This first issue of Draft magazine emanates from the positive response to the last two Yearbooks, produced by the Interior Programmes at Middlesex University. It represents the interest within our research cluster, Making Places, to explore through publication the detail of our collegial approach to the subject of designing interiors. Importantly, it also aims to illustrate the balanced emphasis we place on both thinking and practice to extend knowledge of the interior as a subject of study.

The previous Yearbooks documented the successes of the academic year that culminated in the Degree Show and celebrated the work of our graduating students. Draft magazine aims to develop the content further this year to reflect the outputs of both students and teaching staff relative to research and practice.

The intent is to establish a platform for collaborative discussion between students, academics and practitioners across a range of disciplines to showcase activity for public dissemination. This publication therefore aims to enable a multi-disciplinary dialogue about the subject of interiors that interrogates meaningful, iterative ways of critically acclaiming practice, whilst also celebrating the relevance of writing in design education.

Draft is produced in two parts, both digitally and printed. The first part, Process(ing) focuses on developing ideas and the second, Project(ing), documents design outcomes in greater detail, thus emphasizing that successful design is always underpinned with rigorous research, a thorough understanding of precedent study and a clear design process.

Contributions have been selected to represent a range of contexts connected to the interiors discipline, reflecting the project’s ambition to cover a diverse body of student work, research contexts and associated practices.

David Fern
Director of Programmes, Interior Architecture and Design

‘Process is more important than outcome. When the outcome drives the process we will only ever go to where we’ve already been. If process drives outcome we may not know where we’re going, but we will know we want to be there.’

Bruce Mau
An incomplete manifesto for growth
If we are always in search of a theory to mediate between research and practice, process is our anchor—process as a sequence of interlinked actions that is iterative. During the design process we focus on how the subject of our speculation can manifest to others—the research of the forms, strategies, tactics and tools of this communication is a strong and valuable part of our work. Sometimes the process(ing) is a phase that enables a satisfactory design resolution but more often it constitutes a highly significant and independent package of meaning in its own right. Process legitimates outcomes and the narrative that it weaves enables a wide range of possible project(ing).

Here we present draft—a publication that even in name reveals our attitude toward process as the curation of the multifarious ways of working that we do, in an attempt to engage with what we broadly understand as interiors. The first issue is reflective and speculative, the thinking phase in preparation for the next issue project(ing) where these ideas will be framed, scaled and made ready to graft into context. (FM)
Few things are as satisfactory to me, as the joys of specifying colour.

My favourite manufacturer, which will remain nameless, has a fantastic trade palette, which I consider myself lucky to own. Often I stand, (in daylight of course, artificial light is not allowed), examining the arrays of reds or, increasingly, yellows fanned out in front of me—little rectangles of colour, seven per page, each a subtle variation of the same shade. No exotic sounding monikers here, no ‘Berry Smoothie’ or ‘Seaspray White’, just cold, hard, reference codes. At first these colour references seem to be impenetrable, however happily, they have an underlying methodical system—take 70GY 22/546, my favourite green for a period of time, which features heavily in several of my projects. The first four characters refer to Hue, 70GY is green to yellow 70%, or much more green than yellow. The next two numbers are the lightness or darkness of the colour, 0 being black and 99 being bright white, 22 would represent something quite dark. Finally we have the Chroma, or intensity of the colour, the higher the number the more potent it is—546 is pretty intense. 70GY is green to yellow 70%, or much more green than yellow. The next two numbers are the lightness or darkness of the colour, 0 being black and 99 being bright white, 22 would represent something quite dark. Finally we have the Chroma, or intensity of the colour, the higher the number the more potent it is—546 is pretty intense. 70GY 22/546 is therefore exactly as described by the reference, a fairly intense, darkish green which somewhere in it, if you look closely, has a hint of yellow.

On the back of each leaf of the trade palette I have written the projects that the colour corresponds to—flicking through I can relive the various battles that came with each particular project. Convincing a client that this exact shade of blue is completely the right choice, in order to subliminally get customers to buy a new pair of spectacles. Explaining to a contractor on site that, although they have already put two coats on the wall, it still looks patchy and will need a further layer of turquoise to achieve the desired lustre. Although I must admit, now I look at it again, 05YY 42/727 is probably not the best choice of orange that I could have made at the time.

Of course if it was as simple as choosing a colour to set a mood, feel or atmosphere, colour specification would be a relatively straightforward matter. Unfortunately the type of paint also has to be stipulated. Classically for Interiors, emulsion paint, in vinyl or matt finish, would be specified for walls, while eggshell or gloss was used for doors, architraves and skirting boards. Outside, masonry paint for walls and exterior gloss for window frames and sills, would be the normal expectation. A primer would be applied first, followed by two top coats in most circumstances. The modern day Designer or Architect on the other hand, has an increasingly bewildering array of choice in the type of paint they select. Each with their own characteristics and viscosities, self priming eggshell (my preferred choice for interior joinery items), dead flat, lime wash, soft sheen, distemper, and many more specialist, branded types, all vie for contention with their traditional counterparts. The encouraging legislation to cut down on Volatile Organic Compounds, used in the production process, has led to the main companies who manufacture paint bringing out, predominantly water based, environmentally more responsible, versions of their range.

A further complication arises when specifying colour for metalwork. Sadly now, a new colour palette has to be located bearing the ominous three letter logo, RAL. An acronym for ‘Reichsausschuss fur Lieferbedingungen’—I had to look that up—RAL was the result of an initiative to standardise colour by the German government in 1925. The modern ‘classic’ range containing 210 colours is the definitive, industry standard, for powder coating. Trying to match the colour of your powder coated metal, with your choice of wall paint, can become a tricky and time-consuming affair. Telephone calls need to be made, websites checked, samples ordered, intense scrutiny of said samples by office windows follows, until it is agreed that “we don’t try to match it, we use a contrast colour instead.”
On a field trip to Paris we took a group of students to see Villa La Roche, the house designed by Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret. Although the perception of Corbusier’s work might be that it is predominantly rendered with white walls and concrete, his interiors are often boldly coloured. Villa La Roche, an early work, 1923–25, is no exception. Plans are rendered in reds, blues and yellows, a careful composition of tone and form. Corbusier’s attempt to affirm or suppress the spatial volumes he had created. He does also employ white walls and natural materials but when supplemented by the use of colour, the overall effect carries the eye, in a controlled way, around the space. Ever a lover of rules and systems, Corbusier would go on to develop his Architectural Polychromy, a set of 63 colour shades, in essence his own colour palette. He intended that the colours could be combined in any combination, each colour having its own defined characteristic. His philosophy on colour can be crudely condensed into three principles; that colour modifies space, that colour classifies objects and that colour acts physiologically upon us and reacts strongly upon our sensitivities.

I can’t help feel that this philosophy should be adopted today, as we heedlessly pursue our obsession for white and grey. Are we scared of making a bold technicolour statement? Is it the fear of getting it wrong, that steers us towards the safer colour palette? Or is it just too difficult, with so much choice out there, to decide on the appropriate colours? Of course there are exceptions to this monochrome trend. Enthusiastic proponents of chromaticity are still out there, people happy to ponder a decent colour trade palette. Perhaps at the moment we are just ‘enjoying’ a temporary fashion for more muted tones, which will once again metamorphosize, as we seek to reinvent the built environment.

Requiring such dedication to actually decide on a colour, it can be little wonder that increasingly the fields of Architecture and Interiors are shying away from it. Look at any print or online magazine, you will see a proliferation of white and grey buildings and interiors. Naturally, I have not carried out an academic or scientific survey on this, it’s more a feeling of unease that has gathered pace over recent years. Tone and colour tend to be introduced via natural materials, timber, stone and concrete. I must admit to being a proponent of the ethos ‘let the natural colour of the material be shown’, however when was the consensus achieved that a plastered wall is white? In it’s off-the-shelf state, plasterboard is generally a light grey, when skimmed it is a pinkish-brown. Why should colour not be introduced into a space to enhance the look and feel?
01 Prisca Mundai
Shielding and revealing the live-work space for two fashion students. Layers of structure show and hide the public/private realms.

02 Hemangui Hasmukal
Explanatory sketches looking at the potential for organisation of spatial volumes in the V&A entrance hall.

03 Kasia Bodnar
Fabric shield can be raised and lowered. The students occupying the V&A can control how they engage with public or retain times of privacy.

04 & 05 Daniela Hurmuzache
A pod hangs in the V&A foyer. The public must climb the stair/ramp which wraps around the pod to see the students working in this creative hub.
01. Gopitha Murugaiah
Exploded axo of the re-invented charity shop. Customers experience a juxtaposition of environments within a typical shop unit.

02. Anwar Al-Mashalawi
Sample board for Westfield Charity Project.

03. Simona Mockute
Visual for a new charity shopping experience, enforcing the customers’ commitment. Materials are a purposeful mixture of the luxury and the dilapidated.

01 Karolina Klonowska
Making these concept models helped me with exploring physical volumes, forms and contrasts between the materials.

02 & 03 Kelly Botterill
The stacking of these blocks creates opportunities for the different levels to combine and forms vertical and horizontal circulation.
The visuals portray the atmosphere of the exhibition stands within the given interior. The plan shows the arrangements of four students’ work, also indicating the finishes of the stand and the placement of the lights. The elevations show the arrangements of the display board, which can be positioned in portrait, standard or in landscape, and indicate the flexibility of the portfolio table and the positioning of the model exhibition box.
A student’s experience of modern design education is an intensely personal one, always transformative, often exhausting, and for many, deeply enriching. The particular experience of the individual student is so enveloping that it is often difficult for them to step outside of that experience and view the process of their education, to recognise the mechanisms put in place to help them to learn, to see the cogs in that machine, and to understand the intention and the theory that inform and drive those mechanisms.

Educators are, by default, thinking people and they derive great pleasure from reflecting on the act of education, on questioning assumptions and proposing refinements to approaches, objectives and outcomes. But for an educator on the front line of teaching, it is easy to become embroiled in the power struggles of the elite pedagogical theorists, who regularly put forward new philosophies of teaching and learning. Theories are much like fashions, they come, have passionate advocates, and then they go, to be replaced by a new ‘new idea’.

So perhaps we might take a moment to look at a few of the many theories that have come and, in most part, gone. We have had the rather old fashioned Transfer theory where the student is conceptually empty, waiting to be filled with knowledge—think empty glass and the tutors as a full jug of refreshing water. Here knowledge has a value, it is a commodity, an object to be passed from one to another. Although highly questionable and defiantly out of favour in educational circles you don’t have to look too far below the surface of some tutors, and even some students to see this theory having some traction.

Then there is Shaping theory, here the student starts out a shapeless (and directionless) form and needs to be moulded—the tutor is the modeller, shaping the students to a predetermined form. Then there is the more contemporary Growing Theory, here the tutor is the gardener with the emotional as well as the intellectual development of the student their primary concern. The development is nurtured, grown from fragile soil, watered and pruned to promote growth. I’ll resist the urge to put a fertilizer quip in here.

‘Lost Luggage’ was a student engagement project that opened up learning dialogues between groups from different disciplinary backgrounds at various stages of their learning. It was a cross-programme workshop promoted by Robert Parker (Senior Lecturer in Animation, Middlesex University) involving several schools, that allowed for diverse and divergent outcomes through collective creative enquiry and essential learning.

A student’s experience of modern design education is an intensely personal one, always transformative, often exhausting, and for many, deeply enriching. The particular experience of the individual student is so enveloping that it is often difficult for them to step outside of that experience and view the process of their education, to recognise the mechanisms put in place to help them to learn, to see the cogs in that machine, and to understand the intention and the theory that inform and drive those mechanisms.

Educators are, by default, thinking people and they derive great pleasure from reflecting on the act of education, on questioning assumptions and proposing refinements to approaches, objectives and outcomes. But for an educator on the front line of teaching, it is easy to become embroiled in the power struggles of the elite pedagogical theorists, who regularly put forward new philosophies of teaching and learning. Theories are much like fashions, they come, have passionate advocates, and then they go, to be replaced by a new ‘new idea’.

So perhaps we might take a moment to look at a few of the many theories that have come and, in most part, gone. We have had the rather old fashioned Transfer theory where the student is conceptually empty, waiting to be filled with knowledge—think empty glass and the tutors as a full jug of refreshing water. Here knowledge has a value, it is a commodity, an object to be passed from one to another. Although highly questionable and defiantly out of favour in educational circles you don’t have to look too far below the surface of some tutors, and even some students to see this theory having some traction.

Then there is Shaping theory, here the student starts out a shapeless (and directionless) form and needs to be moulded—the tutor is the modeller, shaping the students to a predetermined form. Then there is the more contemporary Growing Theory, here the tutor is the gardener with the emotional as well as the intellectual development of the student their primary concern. The development is nurtured, grown from fragile soil, watered and pruned to promote growth. I’ll resist the urge to put a fertilizer quip in here.
Welcome to Seaside Theory. Allow me, if you will, to set the scene. Education is a beach, the beach is wide and varied, with flats of sand and dunes behind, some areas of the beach are low and undulating, some pebbles. Ahead of us is an expanse of sea that laps up to the beach—lets look at students in education as visitors to that beach and assess what they come here for.

Waders Some visitors see the sea as a fun place to spend sometimes and find splashing in the shallows, rock-pooling, they may occasion wade out a little way but either don’t see the benefit of full submersion or four giving up their own self-image. To swim you must trust that the sea is safe, that your equipment will not fail, that the life guard can save you if you get in trouble and that you will not sink silly with wet hair.

Close Swimmers Those folks want to swim, they enjoy it, but only up to a point. They can get flattened by waves, they like to see the bottom and can get out of their depth if they swim out too far. They stay in the shallow and swim along the beach front, not out to sea.

Deep Swimmers Other swimmers see the shallows as something one wades through to get to the depths, they are prepared with smocked or breathing apparatus and see the act of swimming as one of exploration more than play. They perceive that there are wonders in the deep to explore.

It is interesting to consider that those splashing about in the shallows can gain much from the experience, certainly enjoyment, friendship, social acceptance, even an appreciation of the sea itself—they may even progress from waders to swimmers. The problem in my own experience comes when students who have never dive deep into projects in the first couple of years in education suddenly, in their final year/ final project present that they are now getting serious and intend swimming out into the deep and achieving a excellent level of outcome. These students (assuming they don’t flounder) can feel aggrieved that they have worked so hard, thrashing their legs and swallowing salt water, yet achieved a lower grade than they feel they deserve. They equate effort with reward, what they do not recognise is that other students around them have, through experience and practice, moved off with slow strong strokes into deep dark waters, out of sight to those in the shallow, and that these deep swimming students are able to use their experience developed over many mergesciences into the water, and the courage and ability that come from this experience, to find new areas of self-discovery and achievement.

In this analogy it is important to see that the beach where students are valid uses of the sea—it is merely a question of the student accepting what their beach is offering and being strong and brave and risk taking. There are however other varieties of visitors to the seaside.

Surfer This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.

Sunbather This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.

Sunbather This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.

Sunbather This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.

Sunbather This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.

Sunbather This visitor comes to the beach to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle. They do not swim, they do not break a sweat, they lounge. Often these visitors can engage in casual conversation, can be seen reading literature (not trashy fiction) and are one of the first people on the beach in the morning and last to leave at night.

Beach Jogger This visitor is often an individual, and comes to the seaside to improve themselves but has no interest in the sea, doesn’t register it as being relevant to their development. They can often be seen running along the edge of the surf, working hard but ultimately just running back and forth, no risks, no unknowns or exploration. But they are fit and healthy, and they can show great aptitude and technical understanding.

Picnicker This visitor wants to be part of a group, wants to party, socialises, they will never break into a sweat but will often work very hard at being seen, being sociable, and are always ready to dive in ourselves to save, not stand on the sideline admonishing the flow flexing and linking for going in dangerous waters.

Surfer The surfer can swim with the best of them but really wants to ride the waves, lacking the part, being as exciting, brave and stylish. The surfer wants a high profile of the deep, they don’t see the point in diving below the surface because no one can see them doing it.

The deep sea diver This visitor isn’t at the seaside to be seen, to soak up the environment and be part of a lifestyle, they want to go deep, quickly and could (as the deep swimmers) move with aching slow, careful progress across the seabed. They achieve their goal at any one moment—this is their beach.
Sharing has become a common way of identifying different contemporary phenomena. It is a used and abused term that defines a range of actions. We share ideas, content and spaces in many ways: through social media, co-working and co-housing.

The term sharing economy started to take hold in 2010, and can be defined as an economic system built around peer-to-peer marketplaces. Since then the sharing economy has become key within our daily lives, changing the way we experience some everyday services: in the transport sector—like car sharing, ridesharing and in the hospitality sector with Airbnb.

Much of the innovation within the sharing economy has so far been concerned with consumers. However public sector organizations and logistics are areas where the sharing economy is likely to become increasingly important, foreseeing significant potential for efficiencies and savings.

The idea of the sharing city, connected to the concept of the smart city, embraces the way cities are managed, public assets used and social ‘actors’ engaged. Sharing in our everyday life is associated with the world of social media, enabling us to share ideas, news and images through a preferred network.

One of the direct effects of this practice is the changing perception of privacy, allowing for the creation of a collective consciousness that is fast becoming a strong and effective tool for political action (from crowd funding to petition web platforms).

This shift in thinking widens access to property and creates the need to redefine the tactics for designing both public and private spaces, the thresholds between which are increasingly fluid and porous. Further it makes room for a collaborative model where people and communities operate as co-authors and active participants within the design process.

How can physical space relate to the sharing phenomena?

How can the design process support the sharing of activities and ideas?

How do we interpret sharing as a concept, an opportunity, a goal, a common ground, and a realm between the public and the private?

We’ve been sharing thinking, ideas, approaches and research with our colleagues and the students of the 1st year MSc course of the Politecnico di Milano, School of Design. We have taken part in a Sharing Symposium (School of Design, Politecnico di Milano, 18th February 2016) to frame the status of the research and set future challenges.
Getting lost in liminal spaces across Crouch End and around Hornsey Town Hall. These were spaces that blurred the boundaries between private and public and involved various typologies of liminal space.

Recreating home at Hornsey Town Hall for the homeless by providing feelings of security and safety. The homeless can see anyone entering their space through views towards the entrance hatch of their space.

Beginning with the form of the building itself, the conceptual stage of the project experimented with slicing up the building to plug in new elements.

The exploded axonometric shows a section of Hornsey Town Hall, where I have designed a Bipolar Disorder awareness scheme.

I gathered personal accounts of people who experienced homelessness, in particular young, single, homeless adults, using these narratives to inform my design.

The image depicts Hornsey Town Hall as a transitional space. We define a transition as a moment that lasts for a set period of time and leads us from one state to another.
A vision of the future; transforming the surrounding area into a public garden, involving the local community in cultivating and selling produce as well as gardening.
24 25

interior architecture—year two
refuel

01 & 02 Sameeha Bashir
Space for a prosthetic artist, divided into two opposing volumes.

03 Magnus Fines-Conqulie
An inhabitation for a mathematical artist, which explores the contrasting states of precision and chance.

07 Raiana Anha
The shapes of the shelters are inspired by the void spaces of different Tai Chi moves; the volume is generated by stretching and rotating by 90 degrees the base towards the roof.

09 Suellen Cesca Lebranbencho
Multiple layers of materials wrap the interior space designed beneath the existing canopy; to offer a more enclosed environment.

10

interior architecture—year one
a sense of place

07 Raiana Anha
Tai Chi practice in the newly designed green structures.
To live is to leave traces.¹

/limin(e)/ adjective
1. relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process. 2. occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

We live in unsettled times that some critical thinkers have described as an extended moment of “weak and diffused modernity”²—a post-functionalist vision of our cities and architecture that exists within a kind of “liquid modernity”³, reflecting our way of being and inhabiting the world.

The architectural heritage that we have inherited has become over time, deprived of content and meaning, becoming an ‘empty container’. What persists, and remains in the public domain beyond the most recent global economic shifts, is a liminal situation that offers on the one hand a valuable ‘memory space’, yet problematises the development of a strategic approach to architectural intervention and re-appropriation that is both economically and socially sustainable.

The most common effect of this state of in-betweeness is being unable to invest this architectural heritage with new meaning. The strategies we’ve been working on in the past few months takes as a reference conceptual models that are incomplete, imperfect and elastic, capable of withstanding continuous innovation and adaptation. Within such an approach, time itself becomes a key ingredient of the design process and assists in the development of a strategy that, over the next few years, will look to address the shifting contexts and contents of our heritage.

Built heritage is always time-specific as it has been designed and built according to a time specific idea/need, but the life span of a building is often longer than the purpose for which it has been built. Changing the timeframe, buildings need to be updated in order to survive societal changes that affect their form and sense. Buildings are part of a process and need “[…] to be understood in terms of several different time scales over which they change”⁴.
making
at the beginning
the material
stands alone

When I formed my design partnership we were required to compete against other designers for a very important project that we hoped would help to establish our practice. For the presentation I made a very simple 1:50 model of the space—a store for a Japanese fashion designer, Michiko Koshino. Despite the effort that was applied to the graphic presentation, containing the usual concept sketches, orthographic drawings and interior perspective drawings, during the presentation the little model, made in white card and paper, was the focus of client attention. Michiko smiled approvingly when she first saw it and couldn’t resist referring to it. We secured the contract to design the new store but I am sure that we would have been successful if all we had had to present was the model, such was the impact of the tangible object.

Why is this the case? What is it about the physical model that is so engaging? Is its resonance even greater today because, in this digitally dominated age of communication, encountering an actual three-dimensional manifestation of a design idea comes as a relief from the excessive demands of flat screen interaction? Or is it the immediate presence of the idea in three dimensions that is so appealing? Architect, Emily Abbeves considers the physical model to be “the material embodiment of an idea, and therein lies its magic. By becoming real, it gives life and actuality to an idea in a way that two-dimensional expressions rarely can.”

The physical model bares inherent qualities when physically experienced that digital models currently lack. The model provides a tactile and sensory experience of the space, an opportunity to size, scale, weight, transparency and consider all the characteristics when physically handling the material. Just as Hockney, who was forced to stop drawing with his hands after an injury, found that he could not understand the work of the digital artist without actually physically experiencing the work with his own hands, the same is true for the physical model's material presence.

When making the physical model I find it essential to keep in mind the printing process that the model will go through. By providing a print-out of the proposal in white card and paper, we are able to make a basic presentation model that can be amended, enlarged or reduced. We are able to adapt the model to the specific situation of the client and to the project we are working on. Because the model is a physical representation of the project, it contains the ideas and concepts that have been developed in the process of designing the project.

When the model is made it is a physical representation of the project. When the model is presented it is a physical representation of the ideas that have been developed in the process of designing the project. The model becomes the material embodiment of the ideas that have been developed.

The material stands alone and offers a departure from the prolific onslaught of the generically conceived digital model. Haptic interaction with material in the model making process evokes an experience of material, not only in the tactile sense but also relates to size, scale, weight, transparency and smell. In experiencing these qualities and characteristics when physically handling material, questions are provoked about their choice and effect on the potential design outcome under consideration that may not be raised through digital investigation.
Juhani Pallasmaa refers to the effect of peripheral vision upon our existential perception of space. “Focused vision confronts us with the world whereas peripheral vision envelopes us in the flesh of the world.” Pallasmaa expresses concern here about the impact of digital screen interaction and the architectural fraternity's continued obsession with on-screen vision, its conscious intentionality and perspectival representation.

Although still only an abstract representation of the real thing, a model when viewed, allows the peripheral vision that Pallasmaa describes to engage in addition to the attention we deploy upon a particular view, which in turn affects our emotive response. When analysing a physical model our viewpoint can change at will as our vision bathes the object, allowing us to choose when and for how long to linger upon any particular aspect of the form. Ultimately through the engagement with peripheral vision and a choice of when and where to focus upon and within the physical model, we gain a closer connection with the reality that the model emulates.

On our undergraduate programmes we therefore stress the relevance of designing and learning through making in a number of ways. The process starts at the very beginning of the study, by encouraging students to think about the tangible articulation of form and space through simply folding and cutting paper to create three dimensional forms. As students become familiar with the development process necessary to arrive at any design conclusion they appreciate how model making can aid the design process and sharpen their creative awareness.

Models are used during the project therefore to document the thinking process and to map design narratives, for example, by illustrating possible iterations in the organisation of the space. Models are produced to test material possibilities and to physically explore and represent design options in concept, through quick sketch process maquettes and in detailed study at various scales for more perfected design representation.

However, students of interior architecture and design are typically limited to representing design outcomes merely in graphic or model form to scale and so although connoisseurs of the ideas, they are not exposed to the thrilling experience of ‘being on site’ and monitoring their actual implementation. This is an important part of the interior architect/designer’s role in professional practice that concludes in witnessing the inhabitation and public use of the environments that have been created. Therefore where possible, we make opportunities available within the course curriculum for students to design in groups and build small interior environments at full size.

These projects help students to gain a greater understanding of structure, materiality, the effect of light and construction detail. Student experience is unquestionably improved through physical, material investigation and experimentation, aided also by working collaboratively in a team. During the activity of making haptic, other sensory responses are engaged that are not evident when designing solely on a computer. The energy, enthusiasm, sense of enquiry and ultimately fun generated during these projects enhances the student satisfaction and learning year on year.

Through understanding making we come closer to imagining potential human interaction with material, form and space that ultimately defines individual experience and the atmosphere of a place, and therefore students immersed in the design of interiors should be able to understand how places are made and how their respective component parts are brought together. Designing and learning through making them is fundamental to the pedagogic process.

---


02 & 03  Joo Hee Tan
Sketch Visuals: A series of quick spatial creative questions which open up the ‘designer’ mind to the potential design opportunities within the site.

04  Zahra Elyasi
Interior Visual: Chasing the Light, the glow beckons the visitor as they pull back on the door to reveal the space beyond.

05  Zahra Elyasi
Interior Visual: The visitor must react, seeking out openings, exploring and form to find that which is openable, active and reactive.

06  Zahra Elyasi
Interior Visual: The light acts as link and a lure, it calls and the visitor chases.
Leyla Ahmet

Interior Visual: House of Illustration main exhibition area where the work displayed and the nature of the interior itself merge and blend.

Zahra Elyasi

Site concept study: The tree grows and changes, watching the colours change, the leaves fall, this tree is preparing itself for the new, regardless of our reality.

Leyla Ahmet

3D Study: Entering through the window opening the visitor glimpses the area beyond and is called forward.

3D Sectional Study: The interior allows the visitor to experience otherness, outside of traditions and preconception, it tests us and we want to understand it.

Zonal Planning: The series of controlled space offer the visitor experiences to build, their connections to become more trusting and their belief in the work displayed more instinctive.

Leyla Ahmet

Interior Visual: House of Illustration main exhibition area where the work displayed and the nature of the interior itself merge and blend.

Interior Visual: The openings are concealing and revealing, they require touch and therefore engagement.

Zonal Planning: The series of controlled space offer the visitor experiences to build, their connections to become more trusting and their belief in the work displayed more instinctive.

Leyla Ahmet

3D Study: Entering through the window opening the visitor glimpses the area beyond and is called forward.

3D Sectional Study: The interior allows the visitor to experience otherness, outside of traditions and preconception, it tests us and we want to understand it.

Zahra Elyasi

Site concept study: The tree grows and changes, watching the colours change, the leaves fall, this tree is preparing itself for the new, regardless of our reality.
08 Yuan Yuan
Site Study: using a technique of covering the structural envelope to mask and redirect its personality and therefore open the designer to new potentials.

09 Joo Yee Tan
Sketch Visual: the divisions of movement through spatial manipulation.

10 Joo Yee Tan
The dynamics of form space white modelling is focus of the proportional harmonies of the interior.

11 Joo Yee Tan
Interior Visual: Sergei Tchoban Exhibition space exploring the use of materiality and light to direct and attract the visitor.

04 Ashna Varma
Concept Model: Exploring conceptual space using Mindfulness techniques, balanced reflection and individual focus.

05 Ashna Varma
Concept Model: Further testing of conceptual form and meaning — pebbles sourced through touch, weight and sound.

06 & 07 Tselane Bolofo
Sketch Thinking: exploring the nature of supporting structure with space and the specifics of movement through that space.
‘Madlove: A Designer Asylum’ is a design commission with and for the vacuum cleaner — artist James Leadbitter—who, together with artist and producer Hannah Hull, has been re-imagining mental healthcare through a participatory process with workshops across the UK. The installation formed part of the ‘Group Therapy’ exhibition at FACT Liverpool (5 March 2015 –17 May 2015), which looked at ‘mental distress in a digital age’. 

---

12 Yuan Yuan
Sketching over site photographs to probe the value of a potential design idea for a revised entrance location.

13 Yuan Yuan
Sketch Visual demonstrating conceptual space where the past impinges upon the present.

14 Husna Onathukattil
Site Plans modeled to better understand the built to appreciate the existing envelope and then sketched over to scrutinize latent drama within the form.

15 Husna Onathukattil
Site Models built to appreciate the existing envelope and then sketched over to scrutinize potential directions.
... Architect James Christian of Projects Office and designer and researcher Benjamin Koslowski, both visiting lecturers in Interior Architecture at Middlesex University, developed designs for the space at FACT Liverpool. These were based on a range of workshops, in which participants were encouraged to reconsider what good mental healthcare looks like, feels like, and ultimately should be like. A series of playful structures present deliberately abstracted embodiments of spatial and sensorial qualities discussed in the workshops, while the tea-coloured walls and floor of the environment recede into the background, dissolving the boundaries of the gallery space. The individual structures have been designed to offer shifting levels of privacy and intimacy ranging from a space for one person to let off some steam to complete togetherness in the social space at the heart of the installation. The installation is a beta-version of the Designer Asylum; it is designed as a platform to continue the conversation that has evolved through the curators/curator’s public engagement so-far, and to allow people to programme the space, to share insights, knowledge and skills in a programme of activities that will run throughout the duration of the exhibition.

The ‘Madlove’ installation, which has been featured on the BBC news website and in Slate magazine, is only a small glimpse of a project that has the potential to influence the way we think about the design of mental healthcare environments. The project is the first manifestation of an ongoing project-led by the artist, working with designers, and crucially stakeholders including service users and mental health professionals. The next stage in the project is the development of a large scale architectural model of the Madlove Asylum for a major upcoming exhibition in London. The working process between the artists and designers will further test ideas informed by a broad spectrum of people invested (or simply interested) in how we can create better spaces to enhance our mental wellbeing.

The Disabled Interior. Investigating the scope and perceptions of inclusive design and future solutions that enable diverse communities, irrespective of their (dis)abilities, to navigate the built environment.
Speaker / Space.
Investigating how sound enables connectivity and atmosphere within public spaces and developing soundscape environments that explore acoustic ways of creating non-physical space.

Nicola Geldart
Retail Therapy.
Distorting and augmenting the existing typologies of retail space with interventions to enable distributed support and therapy processes for victims of domestic violence.

Polyvios Miliotis
Common Space.
Exploring ‘commoning’ as a strategy that challenges the privatization of city space and empowers the social creation and design of sustainable and affordable public environments.

Rebecca Onafuye
Digital Space.
Exploring possibilities to create and exploit areas of signal-free mobile reception to facilitate moments of detachment and physical interaction within the connected cityscape.