

Dulux
Study
Tour
2011



With
special
thanks
to ...



Phil White – Dulux

Jason Anderson – Dulux

Bernadette Wilson – AIA

Christina Cho – DST 2011

Carly Barrett – DST 2011

Yuri Dillon – DST 2011

Brendan Murray – DST 2011

Report by:
Jefa Greenaway





Dulux Study Tour Group (at Bjark Ingels Group (BIG), Copenhagen:
Yuri Dillon | Brendan Murray | Phil White | Jefa Greenaway | Jason
Anderson | Carly Barrett | Bernadette Wilson | Christina Cho

Dulux Study Tour 2011 – A personal reflection

Introduction

On reflection, the Dulux Study Tour constituted a real Watershed in my professional development as an Architect.

The prospect of travelling to Europe to take in different perspectives of 3 key design cultures was both illuminating and inspiring.

The 'backstage pass' nature of the tour was a rare privilege. The level of a genuine welcoming treatment by so many was a testament to the collegiate nature of the profession and really added to the experience.

A number of key themes emerged from the trip which I would like to reveal and expand upon, namely:

- The value of such an experience
- The spirit of the group and friends made;
- The rigour of London;
- The parallels and contrast of Barcelona;
- The excellence and leadership of Copenhagen;
- The role of physical models;
- The highlights that still resonate.

A Lesson in Learning

I cannot praise enough the foresight of those who had the vision for such a prize, by assisting Architects at a critical point of their career.

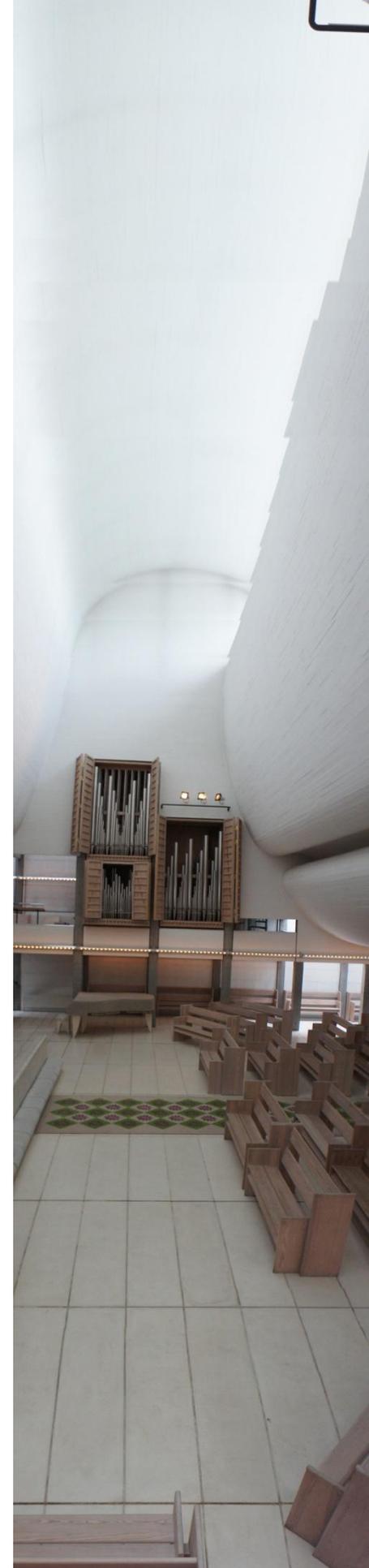
The prospect of visiting major practices, getting guided tours of significant architectural works and enabling a dialogue with a core group of enthusiastic and talented Architects from across Australia was a revelation.

I would commend any Architect serious about their place in the profession to pull out all stops to attempt to secure a place on the Dulux Study Tour.

This is one of the most sought after of awards, and rightfully so.

It proved to be so enlightening, stimulating and fun, that it cannot but change one's perspective on architecture.

The reality of architecture, is that it is a journey of life long learning. We cannot rest on our laurels, but should acknowledge the value in open ones mind to the prospect of forever learning, the DST tour reinforces this.



Bagsværd Church, Jørn Utzon)



Jefa Greenaway and Christina Cho listen in to Jan Utzon share his recollection of the Bagsvaerd Church with
L to R: Yuri Dillon | Phil White | Jefa Greenaway | Christina Cho | Jan Utzon | Carly Barrett | Brendan
Murray | Jason Anderson (beyond)

The importance of people

What made the trip particularly memorable was the fantastic bunch of people who participated in the tour.

I see one the lasting legacies to be the firm and ongoing friendships and likely collaborations which will stem directly by the contacts made, which are unlikely to have been otherwise made.

To the four other recipients I owe a debt of gratitude for their good company, candour, talents and goodwill. It made for a evermore enjoyable trip.

Special mention should also be made in acknowledging the value of such a strong support team from both Dulux and the AIA.

To me it was the people experienced throughout the trip that made it the unique and amazing trip it was. Be it the generosity of time given by Ken Allinson on the London Walking Tour, the warmth of Carme Fiol (Ariola & Fiol) or the breadth of discussion of Kim Nielson (3XN) – to name just a few.

In short, as technology evolves to reduce face to face time, the capacity to tangibly connect becomes evermore valuable.

London's rigour

London exuded a seriousness towards architecture that was very evident. The sheer scale of practices (ie. Foster + Partners, Rodgers Stirk Harbour and Wilkinson Eyre) demonstrated a capacity, diversity and rigour that deserves mentioning.

What particularly interest me was the move towards the 'one-stop-shop', with for instance Arup undertaking architecture, while Fosters engaging engineers as in-house members of staff. While Davis Langdon has positioned itself beyond pure quantity surveying to become global facilitators and consultants in realising good built form outcomes. These moves appear to be the way ahead.

The level of innovation and bespoke detailing, exemplified by OMA in the Rothchilds Bank Headquarters was a constant theme across the work of the various practices encounter.

This was contrasted by the smaller practice of Carmody Groak which reiterated the maxim that God is in the detail, with their own brand of fastidious attention to detail and logistical heroics in realising bold and arresting projects. London's commitment to high standards was very noteworthy.



Lloyds of London (Richard Rogers Partnership)



Office of Jan Gehl, Copenhagen | Office of Ariola & Fiol, Barcelona | London Walking Tour with Ken Allinson | Discussion at Bella Sky Hotel with Kim Nielson (3XN)

Sunny architecture?

While Barcelona remains a mecca for those wanting a good tan, plenty of sangria and tapas to while away the time – the architectural culture and mentality appear both relaxed (non-sterile offices, breezes washing over yellow trace, awe inspiring period surrounds) and at a point of deep examination.

Be it the GFC or the rise of staff from across the globe or the need to look offshore to remain viable, these dichotomous experiences resonated with some of the key challenges encountered here in Australia.

Furthermore, the climate reinforced a tectonic expression that demands to respond to the ever present issues faced by global warming. Simply put, buildings need to respond to the sun, sheathed in layers which allow for flexibility, modulation and expression.

The parallels and potential for further collaboration seems obvious. The capacity to continue a dialogue following our discussions with Antoni Casamor, President of the Demarcació de Barcelona Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya were both welcome and require a concerted effort to foster a mutual dialogue.

Branding good design

Having visited London and Barcelona in the past (albeit briefly), Copenhagen was a particular standout. I enjoyed the people, the scenery and the obvious design standards.

What really impressed was the sense that good design, in all its guises – really mattered. It was as if a certain standard was demanded, particularly given its support from the top down. Be it fashion, furniture, product, industrial or urban design, the commitment to strong design input was obvious.

I was also particularly taken by the social benefits of working in Denmark, the parental leave, the acknowledgement that family will be a priority at a particular point of time. The requirement that all employees are mandated to have 2 weeks paid study leave is a positive gesture toward the concept of perpetual learning.

It appears that Copenhagen has well positioned themselves as a key design centre, almost become a moniker for beautiful design – particularly given the numerous initiatives supported at all levels of government toward the profession. The respect given to design could definitely be emulated.

Sagrada Familia (Antonio Gaudi)





Tapas | Barcelona Pavilion (Mies Van de Rohe) | Taller de Arquitectura (Ricardo Bofill) | More tapas

Creating 3D artefacts

As somebody long interested in the art of physical models, the breadth of engagement with the craft of architectural models came as a real surprise.

Be at a practice of less than 10 (Carmody Groak) or the mega-practice of 1,000 (Foster + Partners) models were a consistent theme in all 3 cities encountered. While not all practices visited employed full time model makers in-house, it was evident that the model maker and model making was an important part of the team.

Some preferred the Architects to do the models themselves (Chipperfield), others utilised interns (EMBT), while others engaged craftspeople (Rodgers) to do the work. Even more interesting was the fact that university degrees exist in London wholly focussed on architectural model making.

It may be the culture for competitions or the front loading of fees towards concept design, or maybe the appreciation of craft, whatever the reason the embrace of models to explore tectonic, design and aesthetic issues can only be applauded. There is nothing like the tangible and tactile beauty of a model, especially compared to the limitations of CAD.

Highlights

2 months on, I am still endeavouring to process the experience. The tour has had a profound impact on how I view architecture and my place within it. From the desire to get a bike (thanks Copenhagen), to the amazing role that physical models bring to practices (especially evident in London) to the need to enjoy life and embrace a more balanced relationship to work (Barcelona) – the trip was indeed a real eye opening adventure.

I foresee that in a subtle and gradual way, the experience of the trip will infuse itself in the way in which I practice, the way in which I position myself more broadly in the profession as well as facilitating the capacity to share my experiences to as many people as is possible (be it students I teach, younger personnel in the office or people outside architecture in social settings).

The legacy will be longstanding and the prospect of such things as alumni events in the future and the knowledge that both the 'fab5' (as well as the great support team from Dulux and the AIA) are just a phone call or email away, and that the deep friendships will continue to evolve is a testament to the success and phenomenal experience that is the Dulux Study Tour.





Old City, Copenhagen | Ørsted Gymnasium (3XN) | Nykredit Headquarters (Hammer Schmidt Lassen) | Nyhavn, Copenhagen

Dulux Study Tour 2011 – Media

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October <i>pending</i> | <i>DQ Magazine,</i> by Alice Blackwood | May 25 | 'Young Australian architects tour London practices' by Elizabeth Hopkirk <i>www.bdonline.co.uk</i> |
| Aug <i>pending</i> | <i>Voice (the Age supplement)</i> by Lyn Toh | | |
| July/Aug | <i>Construction Matters</i> Volume 4, No. 2 [WA] 'Young Australian Architects Meet With Architectural Heroes' by Annelie Wressmark | May 24 | 'The Dulux Study Tour Takes Off' by Imogen Russell-Head <i>www.blog.selector.com.au</i> |
| July/Aug | <i>Architect and Builder</i> Volume 9, No. 2 (#37) [WA] '12 Architectural Champions Receive Top Honours' by Annelie Wressmark | May 24 | 'World Architectural Heroes Meet' <i>www.fadavi.blogspot.com</i> |
| June | <i>Atrium 16 2011</i> <i>Cities and Urban</i> <i>Environments</i> (University of Melbourne) | May | 'Young Architectural Artists Embark on Australian Institute of Architects' 2011 Dulux Study Tour' <i>www.infolink.com.au</i> |
| May 4 | <i>City Weekly </i> <i>Melbourne Times Weekly</i> 'Pushing Boundaries: Winning a major architecture award can really take you places' by Stephen Russell | April 13 | Main Feature 'Australia's Best Emerging Architects Go On Tour' by David Wheldon <i>www.architectureanddesign.com.au</i> |
| Mar/Apr | Feature <i>Architecture</i> <i>Australia</i> Vol. 100, No. 2 Dulux study Tour citation | March 29 | General coverage 'The Architects' RRR (radio program) |
| May | 'Australia's best emerging architects have returned from the Dulux Study Tour' <i>www.dulux.com.au</i> | March 25 | '16 Architectural Champions Receive Top Honours at Australian Awards' <i>www.thefifthstate.com</i> |
| | | March 24 | '16 Architectural Champions Receive Top Honours at Australian Awards' www.tasmaniantimes.com |

*** As the level of media interest attests,
the Dulux Study Tour is broadly seen as
an amazing architectural odyssey.*



July 7 Memorial, Hyde Park (Carmody Groak) | View from Rothschilds Bank HQ, London roof terrace (OMA) | Parc de Nou Barris, Barcelona (Ariola & Fiol) | W Hotel view, Barcelona (Ricardo Bofill)