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2018 Dulux Study Tour Report By Leah Gallagher



I loved the Dulux Study Tour! It was amazing and I have taken so much away from this trip.

Marjorie and I are beginning this exciting and daunting journey of starting a practice and I am trying to learn as much as possible about other practices and design approaches to inform our direction. As a result I have a lot of ideas washing around and I'm trying to answer these questions:

- How can Brisbane explain itself better?!
- How do we open up the city for more people to enjoy great spaces we have available?
- How do you action these ideas as part of an architecture practice?
- How can architects influence decisions about the city?

Other questions about style, vernacular, regional responses and fashion are still being pondered! My report is full of questions, things I am still thinking about after the tour. I've mentioned most practices or conversations that have left me with more to think about. I enjoyed every practice we visited and I am very grateful for the time architects gave us to talk about their work and city. I hope I can repay the favour one day.



2018 Practice + Project Visits

LONDON PROJECTS

Covent Garden
Tin House
Design Museum
Battersea Power Station
Tate Modern
Millennium Bridge
St Paul's Cathedral
Paternoster Square
One New Change
Bracken House
Bow Lane area
Wren churches
Bloomberg Place &
Temple of Mithras
New Court
Mansion House
1 Poultry
Bank of England
Royal Exchange
Threadneedle St/
Throgmorton St/Cornhill
Gherkin
Cheesegrater
Lloyds Building
Willis Building
Plantation Place
Walkie Talkie
Woodblock House
RIBA

LONDON PRACTICES

Carmody Groarke
Denton Corker Marshall
Zaha Hadid Architects
Rogers Stirk Harbour +
Partners
AL_A
Ash Sakula
WilkinsonEyre
Foster + Partners
Studio Octopi

BERLIN PROJECTS

Frizz23
ze05
Australian Embassy
Berlin
Reichstag Building
Neues Museum
Jewish Museum
Konig Gallery
Baugruppen Projects: B50
project and IBeB (from
outside)

BERLIN PRACTICES

David Chipperfield
Architects
ACME
Deadline Architects
GMP Architekten
Realities:United

MILAN/VERONA PROJECTS

House of Memory
Bosco Verticale
Castelvecchio Museum
Banco Popolare di Verona
Palazzo Giardino Giusti
Farini Bakery
Porta Nuova district
Piazza Gae Aulenti
Giardini Pubblici
Torre Velasca
Duomo
Museo del Novecento
Piazza Mercanti
Castello Sforzesco
Dominioni
CityLife

MILAN PRACTICES

BE.ST (Stefano
Belingardi)
Piuarch
arcHITEcts srl (who also
exported pizza bases)
Progetto CMR
Park Associati

LONDON

The pace of the city is so full on! I was also fresh from jury duty for the QLD AIA State Awards, so I was in the right mindset for asking questions.

In London we started with a walking tour which set the tone of the conversation and gave us an appreciation for the history, complexity and scale of the city. The Tin House by Henning Stummel was our first stop - one of my favorite buildings of the trip. The changing scale of the space and use of materials to create simple pyramid structures was beautiful - everything was considered. The walking tour increased in project scale as we travelled closer to the city, concluding at the Walkie-Talkie building.

Our tour guide David Garrard was excellent. Over lunch it was interesting to ask David more about his work and interest in conservation. We all had local examples of controversial heritage projects and discussed with David what he thinks the future of conservation is - what is worthy of being kept in a modern city and will politics change in the future to favour more commercial outcomes?

I've been thinking about this conversation further since I've been home. Brisbane has a style responding to our 'timber and tin' tradition and the Brisbane City Council character overlays. I think it might be holding us back and possibly creating a local PoMo (David's term for Postmodernism) style.

What I found fascinating about London was each practice was making their office space a temple to embody their design beliefs and philosophies. All the practice staff are part of the brand, and it would be evident what the practice focus is upon entering the space. It was space linked to brand. I think we (as architects) need to invest more in architecture ourselves and our own spaces we work within. Sounds obvious but the tour made this very apparent to me!

To give examples of this, we found the workplace culture also related to the practice location and interiors.

Zaha Hadid had an amazing gallery shopfront on the ground floor with a sweat-shop full of architects above. The culture seemed to be focused on output and data analysis. The conversations we had with the Zaha staff were fascinating and polarizing, which made for

interesting discussion about the share economy and neighbourhood types. To contrast this, AL_A were located in a light industrial area within an old factory. The interiors were white and light filled, with plush red carpet. As you entered the space you were requested to remove your shoes and instantly felt calm and relaxed. The models were in the centre of the space and provided moments for practice staff to meet and collaborate.

The office of Ash Sakula Architects was a whimsical row house, with playful pockets of space around every corner. The two directors share their home with the small office and the practice is producing work that is warm and at a human scale. Robert was telling us the development of their street over time - a rich history from stables to row houses now covered in vines.

Foster and Partners office - what a place! The main office space was humming with activity. The opportunity to learn with the resources they have to hand is amazing. They have a product library that dreams are made of - pigeon holes with different samples stacked in material categories, each sample with a traceable code to give you the specification. Amazing. I think it would be great if each AIA Chapter maintained a library like this, product reps would love it and architects could have client meetings at the institute. Add bookable meeting rooms and access to a printer - Josh?

All the other practices followed a similar suit and interestingly a similar process of working with models. I don't think many offices in Brisbane work with physical models but almost every office we went into in London had a working set of models. The most impressive collection of models was at Carmody Groarke. They filled the entry and were incredibly detailed, with a few at 1:20 scale.

On our way to the airport we had another extended commute (great for discussions) and a chance to chat to our Uber driver about architecture in London. He told us that London is a city of countries and that people care more about the architecture than the monarch. All of a sudden I didn't want to leave London, it's a place that is impossible to explore totally.



AL_A



Zaha Hadid Architecture



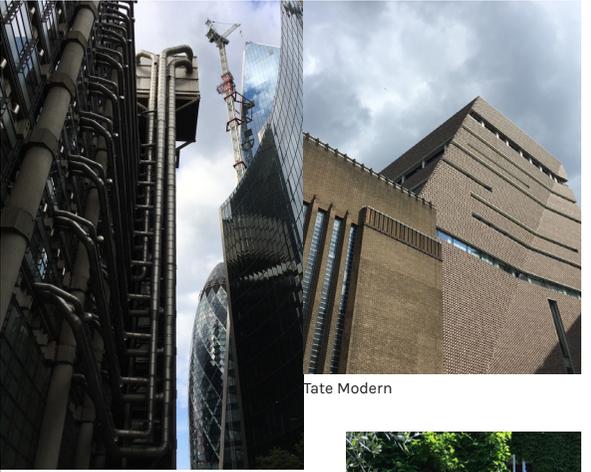
Tin House by Henning Stummel



Foster + Partners AMAZING product library



DY + LG at Battersea Power Station



Gherkin/Cheesegrater/Lloyds Building

Tate Modern



Woodblock House by drmm Architects



Woodblock House



Ash Sakula



KB1 + DY + JOM + KB2 + LG + JL at Ash Sakula

BERLIN

London gave us a singular reference point as a group to compare and contrast Berlin with. Berlin provided us with a moment to catch our breath!

My takeaway from Berlin was that possibly politics, economics and legislation comes under careful review by architects when the building industry goes quiet. From what we heard the procurement of projects in Berlin is difficult at present. There is no cheap land, most of the land which became available after the wall came down has been developed. Perhaps Berlin is in a two-speed economy with the rest of Germany, as builders are getting paid higher rates in other areas of the country and it is difficult for projects to stack-up financially. When tenders are high how do you procure a project? Build it yourself? Do you become a developer?

Matthew from Deadline and Christian from Zanderroth Architekten both told similar stories of projects where the architect plays the role of developer. The risks taken by these practices to create a successful architectural project were interesting to hear. Don't let everyone pick their own toilet, make sure you lock in as many tender line items as possible and limit provisional sums. The economic climate in Berlin sounded like it is changing fast and the tour has highlighted to me how the particular economics of a place influence creative responses by architects.

Back to the city, after the Berlin wall came down, the city realized that there was an interest from visitors to see remains of the wall and a local debate began. Should the city rebuild sections of the wall? Or create a planning scheme that allows for the building volumes to increase in height where the wall once was? Matthew from Deadline was disappointed to share that the city selected the first option as an appropriate response. He seemed frustrated at the current conservative approach to development in the city. His views were also shared by our tour guide Richard and Martin from GMP. Why is the city rebuilding a baroque palace in the centre? Is that appropriate? When I asked Martin from GMP more about the direction of development in Berlin he chuckled and said 'the older you get the more at peace you are with your situation.' What?! Never!

To contrast this we did hear from some practices engaging in some interesting procurement models. Architects are proactively talking to government about housing, public space and the need for schools. This is what I am interested in - enacting ideas.

ZE05 by Zanderroth Architekten, was an architect lead development where the owners funded the project by creating a building company or Baugruppe. The outcome is a great example of medium density living for families. Each kitchen opened onto an up scaled backyard for all the children to play in. Under this elevated garden was a carpark that allowed people to enter via their own laundry door - unloading prams and groceries would be a breeze. The row house design also has a flexible room on the street which could be an additional living space or home office. The homes are stacked over four stories and are actually quite large - the bedrooms are large enough to have a bed, a window, a desk and still permit you to circulate with ease - revolutionary. A very successful project.

By far the most interesting practice we visited was realities:united. A practice pushing an experimental approach to art and/in architecture, founded in the mid 1990s after the wall came down. The practice started in former East Germany in an old animal testing facility without running water or electricity. On the weekends the space became an illegal nightclub with the purpose of 'meeting interesting people' and developed into a place of experimentation for the practice.

Their Flussbad project was fascinating, a scheme to develop and clean a section of the river at Museum Island. Realities:united has been encouraging the city to take on this project for the last 20 years. An annual swimming event has been run by realities:united with donations to fund the river cleaning in the month prior to the event. For the last four years the swimming event has been successful and now the riverfront rejuvenation project is being considered by government. It was eye opening to hear that enacting change can occur in a positive and community centred way.

The process of demonstrating alternatives could be done by protest or critical review. Realities:united did this differently, they staged a community event to highlight a need. At the beginning of the DST I wanted to learn how architects can be influential in city making and the approach from realities:united was different. In my (limited) experience of advocating for change, I presented alternate ideas and critically reviewed the proposal for the Queens Wharf Casino in Brisbane. A swimming event sounds more fun than a political protest.



König Gallery



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe



realities:united Flussbad proposal



Ze05



David Chipperfield Architects office



Neues Museum



DY + KB1 + JOM in our hotel in Berlin - great chats!



Kids on bikes



Ze05



Ze05

MILAN

The tour is such a whirlwind I was struck by the cultural differences in all the places we visited and how instantly this hit us on our arrival. In Milan we departed the airport at alarming speed in some sort of luxury car with a textbook example of eurofashion at the wheel. We are in Italy. During the car ride we spoke about architects and business. Most architects win a project and think about how they can maximise output and business people think about how they can minimise output to maximise profit. Is the profession fundamentally flawed? Maybe. Do we need to find a different mode of business to support the practice of (good) architecture. Maybe.

During our first walk around Milan I was beginning to understand vacant sites as areas of city trauma arisen from conflict - a hangover from Berlin. By contrast, vacant sites in Milan were signs of economic change that occurs in a post-industrial city. Milan has transformed itself from the home of manufacturing to the home of fashion and culture.

One of the practices we visited was Piurach, which has Dolce & Gabbana as their main client. Clients in fashion appreciate the details of architecture, as the process to create a crafted and considered building is similar to design processes in fashion. I thought International style sits more comfortably here - it's fashion, it makes sense.

Piurach spoke of integrated green roofs and gardens in all of their projects, which is encouraged by the city council as a way to mitigate urban heat island effect. From the architects we spoke to in Milan, it sounded like the city council has a good grasp on the realities of growing cities. There was a city plan recently released that is defining Milan as 88 neighbourhoods, each one different. We visited City Life, a space ship that has landed on a post-industrial site and is home to some unsuccessful Zaha Haddid and Daniel Libeskind buildings (our guides words, not mine). Even if I thought City Life wasn't a particularly successful neighbourhood, it was refreshing to hear that a city council wants a diversity of neighbourhoods. Different types of places for different types of people - it's obvious but great to see. I don't think Brisbane has made the same realization.

The tour has also highlighted to me why a city would want to select 'big name' architects over local architects. It's easier for local prejudice about a site to be forgotten by an unfamiliar (new) and exciting design. Our guide told us that in Milan's case international architects

were employed as a way to ensure expectations of delivery and quality were met. Sadly, none of the apartments or office spaces which form the City Life precinct have sold quickly.

City Life and its shortcomings were highlighted when we went on a Scarpa day trip to Verona. We visited Castelvecchio and everything was local, crafted and loaded with meaning while being playful and engaging. It was great to experience Castelvecchio with the group and have a day away from these puzzling and complex cities. It felt like we were on holiday!

On the last day we had this incredible city bicycle tour by Carlo Berizzi and I asked why the lineage of Scarpa's work wasn't continued. He thought it was because Scarpa did not teach to a wide audience and as a result his work was not closely studied. I find it amusing that Scarpa's work is elaborated on further and referenced heavily by many architects in Brisbane, Australia. I also think that Scarpa may have been heading towards PoMo. Not sure.

Carlo pieced together Milan for us and explained how the city style has evolved as a result of internal furnishings. Most homes in the 1950s and 1960s had furnishings and paintings from other styles and centuries, which did not fit with modernism. Apparently to remedy this mixture of styles a neoclassical influence was mixed with modernism to create a Milan style.

Our conversation with Carlo jumped scales, and we discussed how the city was first settled and he told us that Milan is built over a river originally used for trading. The weekend we were visiting voters were going to decide if the river should be exposed or remain concealed under the city. Sounds like a responsive council - I like it.



KB2 + Wine



DY at Banco Popolare di Verona



Stone floors in Milan



Our Milan guide Carlo Berizzi



Piuarch office has a rooftop garden w/ fruit + veg



House of Memory



Banco Popolare di Verona



Team photo in Verona



Castelvecchio Museum



Bosco Verticale



Palazzo Giardino Giusti/pre spritz nap



Alison + I at Castelvecchio Museum

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One of many band photos of Jason, Joseph, Kim, Dirk and I.

Thank You!

Thank you to Dulux and the Australian Institute of Architects for this opportunity, that is both unrepeatabe and unforgettable. I have learnt so much and I think I've come back with more questions for myself than answers. Which I think is great! I enjoyed spending time with everyone.

Josh is fully aware of my Institute wish list and I feel he is up to the task of executing most of it!

Alison, Hellen and Richard are architecture converts. Alison in particular has a new appreciation for how much architects care about projects and can become fascinated by the oddest of things - door knobs, city planning, abandoned mattresses... etc. On reflection my time spent with Alison, Hellen and Richard has been a great opportunity to learn more about business development and marketing. Often I would walk out of practice visits overwhelmed by the entire operation and business model. I quickly became refocused by astute comments made by our Dulux hosts. As running a business is obvious to them and new to me! Thank you for sharing!

Mai was an absolute delight to travel with and we have had some great conversations about architecture in our home cities. Our discussions as a group were carefully recorded, elaborated on and encouraged by Katelin.

Lastly, I think I have made some great new friends/peers/colleagues/people to talk about concrete finishes with! Jason, Kim, Joseph and Dirk - thank you! I'm looking forward to seeing how this tour impacts each of us going forward and I can't wait to catch up with everyone soon!

Thank you for providing this opportunity to me! It has been incredible!

Leah Gallagher RAIA