place navigated and expressed through the

use of singular materials? The perspectival section is utilised as a tool through teaching to assist in building and understanding the defined narrative. In practice the section has been used to define the relationship between spaces and the formal conditions that result. The singular finish applied to the cut model assists in understanding the relationship between various unbuilt and built projects. The PhD becomes the vehicle for exploring these conditions and their relevance in the pursuit of a singular, unifying language used to define an architectural response specific to place.



**unearthing ground
form...pigment...something 'other'**

unearthing, speaks of discovery and of matter...ground, speaks of tangible substance – earth soil/ clay...of territory – physical/ intellectual/ emotional...of preparation – layer as in painting

With this PhD, I seek increased understanding of the nature of 'design intelligence' – spatial/visual/material as evidenced by the discipline of architecture through practice.

While understanding the process of getting large buildings/infrastructure built and acknowledging the invaluable contributions of staff members in our office over 30 years of practice to that enterprise, what interests me specifically in this research is insight

into how we get as thinkers/designers/practitioners – as architects, from a site and a sheet of paper with a list of rooms/schedule of accommodation, numerous prescriptive do's + don'ts...to... 'a great blue lump of a school' ...'a crimson creature' ... 'design gets its full citizenship'.

Paralleling my quest for new insight into 'design intelligence' is a preoccupation with exploring the 'physical' in a world seemingly favouring the 'virtual' and specifically the place of our visual tonal register or judgment, applied to the phenomenon of ...colour/hue/pigment....colour/light/pigment...as a medium of 'design intelligence' exercised through venturesome practice in architecture.



Polycephalum 0.4

In this fourth PRS presentation I will look at my latest projects, with a particular focus on BIOTALLINN curator exhibition, as case studies for discussing the role of design as well as of contemporary design practices in the age that scientist call the Anthropocene and in relationship to my PhD findings.

Referring to Timothy Morton reflection on environmental aesthetics:

'[...] while we campaign to make our world 'cleaner' and less toxic, less harmful to sentient beings, our philosophical adventure should in some way be quite the reverse. We should be finding ways to stick around with the sticky mess that we are, making things dirtier, identify with ugliness [...]' Timothy Morton.

I would like to problematize a design method which approaches the current conflict between the Urban-sphere and the Bio-sphere from within and aims to expand the scope of our rational understanding of the impending global environmental crisis, and of the ability of architecture to unpack complex urban issues by reframing the problematic field and expanding the space for solutions.

I will conclude by looking back at previous PRS conversations and how they allowed a contrast to emerge in-between content and format in my work, and how the acknowledgment of this discrepancy brought me to expand the way I see ideas of collective and weakness influencing the way I operate as designer as well as researcher.



The materialization of the digital society: algorithmic processes in timber architecture and design

Practice for Architecture, Research and Theory (PART), being an architectural practice for experimental, digital and technological innovation research and implementation, guided by the values such as material sustainability and energy efficiency in construction. This thesis presumes on adding value to the local biggest natural resource and export article—timber—through design. Projects range from tool-finding explorations in academia (EAA Department of Architecture) to 1:1 scale constructed prototypes in publicraum, with underlying research into digital design methods and study on industry manufacturing capabilities.

Alongside practice, the curatorial initiation to more tightly intervene architects and Estonian timber house manufacturers, have led to the biennial Installation Program for the Tallinn Architecture Biennale. EAA Open Lecture Series and collaborations with Architecture Center (PuitAIT) training programs, with the aim to introduce local architects to the capabilities of parameter driven designing and maker-ideology at large. The practice wide range of activities have gained numerous recognitions, including the Young Architect Award laureate of 2017.



Estonian EU presidency Opening Ceremony Installation at Freedom Square. Photo by Tõnu Tunnel.

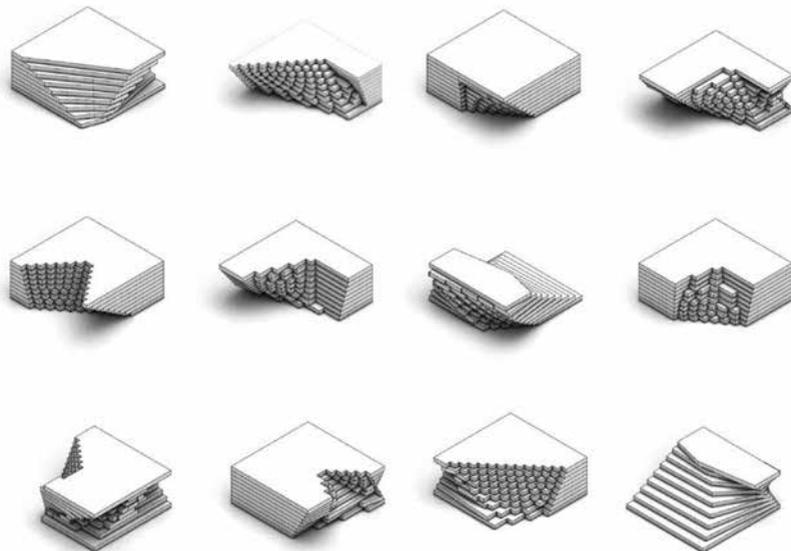
SuperBlock_SmartGrid and the Architecture of the Ill-Tempered Environment

SuperBlock_SmartGrid and the Architecture of the Ill-Tempered Environment comprises three scales of operation linked to three very specific regimes of architectural performance.

SuperBlock is an urban type/policy that radically impacts the existing metropolitan grid in a three-fold manner: a) by geometrically tuning its scale, porosity and subdivision ratios; b) by opening up possibilities of new ways of citizen use of public space; and c) by removing vehicular traffic and hence contributing to increase the quality of our environment. However, the isotropic grid as epitome of the modernist city model is equally affected by other more ubiquitous forces.

Automated technologies inform built Form blurring the boundaries between data and physics, and deploy a layer of intelligence that animates the static grid making it dynamic, emergent and smart.

The Block, the Grid and the Environment with their intrinsic and operative overlaps are the centre of this research and serve us to rethink the multi-scalar, non-linear, responsive, climatic and political nature of urban life within the post-mechanical paradigm. It is on their inter-relationships that unexpected prototypical cases of architectural interest have emerged in a dynamic form.



Systemic Architecture Polycephalum.City

Our current techno-human condition implies that society cannot exist outside an embedded technological paradigm, which is best expressed in the complexity and richness of contemporary cities. I suggest that we can best engage this complexity by embracing this Urban condition beyond the physical boundaries of the city and in all its trans-scalar forms and manifestations. To capture the global relevance and interconnectedness of such territories I have formulated the term 'Urbansphere', the global apparatus of contemporary urbanity. It sustains our cities' increasingly demanding metabolism and wraps the Biosphere in a dense network of informational, material and energetic infrastructures.

The project Aarhus Wet City, which took place over the summer 2017 as part of the Aarhus Capital of Culture program, deploys the artistic dimension of architecture to interface technical, technological and scientific research with society's future needs. It materializes the notion

of Urbansphere in the specific case study of the city of Aarhus. From this perspective the project engages the urban realm as an open air Laboratory. Public piazzas have been historically the core arenas of democracy, of public engagement and participation. In this project the participation of the public is vital to train and evolve the methods and protocols of what I call "collective urban intelligence".

Public involvement is directly interfaced by means of the Urban Algae Folly prototype; data are harvested with the purpose of feeding the machine learning algorithms running the new Planning Interface of Aarhus Wet City. Designed to contribute to the development of the future blue-green plans of Aarhus, this instrument channels the latest innovation in digital and biotechnology to increase Aarhus resilience to the effects of climate change and raising sea water levels.



***"To observe with the client, to draw with the existing".
Three cases of architecture dealing with the As Found***

In this research there are three projects on observation: Yutes Warehouse, Food Cultura Museum and Sala Beckett Theatre and Drama Centre. All of them are rehabilitations of existing buildings with more or less heritage value, but with a very precise cultural or emotive attachment with the client, which explained us their personal reading of the existing. Their observations opened our initial attention and curiosity towards the As Found, so that our later reflections on the actual state of the building, became the beginning and guide of the rehabilitation design. This PRS presentation works from recent conversations with two of the clients, to elaborate a reflexion on "building memories".



Practice as project: an eidetic survey

I am investigating the value and nature of the image. In particular I am interested in the capacity of the eidetic to articulate the various narratives that inform my practice.

In Colin St. John Wilson's account of the technique of the work of the British painter Michael Andrews, he quotes the artist reflecting on his method of working as '... the most marvelous, elaborate, complete way of making up my mind'. His paintings offer compelling speculative evocations of both imagined and recalled moments as a means of 'making sense'.

Research has focused on how such moments inform both the experience and the production of architecture in my own practice through explorations of process and technique pursued through an eidetic survey. This survey – an operation analogous to the normative algorithms of design – serves as a clarifying medium, inviting more finely focused reflections and responses to the various programmes and topographic conditions that characterise the work of the practice. The emergent architectural proposition presents itself as a form of staging or frame – an architectural *mise en scène*.



All that we are: All that I am: All that we can be

This research explores two streams of my current practice: one is a social practice public participatory project, itself in two separate but interdependent parts, and the other is an intensely private practice, in this case resulting from personal trauma. The relationship between these two areas of practice includes a comparison between *all that we are* and *all that I am* – the space between the inner and outer of being. In exploring these two areas of my practice I will investigate and compare the relationship between a socially engaged way of working, in co-designing and creating participatory artworks, alongside an intensely personal compulsive image making.

This study interrogates the place of the contemporary artist, their social values and their capacity to embrace critical responsibilities in reshaping our global society through public engagements. Centered on the practice of the artist engaged in collaborative and co-creative arts experiences with communities, this exploration will map opportunities and suggest tools to redefine the role of artists to support social creativity and a creative pedagogy as a key to connecting to self and community – *all that we can be*.



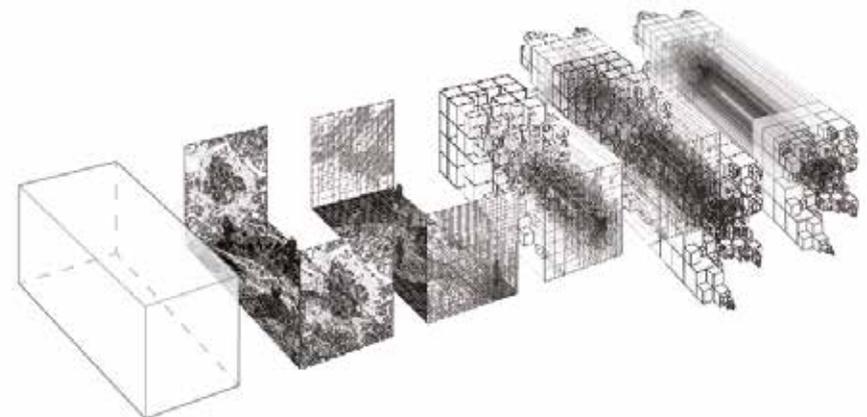
***Exhibiting, Designing and Governing Environments:
Public Behaviours From White Cubes to Future Societies***

As an architect, I expose spatial ideas to the public via environments. My projects are trying to envision a specific environment considering the forces shaping it or explaining its specificity. These may surface as spaces of ideology and translation of current world affairs, or sometimes borrowing extreme precision of research data to describe new perspectives of social habitation, consumption or climate, mobility etc.

The association for rendering models that approximate or translate the built environment range from artistic translations of politics to scientific computational models, from The Blue Marble to my work for the Baltic Pavilion to the uncanny climatic hybrids

of Latour. The underlying concern seems to be centered around the impact of our actions manifested in built forms and 'the environment'.

The environment is a construct onto which it is possible to project behaviours and agencies. To use the environment as a tool to mediate and illustrate systems. In my work, environments are perceived as contemporary models for public space of debate – they are shared, recognised (more less) universally and contested from specialists point of views. Whenever something becomes environment, it becomes into the public.



Organised Chaos

Having trained myself to interpret objects through algorithms, my perception of things is vastly different from someone with a different skillset. Automation, analysis, optimisation, integrated structural and environmental design etc. are tools, a means to an end. The end, for me, is investigating human perception of geometry, looking for the tension between chaos and order, creating rooms that are more than just units of space.

The investigation would be completely subjective were there not peers and critics, students and clients to debate and discuss. On what level the discussion is held is very much dependent on the background and attention

span of the participants. Mainstream media, being the base level of communication, often brings the discussion onto a metaphoric level. Although a design might be a result of purely geometric operations, based on structural and environmental analysis, when these operations become automated, they easily lapse into non-human domain associated with the organic.

The tension that arises between human reading of geometry and the pseudo-organic is what I am trying to reveal by looking at the area where one changes into the other.



***Making spaces for people to play
Designing for Incompleteness***

Strategic design is nascent and is under-articulated, and my focus has been to explore my approach, starting with the nature of connecting big picture with small details of designing. In particular I have used the lens of the tactics and joyful energy of the Trickster to understand and review making change through design.

A deeper interrogation of one Trickster tactic has opened up a new view of the work I do as a strategic designer. This involves looking at the nature of incompleteness as a way of working, and how it features in my work. Understanding the different flavours of how the design of and making of spaces

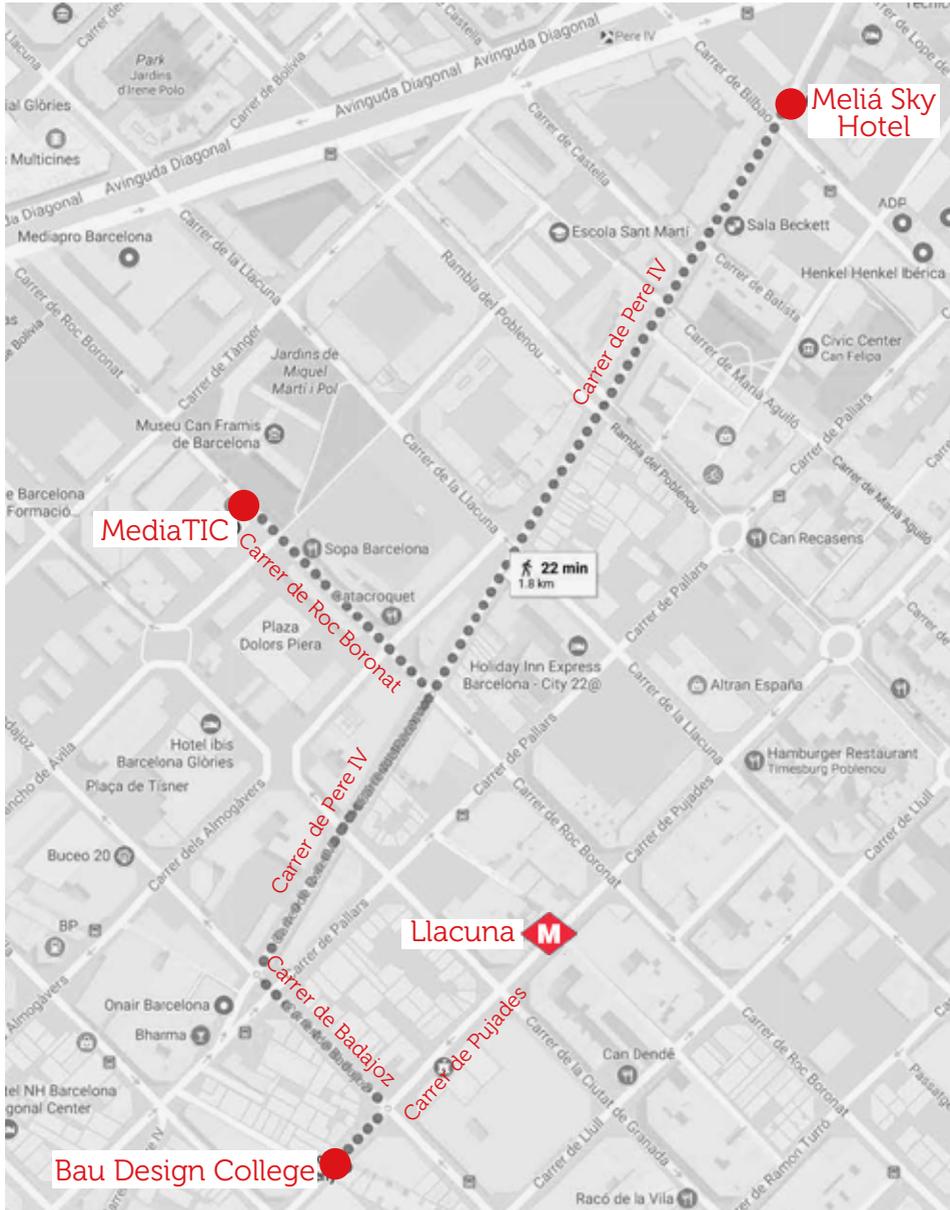
for others to play connects my work in new ways: workshops to user research probes and service evidence. As I begin to make prototypes of new provocations I start to work with more clarity, precision and purpose.



Maps

**November
2017**





Hotel

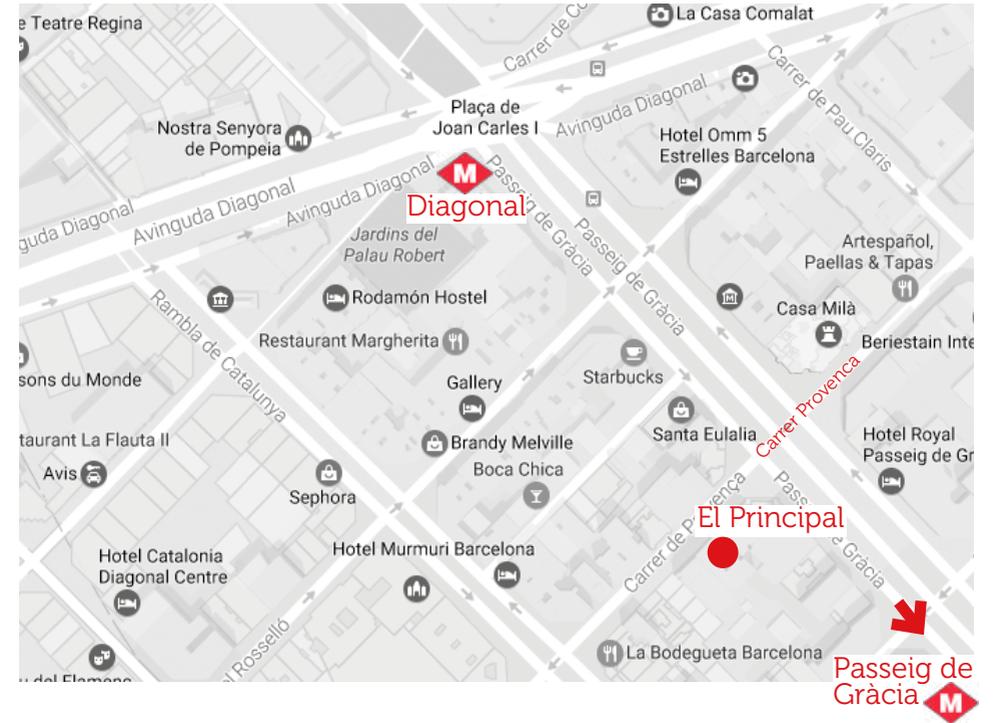
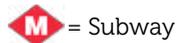
Meliá Sky, Carrer de Pere IV, 272, 08005

Examinations and PRS Saturday - Sunday

Bau Design College of Barcelona, Carrer de Pujades 118, 08005

Friday Evening PRS Opening Event

MediaTIC, Carrer de Roc Boronat 117, 08018



Saturday Evening PRS Dinner

El Principal, Carrer de Provença 286-288, 08008





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