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DULUX STUDY TOUR REPORT

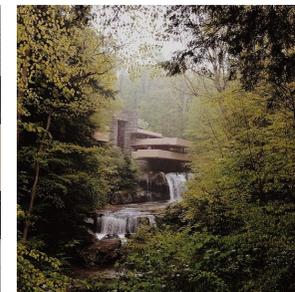
A lot of people have been asking me what my opinion of the Dulux Study Tour was. I've come to learn the best adjectives to describe the trip have been 'overwhelmingly excellent'.

In the eight weeks that I have been home, I have already noticed in small ways how the tour has contributed to both my practice of architecture, and involvement in the profession. My office asked me to give a presentation at the recent Terroir Retreat at the Magney House - at which I presented elements from practice visits that may better the way in which our practice is run. At our recent DARCH committee meeting, I presented ideas for events or initiatives from our visit with the NYC chapter of the AIA. The tour itself is a brilliant idea - Each tour member evidently takes from the tour what is relevant to them at that particular point in their career. For me personally, given I have a multitude of other creative outlets -

it reinforced for me why the profession holds so much potential to critically engage with many disciplines, ultimately making better places for us to live in.

I don't think I will be able to fully recap the trip over the following pages, however I have included what was personally beneficial for me - what I got out of the trip, and what has spurred on continuous thought and research - what has thus far influenced my practice.

I'm not sure I can say thank-you enough to Bernadette Wilson for her intense organisational skills, and many many thanks to Phil White and Sarah Naddonbousch for their generosity in giving such a memorable and informative experience.



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## C H I C A G O

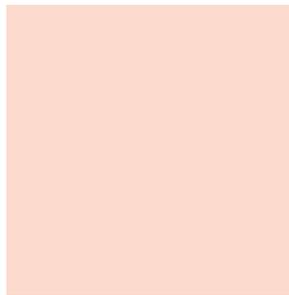
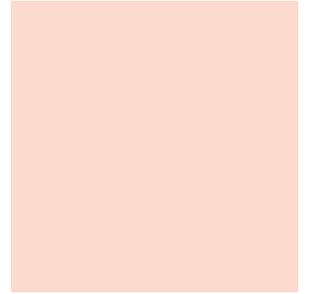
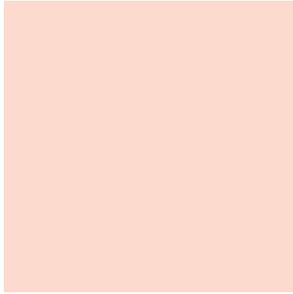
Chicago surprised me. It wasn't what I expected. Firstly, the CBD ['The Loop'] was immaculately clean. Second, the general public's awareness of architecture was overwhelming.

The development of the city I found personally very interesting, particularly given I was recommended and reading a book on the history of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Interestingly, the majority of the building stock of the city was lost in the great fire of 1871. 9km<sup>2</sup> of the city was lost, culminating in the opportunity for the later 1909 Plan of Chicago, or the 'Burnham plan' as it is more colloquially known as, to be implemented.

I've also subsequently read a lot about the double-decked streets of Chicago. I was intrigued to learn that upper levels of multi-level streets typically only serve local traffic, with primary entrances to buildings at this

level - the lower levels serving through-traffic and service entrance to businesses. I read that first double-height street was not produced until the late 1910s, coinciding with the Burnham Plan - due to drainage issues with Lake Michigan. I was particularly fascinated in how these roads created not only an anomaly in the layout and use of streets within the city, but also influenced the planning of buildings.

For me - it became evident that my piqued interest in Chicago as a city was spurred on and developed through my previous thesis research. My thesis looked at the way in which the practices of the everyday, the political, and the social events of a place can in-turn influence the built environment of a place - and how these stories become hidden over time. We had many great tours given by architects, guides, and in conjunction with reading the book I was reading, everyone we met told me something that further peeled back a layer of the city and contributed to my overall understanding of Chicago as a place.



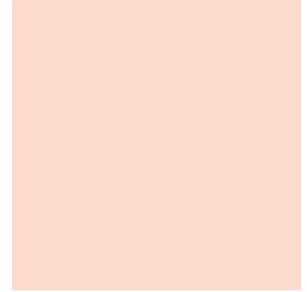
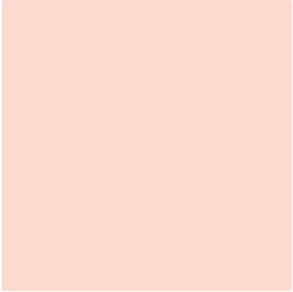
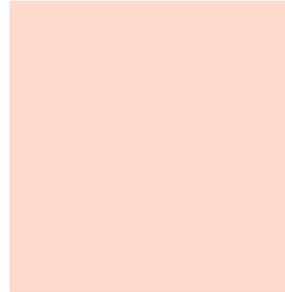
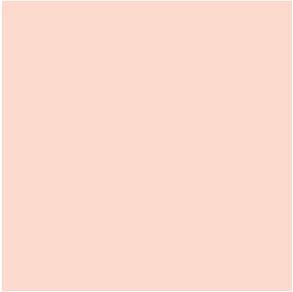
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## THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE

On day 2 we were collected by Larry, our brilliant and ever-informative tour guide. Larry destroyed us for all other Tour Guides to come on the Study tour, particularly given his predilection for showing us/teaching us as much as he could. A Mies-aficionado and a previous tenant of Lakeshore Drive; Larry was the perfect tour guide to share with us the Farnsworth House. What I found interesting was in the many famous photographs of the site, the house appears to be far more remote - images neglecting to represent the fact a large motorway lies a couple of hundred metres up the hill from the infamous piece of residential modernism.

Dare I say it, but I was expecting the house to be perhaps slightly more intricately detailed by the man who was famed to proclaim that 'god is in the detail'; it may have been my OCD tendencies, or the owner may have interfered but I found the inconsistent door hardware in the kitchen quite fascinating. That being said,

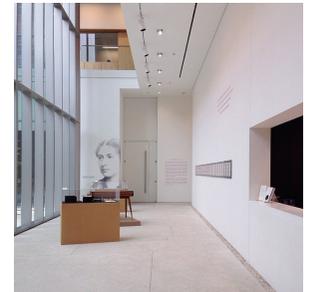
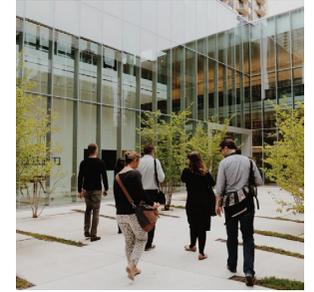
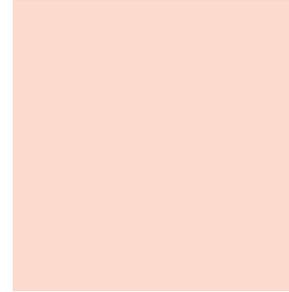
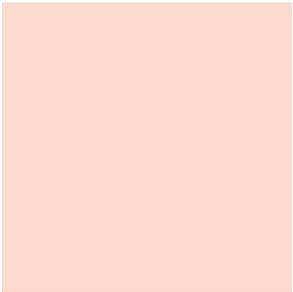
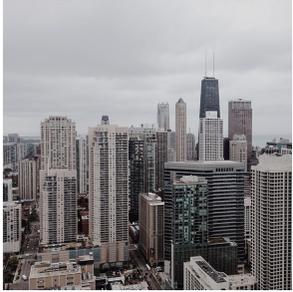
the trip to the Farnsworth house still remains to be one of my favourite elements of the tour, it was quite a privilege to visit a much debated/studied building. I've got fond memories of lying on the lush rug in the living space sharing thoughts and expectations with the other recipients. Conclusively, it was a beautifully calm and restful house - beautifully crafted and well deserving of its praise.



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## CHICAGO + THE APPRECIATION OF ARCHITECTURE

It wasn't until we were on the boat tour that I fully comprehended the way in which the people of Chicago held such a great understanding of the practice of architecture, and its contribution to a city. Hundreds of people on the hour absorb and learn of Chicago's architectural history through the CAF Architecture Boat Tour. Frank Lloyd Wright remains to be a household name (Mies, on the other hand, it was learned was lesser known architectural contributor). Through my involvement with the Institute of Architecture in Sydney through the Emerging Architects and Graduates Network, I found this personally inspiring. It is something that I think Australian cities struggle with - a public awareness of the role of architecture within place making of a city. Whilst we have great events such as Melbourne's Open House and Sydney's Sydney Architecture Festival; it became evident that we have a long way to go in promoting our profession when compared to that of the city of Chicago.



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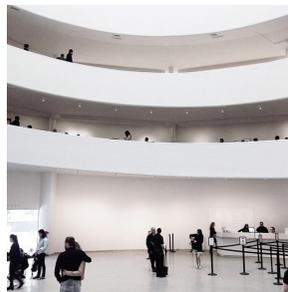
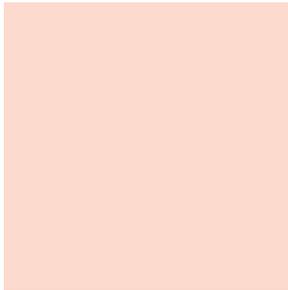
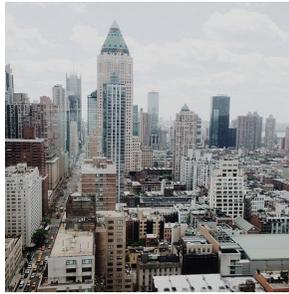
## MARINA CITY TOWERS

It was great to finally visit the 1959 Bertrand Goldberg's towers courtesy of Strawn Steirrlata's very generous home office visit. We had been circulating around the two buildings for the past couple of days prior to our visit, first sited on our Architectural Boat Tour of the river. It's kind of nuts that 19 floors of a spiral corkscrew at the base of each tower have been given over to 896 car spaces per building! I also find the floor plans completely fascinating - each apartment created from parts of triangular wedges. It was inspiring to see how a young practice had lovingly renovated their Marina City apartment, whilst maintaining and restoring some of the original design elements.

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## JOHN RONAN + THE POETRY FOUNDATION

One of the most beneficial things of the tour was visiting a practice or building that you weren't familiar with, who you in turn found completely inspiring. One example for me in particular, was the work of John Ronan. I was in love with his work as soon as we stepped inside his office and I panned around looking at all the materials and finishes samples. As someone who is heavily into crafting and making, I personally have a penchant for the product selection/materials research stage of design process. Visiting John's building The Poetry Foundation heavily reinforced the benefit of stringent product research - John noting the immaculately beautiful concrete aggregate flooring that continued from within the courtyard into the building was the result of at least 100 different tests. Even the pour lines and control joints had been designed. This fast became one of my favourite buildings.



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NEW YORK

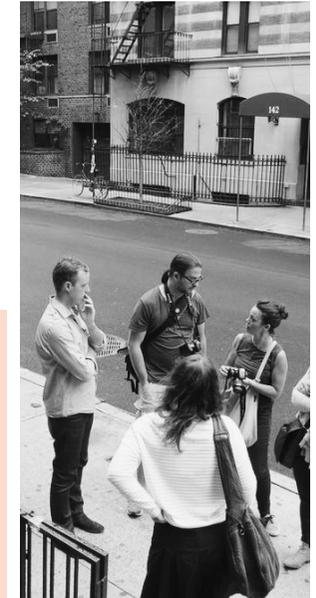
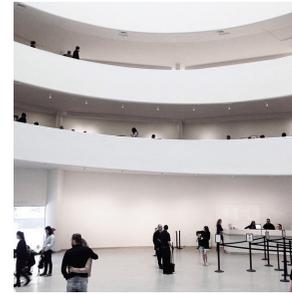
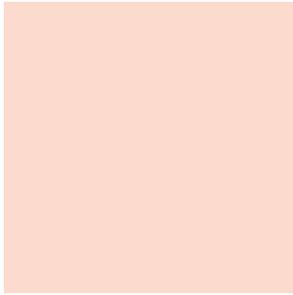
Everyone wants to visit to NYC. Can you blame them? When I first learned that I was a recipient of the tour, admittedly it was the New York leg of the trip that had me a bit more excited. It didn't disappoint!

I'd already had a NYC bucket list of buildings and places to see, the fact that I could experience these items on the tour was fantastic. For me personally, I got a lot out of the practice visits in NYC. Whilst the practice visits in Chicago were also brilliant, and were great at building my understanding of a place I did not know - the practice visits in NYC made me internally challenge the way in which I wish to practice.

I particularly admired the practice model of Toshiko Mori. I appreciated how she had 4 strands of her practice pertaining to research, to teaching, to her practice and to pro-bono work. What I admired about this is she openly admitted that she gets bored easily, and that it is strategically clever to diversify. For me

practice visits such as Fosters or even to some extent - ShOP, reinforced that I don't want to work in a large scale practice working on multi million dollar projects. The larger practice visits reminded me that what I personally love about architecture is its ability to connect with human scale, the detail the way in which people interact with it. This teamed with our visit earlier that day to LTL really reinforced what I want out of my career. LTL's office was filled with prototypes for projects they had physically made themselves. As previously mentioned, materiality exploration and testing is what interests me personally hence reinforcing what I want out of my career.

And we can't forget the Russian Cabaret Tapas Bar. How often do you get the chance to go to a NYC Russian Cabaret Tapas Bar?!



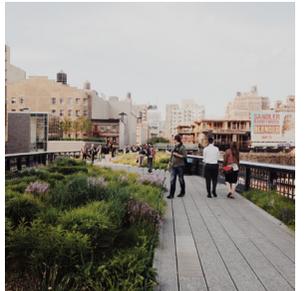
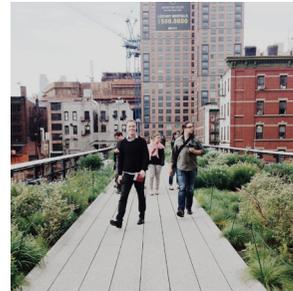
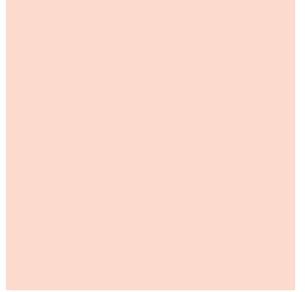
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DISCOVERING NEW YORK CITY

Bettina's guided walking tour of NYC was brilliant I thought. I particularly loved learning about the history of the city (surprise surprise, I'm such a history nerd). I found it particularly interesting pouring over Bettina's prepared maps of the history of NYC; detailing how the city originally finished at Wall Street which formed the 'Wall' of the city itself. Again, due to my previous research I was particularly fascinated in the land reclamation maps.

I particularly enjoyed learning of the neighbourhood acronyms, for example 'TriBeCa' - Triangle Below Canal St, SoHo; South of Houston; and my personal favourite: 'Dumbo' - Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass.

I also really appreciated the free day in the city to spend more time exploring. In the course of the day I

visited the Guggenheim, Central Park, a quick stop to eat strawberries on the steps at The Met, MoMA, and then ducked back down to Soho to continue exploring retail fitouts. This time at my own pace [which admittedly rivalled that of Bernadette's itinerary] also gave me the opportunity to reflect on what we had done so far. I remember looking through my camera in Central Park and couldn't believe we had only been gone 6 days so far.



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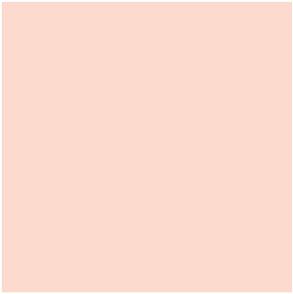
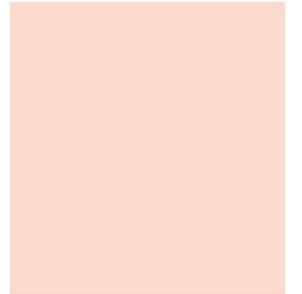
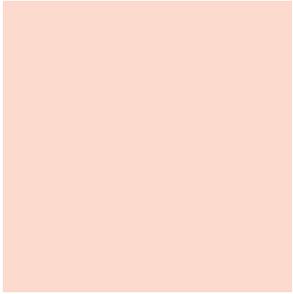
## T H E H I G H L I N E

The tour of the Highline and prior visit to Diller Scofidio and Renfro's office was something I was exceptionally looking forward to. It did not disappoint. It was great being able to meet Matt and Dustin, Matt who had been on the project team for the Highline since day one - Dustin who had worked on the upcoming stages for the past few years.

Dustin's tour was very informative - he was evidently enjoying being totally grilled by the 5 of us whilst walking the entire length of the Highline; answering questions about the very popular urban proposition. We can't have been that bad - we convinced him to come out to dinner with us at the Cuban restaurant he recommended us which was located around the corner.

What was inspiring was hearing Dustin's excitement and enthusiasm for the project, all these years on.

The project itself was detailed beautifully, and the architects were pushing themselves to learn from the previous stage's of development - critiquing what works, what doesn't - all of which has been fed into the detailed design development of the upcoming Stage 3 of the project, linking to the Hudson Yards development.



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### M O S T I M P O R T A N T L Y , M Y P E E R S

For me specifically, half of what I learnt stemmed from the critical evaluation and provocative discussions between my peers and I over dinner each night, in cabs between practice visits, whilst waiting for coffee each morning. One of the more memorable conversations occurred whilst we were waiting in a never-ending queue to pass through security at O'Hare en route to Pittsburgh; Suzannah spurring on a debate - Mies vs. Frank Lloyd Wright.

Many of us had changed our opinions that day, particularly given how much we had been surprised by the modestly intricate planning of the Wright's Unity Temple in Oak Park. This building has become one of my favourite buildings, admittedly it is not what I would call my aesthetic, but it reminded me of why architecture can be so great. It's more than aesthetic, architecture is a 3D object in which people interact - this is what makes it special and so significant.

Since returning, it has also been completely fascinating watching as the photos upload to the dropbox, reliving the tour through my peer's perspectives. What was personally so great about the trip, was being given the opportunity to share the experience with 4 exceptional emerging architects, of whom I would consider to now not be peers only known by name, but lifelong friends. I learnt a lot from them all, and feel very humbled to have been chosen to accompany them on the tour.