As architects we
Travel
Gather cultural observations and
Chase buildings

Education
Which needs to be maintained
Providing inspiration, influence and understanding
It brings in to question how one practices
How one operates
Increasing the pool of references we draw upon
A landscape which only increases in volume and depth
Making one tick

Shanghai
London
Barcelona

1

Dawn
The glistening sun shrouded by the morning haze
A dense urban sprawl calling to be explored
Sunday morning walking tour begins in the back streets of Jinjiang
European plane trees line the streets intermittently decorated by the day's washing
The elevated residential tower patterned by cantilevered laundry
The retail frontage of the city block containing a bustling residential interior
Streets lined with elevated planter boxes
Providing space to the underside for bike parking.

Bubbling Well Lane
Located within the French Concession (Lilong District)
A traditional housing typology
The kitchen shared by four apartments
4 stoves
4 lights
4 preparation areas
A division of space which we would only assume to be for one

The Shanghai Marriage Market
People's Square occupied by the parents of children exploring a new generation
With the female now highly educated and focusing on the benefits of a professional career
Significant cultural shifts in society have occurred
A park transformed over weekends
Dedicated to advertising ones children's credentials in order to find a suitable life partner
A social gathering not for the children but rather for the parents
More intent in maintaining lineage
A park littered with hanging written advertisements
The structure of the umbrella used as a pin board display
The make shift market

Pudong building the aspirational 21st Century
A model of the new world
Cross the Huangpu River as the shimmering glazed vision dazzles
Shifting between the myriad of barges traversing the highway river
Yet another reminder of the development and construction
Underway within the city at large

The Bund provides large panoramic views across to the new
While the elevated walking path adjacent to the old
Defines a very fine European traditional building typology

And then down stream
A view from above
It is midnight and the groan of diesel barges echoes through the city
Construction sites constructing
The familiar sound of the concrete pump piecing the evening air

2

BAU
The master plan
The pace
The brief
How do we?
Adopting the principles established by Christopher Alexar
An in house rule book has been established
Designing walkable communities
Due to scale
The small block is problematic
However if it is sold to the client based on its commercia
Then this is then accepted

Neri and Hu
After returning to Shanghai from Harvard
They recognised the holes in the market and seized the c
Importing European furniture
Establishing a shop front at the ground floor to the office
Making and selling their own products
While running a traditional practice on the upper levels
With the pace of the Chinese market a practice has bloss
Competing and winning local and international projects
Models, models, models

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al merits - increasing frontage

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3

Morphosis Giant Campas
Leaving the picturesque streets
The maddening roads to the out shirts of Shanghai
The smell of chemicals burning nose hairs
Turn left and in a field a European boulevard appears

The horizon line marked by a building bridging the road
A building, a campus, a miniature city
A large generous gesture
A place for working and living
Recreation
Bringing into question the notion of scale
A common theme is beginning to evolve
How do you control these interventions and houses for the future
When the notion of money, scale and briefs are so distorted?
The intent of the building is bold
A roof top field of daisy's is navigated and
Enjoyed.
Working with the locals how can this be achieved?
How can traditional means of detailing be adopted in order for the execution to improve?
Or is it more to do with the fact that the labour isn't skilled due to demand?

Returning back to Shanghai
An hour elevated on the highway
The token green edge achieved through endless miles of suspended planter boxes
A sea of rubber stamped buildings
A stark reminder of a history that has been removed to make way for the modern era
An era based on quantity not quality
An era consumed with consumerism
Sustainability how do we control it?
Build remove build
Longevity not what the 'new' is engaged with.

Archi Union
A garden of experimentation
The Tea House an enveloping concrete interior
Testing within one's own domain
Confidence to use these techniques on a larger scale
Reminiscent of a laboratory
Glazed brick curved walls
Warehouse shrouded by concrete block dancing façade
One does however question the in-between condition between building and façade
How do the two interact?

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After a 13 hour red eye from Shanghai
We were thrilled with whatever vertical sleep we managed to achieve

Coffee followed by Ken Allison's 9 hour walking tour of London
Lumen United Reform Church
Conceptually addressing issues associated with converting single use buildings into
Multi-functional programmatic building
The line between community centre/café/church
Blurred
Making use of a building typology that traditionally is used once a week

The Barbican containing 2000 apartments and tenancies
6000 residents
Sadly defines an era of concrete craft which we may never witness again
Robust, generous, a community exists defined by the mixed use podium below
The joy of opening ellipse shaped concrete services cupboard doors and
Custom timber and brass joinery
All very good
Just what the doctor ordered

AHMM's design for TEA and Shoreditch House development
Forms a large internal master planning exercise
Being carried out in a series of existing buildings
The project has been developed over the past 10 years slowly evolving
The word longevity comes to mind
The alternative work place spaces provide a testing ground for varied
Work place relationships and models for operation
Providing spatial opportunities not afforded within the confines of a
Typical commercial tenancy

The Shard providing the latest London 'view'
The seemingly pure form of the Shard is lost once inside
Views out obscured at certain points by facade junctions and overlaps of form
The left over space dedicated to the viewing platforms over 3 levels brings into question
The formal gesture taking precedence over use
A spectacular view, yet one leaves wanting more

In contrast the top of the iconic Foster 'Gherkin'
Swapping our sneakers for 'smart' shoes we made our way up
To the apex of the building
The function space elegantly completes the form providing a 360 degree view of London
While the curved structure pulls up to a circular skylight
The cathedral like space truly celebrates the act of viewing

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CRAB for an early morning start as the London architectural community begins to wake
We shared a coffee with Mark Bagguley
Discussing the compares/contrasts of delivering a building in Queensland, Australia verses
The UK
A discussion which offered alternative solutions to building
Questioning the traditional delivery of projects
What contractors do you engaged to deliver steel work?
A steel fabricator or a ship builder?

Zaha Hadid
Effie Kuan generously showed us through the winding rooms of the old school house
Adopted to house a power house
Oozing models and three dimensional experimentation
Delightful original white card models folded to form
A chronological history of experimentation into the language and marketable form making
That referred to as ZAHA

MUF
For the small and considered interventions
Ramped platforms become seats, elevated views, define space
The minute move is given a voice, relevance

Stanton Williams
A practice navigating their way through a congested industry
Determined to deliver
Quality
Well considered projects
Tenacious
The work speaks for itself
Maintaining scale within an office
Models, models, models.

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Fosters
Angelic machine housed on the River Themes
A commitment to a global intervention
A global voice, one that is not afraid of its size or intent
One that maintains its voice as a united condition
A dedicated materials library and
Materials research department
The luxuries that an empire can afford
And provides the advantage one needs to compete at this level
Models, models, models.

Tate Modern 2 site visit
As architects there is nothing more exciting than
Getting into our high vis gear and donning the hard hat
Anticipation
Raw details exposed by the in-between stage
Large sways of steel reinforcement cages patterning the ground plane of the site
To experiencing the renovated oil drums
Acoustic dreams that melt the nervous system
The quiet verses the reverberation
So basic yet so tantalizing

dRMM social housing
A level of generosity that warms the heart.
Architecture makes sense when applied and given the credit it deserves
A commitment to a cause providing strong architectural outcomes

Studio Octopi
A generous overview of projects on and off the drawing board
Delighting in the detail
Joy in the resolution
Persevere
The model crowding the office making way for strengthen concepts

Carmody Groarke
Perfection touches each intension
Seated in the boardroom we are surrounded by
Models
Experimentations
Models that defined scaled projects
Which read as jewelled objects in their own right

7

Kevin McCloud
To talk all things architectural and self made
Compare contrast China verses the UK verses the world

And then onto
Barcelona

8

Day one of Barcelona
Called for bike riding through the gridded streets to destination tapas
After indulging in fresh calamari and stuffed capsicum it was onto
Igualada Cemetery by Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos

The rolling Spanish landscape was enjoyed by train for 1.5 hours to the industrial town
Nestled into an existing quarry
The building sits at one with its surrounding context
The shelved landscape provides a curated experience
From above and within

The cemetery brings into question
When a building becomes landscape and
When landscape becomes building
Sensitive yet robust
This project provides a clear reminder that architecture needs to be experienced
Quietly sitting
Contemplative
The walled cemetery allows for a new and habitable landscape to exist

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Sagrada Familia.
A reminder what a building procured with
No budget and no construction program
Results in
An architect's wonderment

Being scooped up into the world of the soaring internal landscape
Out on top of the apex of the building
To get up close and personal with
Once again the exposed in-between condition
That being construction
Molded reinforcement bars folded across the curved facade
Inverted craftsmanship as the terracotta tiles are carefully laid
To be revealed from below
Forming the canopy of the internal ceiling
Bliss

Parc Nuo Barris by Arriol and Filo
An urban planning and landscape intervention
Sensitively handled to negotiate a 40m shift in topography and
To unite rather than wall surrounding housing communities

A space for all
Carved and experienced as a journey
One is reminded of the importance of 'generosity'
When we consider how to improve the urban environment
For the greater community
A diagram of goodness executed with finesse

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Cadaval and Sola-Morales.
An architectural practice bridging their Mexican and Spanish heritage
Between the two continents
A site visit to the X House that hovers above the outskirts of Barcelona
Enthusiasm and engineering principles driving the decisive decisions made
Negotiating local planning law in order to achieve an outcome
That sits comfortably within the landscape
Yet is the antithesis of what is requested of traditional Spanish housing

EMBT
Model heaven
The occupation of an existing building
Within the medieval quarter of Barcelona
Rambling rooms revealing the intense formal experimentations and
Questioning associated with the process
Associated with architecture
A signature condition yet the evolution and rigour is evident

Ricardo Bofill
Perseverance
An opportunity seized
In the 1970's an architectural office and residence
Folded their way into the existing structure and remnants of a
Cement factory
Office spaces cocooned within the cylindrical silos
Board rooms dwarfed by the scale of the main processing floor
A softness has been applied through accepting the constraints
Defining a new adaption

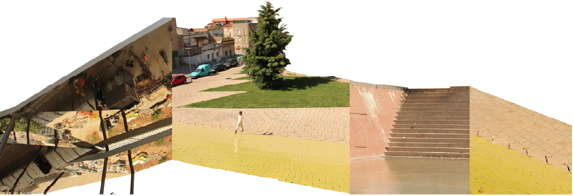
College of Architects of Catalonia.
The forever elusive discussion associated with the intern
And the significant financial contribution it is making to major architectural practices
Throughout Europe
A debate which we had been wrangling with for the 10 days and
Knew we would be taking home with us
To try and ratify within our own minds
What in fact is the value of architecture?
How do we educate the public to understand and be convinced of its value?

Barcelona is fortunate to be bathed in a design culture
One that is respected and admired by the general public
One that respects quality architectural responses and
Carefully crafted outcomes celebrating the contribution of built form and
Spatial interventions that continue to shape and form their city
Yet in such hard economic times
European practices are always looking for international opportunities to spread risk
What one might refer to as
The Fosters Model

As the weeks pass
The impressions grow
As the giddy haze of absorbed information and references are
Digested

Delight in the fact that we were surround for 10 days by like minded peers
Debating
Agreeing
Dissecting
Unfolding
Accepting
Questioning
Laughing

Education is bliss

Amy Muir
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