_Contents
01: Data
02: Context
03/04: Barcelona
05/06: London
07/08: Prague
09: Postscript

_Projects
Mont Duic - Unknown
Barcelona Pavilion - Mies van der Rohe
MACPA - Richard Meier
Mercat del Born - Unknown
Parc de la Ciutadella - Unknown
Barcelona Olympic Village
Parc Diagonal Mar - EMBT
Forum - Herzog & de Meuron et al
Sagrada Familia - Antoni Gaudi
Walden 7 - Bofill Arquitectura

_Projects [Cont]
Deer Moat Tunnel - Josef Pleskot
Prague Castle Renovations - Jose Plecnik
Dancing House - Frank O. Gehry
Unit Development - Safer Hajek Architekti
Villa Rothmayer - Jose Plecnik/Otto Rothmayer
Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord
- Jose Plecnik

_Practices
Bofill taller de Arquitectura
EMBT
Office of Architecture Barcelona - OAB
Studio Octopi
Zaha Hadid Architects
AL_A - Amanda Levete Architects
Wilkinson Eyre
Foster and Partners
ARCHIP
Schindler Seko Architects
FAM Architekti

_Cities
Barcelona 19.05.2017 - 23.05.2017
London 23.05.2017 - 27.05.2017
Prague 27.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

_Cities [Cont]
City Passageways - Architect(s) Unknown

_DULUX STUDY TOUR_POST TOUR REPORT

DATE: 19.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

_DULUX STUDY TOUR_POST TOUR REPORT

DATE: 19.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

_Morgan Jenkins [Nielsen Jenkins]
Louisa Gee [Partners Hill]
Clare Scorpo [Clare Scorpo Architects]
Imogene Tudor [Sam Crawford Architects]
Alberto Quinzon [CHROFI]
Katelin Butler [Architecture Media]
Matt Henson [Dulux]
Phil White [Dulux]
Jamie Penrose [AIA]
Jennifer Cunich [AIA]
Caitlin Buttress [AIA]
First a project. Then a collaboration. Another project, then another, a birth, another project, a lawsuit, more projects, a festival, a death, a bad speech, more projects, staff, a pregnancy, a company, a laceration, PAYG, websites, meetings, insurance, new contracts, more insurance, no insurance, limited insurance, BAS, broken phones, more projects and then there was the Dulux Study Tour.

To understand how much I got out of the DST, one has to understand the context of how I went in to it.

After four years of practicing together as an ongoing collaboration, Lachlan Nielsen and I were biting the bullet and were about formalise our work structure in to a joint company - an incredibly exciting and daunting proposition. Up until this point, the decision to start a practice has never been a clear one for me. The partnership has gained momentum from a series of early collaborations and has turned in to an extraordinarily wild and rewarding ride where we have been learning on the fly and refining our design practice and business strategies reactively.

The timing of the Dulux Study Tour around this merger has allowed me the space, resources and access to look in depth at a diverse and energising array of people, practices, cities and projects in a way that would never have been possible otherwise. It is an experience that will inform me personally and professionally for a long time to come and has indeed done so already in profound ways. The following pages represent a few key themes & moments that I have been thinking of constantly while overseas and upon my return.

I am eternally grateful to Dulux Australia and the Australian Institute of Architects for allowing me this opportunity.
“Geometry makes the irrational rational”

I keep coming back to this quote from our meeting with Borja Ferrater of OAB Ferrater on one of our practice visits in Barcelona, and it is a perfect starting point for a discussion about our experience of the city.

Descending the city-scaled staircase from Montjuic down into the gardens and Cerda’s city grid on the first afternoon of the Dulux Study Tour, I was instantly reminded of why I loved this city so much.

I have been here four times, and every time I have discovered new moments of delight among its meandering cobblestone alleys, tree lined streets and seemingly endless boulevards. It has always felt to me like, for the most part, the buildings themselves take second priority to the street. The architecture is the street. The 100m x 100m city blocks with the 10m chamfers on each corner instantly create small-scaled plazas on every corner. These plazas are then cut by the diagonal east-west slash of the main boulevard and a secondary geometry is formed which re-orients site lines and creates new forms of public space. Combine this then with the medieval alleyways of the Barri Gotic and the resulting pedestrian experience is one filled with view corridors and concealment; compression and release; discovery and surprise.

For me the buildings we saw either added to this condition or very evidently did not. I became far less concerned about the nature of what the building itself was or looked like, but how it contributed to the public space. This had all started in 2004 when my experience watching skateboarders in the Placa dels Angels outside Richard Meier’s MACPA in Barcelona had prompted my thesis investigating subcultural play and the politics of urban public space. Revisiting this chaotic spectacle on the first afternoon of the tour after the sublime tranquility of Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion was one of the highlights of the tour for me. I don’t love Meier’s building by any means, but the way the owners have allowed the skateboarders to appropriate and activate the edges of the square whilst still allowing pedestrian flow through the site has made it one of my favourite examples of a public space.

Carme Pinos’renovation of Gardunya Square with its new creative arts buildings and accommodation was another clear example of a building shaped by its context. The fractured massing of the buildings enabled sight lines, strengthened the edges of the public space, enabled more private circulation experiences and started to create new pedestrian connections beyond the site itself. Even Gaudi’s Sagrada Familiar is keyed in to the city very differently in early plans than it has been in its modern condition. The early plans clearly showed elevations drawn obliquely from key view corridors rather than the four sides of current city block.

One has to wonder if the building would work better for the city if this focus was prioritized rather than the artifact or monument that it has become. On an urban scale, the density of the Olympic village near the waterfront has responded to the patterns and flows of the city in interesting ways, contrasting to the sparse emptiness and singularity of The Forum from 2004.

The singularity of these larger buildings sits so starkly within the context of this city more so than any other that we went through. The form making of the highrises not only mostly ignores the grid and the plan of the city, but weakens it by retreating from the edge of the street and internalizing and elevating its activity.

Returning to his quote from the beginning of this passage, Ferrater had been discussing a landscape project on the slopes of Montjuic. Their firm had rationalized circulation patterns and programmatic necessities in to one 3 dimensional grid, which was then overlaid with the topography to structure the way areas were divided and traversed. This project has stayed with me because he had effectively rationalized the human program in to something that could intersect meaningfully with the natural complexity of the contours.

Like the city itself with its modern grid and historical remnants, it is the tension between these geometries that begins to inform the way the architecture needs to respond.

For me it also means that even the smallest buildings can key in to much larger physical and cultural larger systems, and make an impact at a far more significant scale.
DULUX STUDY TOUR_POST TOUR REPORT

DATE: 19.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

01 Barcelona Pavilion_Mies Van der Rohe
02 barcelona_photo by Ian Harper
03 Cerda Sketch_Jaume Carne
04 Forum
05 Parc de la Ciutadella
06 Placa dels Angels
07 Sagrada Familia_Antoni Gaudi
08 Gardunya Square_Estudio Carme Pinos
09 Placa dels Angels
10 Barcelona Pavilion_Mies Van der Rohe
11 Barcelona Pavilion_Mies Van der Rohe
12 Barcelona Botanical Garden_OAB

MORGAN JENKINS
Scale & Practice.

On our walking tour, we had focused our time primarily in the economic hub of downtown London and visited the city’s ‘icons’ - ascending The Gherkin, The Walkie Talkie and The Cheesegrater in quick succession, climbing almost 600m over the course of the afternoon. This typology of building was very foreign to all of our group and the scale of these buildings was difficult to grasp in such a limited time. The terror alert also coloured our experiences of these buildings, with lineups, security guards and temporary swipe cards a new normal in the financial district. Following on from my earlier discussion on Barcelona, the singularity of the sculptural idea of these buildings seemed far more important than what they offered physically to the city. I was blown away though by seeing the Lloyd’s of London building by Sir Richard Rogers across the road for the first time in real life. The building offers the singular sculptural gesture to the city like the others I have mentioned, but it does so much more. By externalizing and expressing the building’s systems and circulation, the architects have brought a human scale to the building that works vertically as well laterally, its moving parts resembling a giant engine in the heart of the city. In this case the scale of the building is inseparable from the sculptural and aesthetic gesture. It was a big insight for me personally and I began to understand The Cheesegrater in the same way. The expression of the tectonics and mechanics of the building has obviously become the trademark for Rogers, Stirk, Harbour and Partners, but I now see it as a way for them to access such huge projects at the scale of the construction, which is a way of humanizing the building at a number of scales.

Our practice visits from London were fascinating for me personally in this period of business restructuring and I have been thinking about them constantly since my return. I was struck by the way that the culture of the practices was immediately evident upon entry in to their offices. d explanatory tool rather than just for presentation.

They contrasted hugely. From the machine that is Foster & Partners, the sleek professionalism of Wilkinson Eyre, the ‘art gallery’ of Zaha Hadid, the colourful un-hierachical open plan of Rogers & co, the shoes-off informality of Amanda Levete Architects and the very familiar small scale of Studio Octopi – they were all very evidently a physical manifestation of their attitudes and work.

We have been talking internally about what kind of culture we want to create in our own practice and it was evident in all of these practices that the behaviour and values of the directors translated heavily in to the mechanics of the way they operated. At AL_A visitors are required to leave their shoes in the pile at the door, instantly leveling all entrants and grounding them in to the soft red carpet. This informality and space seemed to translate in to how they worked, with nodal groups moving around the enormous volume of the warehouse to work in groups on tables or floors, standing or sitting to draw or to move around models. Nothing was precious. Entire designs could be followed in an informal way by the informal collections of prototypes and process drawings throughout the office. Our host would move between shelving units explaining their design process through very tangible pieces of ‘stuff’ Similarly to the way Rogers and co use systems and circulation as a starting point for their process, this tactility and materiality has defined the work of AL_A’s practice. The culture of model making generally throughout our tour has reminded me of the value of the model as both a testing and explanatory tool rather than just for presentation.

The nature of our practice in Brisbane is predominantly residential, and we have discussed at length how we begin to move up in the scale and typology of the work we do without a proven folio of projects. Studio Octopi have thought creatively about this and launched a series of Kickstarter campaigns to cover their work on a couple of key passion projects involving community pools in and around London. The day after we met with them they were presenting a floating pool scheme in the Thames in front of the Tate Modern to the gallery’s director. Their Thames Baths project is huge in ambition and scope for a four person office, but has proven their capacity for innovation, proactivity and creativity which has already opened doors in to other potential avenues.
MORGAN JENKINS

01. Lloyd's of London, Sir Richard Rogers
02. 122 Leadenhall, Rogers, Stirk, Harbour & Partners
03. Victoria & Albert Museum
04. Paddington Station
05. AL_A, Amanda Levete
06. Foster and Partners
07. Thames Baths, Studio Octopi
08. Studio Octopi
09. Studio Octopi
10. New Court Rothschild Bank, OMA

DULUX STUDY TOUR_POST TOUR REPORT
DATE: 19.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

06. LONDON
Layers

We got a 7.35am Saturday flight from Heathrow to Prague and it seemed like 50% of the cabin was filled with groups of men wearing matching bucks party T-shirts and drinking cans of Heineken. Arriving in the old part of town, we drove past kilometers of tour buses parked in the adjacent suburbs and then there was the crowds. Walking out the front door of the hotel, we were instantly swept up in masses of people following flags and umbrellas, 'booze-bikes' of peddling kegs and chanting groups of tourists reveling in the cheap beer and food. I had been here in 2005 and had a similar experience, immersed in the beauty of the old town but distracted by the way the city was being used and abused. I'd seen a show before leaving that was talking about the fines being imposed by the Spanish government on Air Bn'B hosts in Barcelona in order to keep it affordable to live there and we had been talking a lot about this dilemma. It seemed that there was very little 'real' city life in the way of Barcelona or London – of course there had been huge groups of tourists in both the previous cities but never so mercilessly crammed in like it was in Prague. It was our day off and we moved as quickly as we could out of the centre towards the huge park surrounding the Prague Castle to get our bearings of the city above the hoards below.

It was amazing to us all then the following day when we were led through the city by local architect and guide Marcela Steinbachova who immediately took us off the cobblestone laneways of the main thoroughfares and into a network of cross-block arcades that wove their way through the city. These arcades varied in size and prosperity, but they were all beautifully constructed with glass block arches that let the daylight in and were for the most part full of retail and commercial activity. We would emerge briefly to cross the streets and head back in to the arcades, often emerging in to beautiful central gardens that existed in the centre of the city blocks. We were surprised to find a huge amount of cultural program in these arcades also – it was explained to us later that the level of the streets was at one point much lower than it is today and as such many of the cultural functions of the city are buried underground. It seemed like the locals of the city used this network of passageways to negotiate the old city – bypassing tourists and weather alike – and we were shown a number of beautiful old theatres, galleries and bars occupying these ambiguous spaces between the blocks. These interventions had been so sensitive to the existing city fabric that we had all completely missed this layering of the city in our first day and previous experiences.

Josef Pecnik’s work at the Prague Castle carried through this theme of sensitive architectural intervention to rationalize historical layers and construction techniques. When the nation was formed in 1918, he was commissioned to make alterations to the castle to open it up to the people. These small interventions serve as way-finding cues to pedestrians, signaling connections between rooms, courtyards and in to the city beyond. The first day I had been completely focused on the intricacy of his craftsmanship in the detailing and construction of these small moments. Spending more time there on the second visit to the castle, I was struck by how he had applied the same care in the masterplanning of the whole site, using these comparatively tiny insertions and deletions to rationalize the whole site plan. It was like being part of some kind of architectural choreography – he would rationalize an irregular corner with a multi-directional stair; or cut holes in the walls of internal spaces so as to visually link its neighbouring courtyards; situate an obelisk to create a new axis through an overly open area; and then turn your head to look through a new arched stairway that perfectly framed the steeple of a church many kilometres away. There is such a beautiful balance in this project of boldness and humility that I found quite moving and infinitely inspiring.

Josef Pecnik’s work at the Prague Castle carried through this theme of sensitive architectural intervention to rationalize historical layers and construction techniques.
DULUX STUDY TOUR_POST TOUR REPORT

DATE : 19.05.2017 - 31.05.2017

MORGAN JENKINS

01_Old Town tourists
02_Prague Laneways_Unknown
03_Prague Laneways Diagram_Marcela Stejsbachova
04_Prague Castle renovations_Josef Plecnik
05_Courtyard Garden off laneway
06_The Gang_Prague Castle Gardens
07_Prague Castle renovations_Josef Plecnik
08_Prague Castle renovations_Josef Plecnik
09_Prague Castle renovations_Josef Plecnik
10_
In the past pages I have barely scratched the surface of a few key musings about the Dulux Study Tour. After our first afternoon in Barcelona, I could have honestly gone home invigorated and energized both professionally and personally. The following couple of weeks were so full of intellectual stimulation that I am only just beginning to understand the depth of the way I have been affected by my experience. The architectural immersion that the tour facilitates allows an intensity and depth of discussion I have not been exposed to previously and it was sharing this experience with my fellow travelers that was by far the most meaningful part of the trip for me. It reminded me why I had been drawn to architecture in the first instance – there is no single right answer.

In the two and a half weeks we encountered projects and practices with such varied approaches, typologies, scales and philosophies that it has allowed me the space to look inwardly to start making decisions about what I would like our practice and output to be. I haven’t resolved it all yet, but I’m a lot clearer than I had been before. I want it to be about multiplicity. I want it to be about clarity. I want it to be about inclusion. I want it to be humble but I want the ideas to be bold. I want it to be about the city. And I want it to be about the people it is for.

I would like to thank Dulux Australia for investing in to the five of us and for facilitating such a unique and truly inspiring trip. I would like to thank the Institute of Architects for allowing us the opportunity to undertake such an incredible learning experience. I would like to thank Architecture Media for their assistance in collating, distributing and documenting the journey. And I would like to thank the four other winners Clare Scorpo, Alberto Quinzon, Imogene Tudor and Louisa Gee for their company, insights, opinions and giggles.