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# NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE STUDENT FESTIVAL

2008

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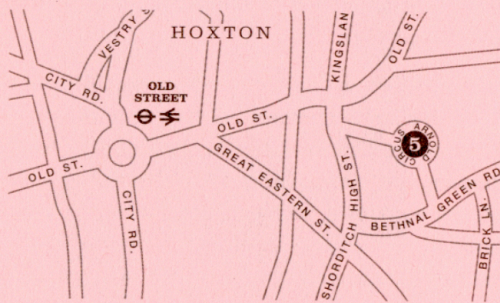
Students: Mansee Dabral, Leegoo Guo, Yuka Kawamoto, pursuing Masters in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at Central St. Martins

Course Director: Patricia Austin  
Architectural Tutor: Sarah Featherstone

## 5.

### Arnold Circus

Centre for Alternative Technology, Wales  
Arnold Circus



Arnold Circus is situated at the edge of the City Fringe Cultural Quarter, in Shoreditch East London. The 'circus' is a raised piece of land conceived as a public space for the Boundary Estate, one of the first purpose-built social housing schemes. The circus, formed from the demolition waste of the old Jago, clearly defines the place, as a wonderful object in its own right and as a focus for a community.

Arnold Circus has a strong history and involvement in the National Architectural Student Festival was a natural extension of the work of the Friends of Arnold Circus (FOAC), a community group tirelessly working to ensure continued vibrant life both on and around the Circus. Students from the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in



Machynlleth, Wales saw the NASF as a catalyst to enable sharing of knowledge and learning; and intrigued by the challenge to bring a bit of Wales into London and to take a bit of London back to Wales.

The students were drawn from all over the UK and from many different disciplines and were all studying on the MSc Architecture: Advanced Environmental and Energy Studies programme at CAT. Working as a multi-disciplinary group, they contributed towards the design and construction of their Urban Intervention. Although initial meetings with various community groups were held in advance of the festival, the main body of the work took place over a weeklong project held in June 2008 and culminating with a final event in July 2008.

Rather than physically construct something, the students decided that the urban intervention needed to be a series of workshops themed around their take on FRESH. Inspired by the productive gardens at CAT their final take on FRESH ended up being FRESH FOOD. What and how we eat is still high on the national agenda and plays a significant role in the global economy as well as our environmental impact. Something that encapsulated not only the ethos of the students and CAT but also resonated with the residents of Arnold Circus; their annual sharing picnic, local city farm, community garden, healthy living initiatives at the local school and local food production and supply.

Students devised a series of workshops that were planned to run during the LFA engaging the local community in our own theme of *making food fresh*. Working collaboratively with the FOAC and other local residents the ambition was to run these events by inviting participants to consider where their food comes from, local food sourcing and notions of urban agriculture; exploring the nature of food production and consumption in an urban environment.



The workshops included *Jam on the Circus*, *Window Boxes from Waste*, *How Do You Value Food?* and *Earth Oven Making*. Students also designed an installation made from disused 1 000 litre containers, getting water, a vital life giving and plant growing resource, flowing again on the Circus. Other proposals included information on small-scale food production and a shared recipe book, to bring together the communities of CAT and Arnold Circus

through stories and recipes in one culinary cook-up.

The main Earth Oven workshop became a reality in June 2008, with the community and students making two ovens for use at local community events, the Shoreditch Community Garden and the other for the Annual Sharing Picnic held on Arnold Circus in July 2008.



The Arnold Circus Oven survived and was a great success with manic pizza making at the sharing picnic in July 2009, a wonderful event, even though the first pizza to go in looked a little apprehensive.

The students, unintentionally found themselves inspired by the work, thanks to a very strong and determined local community. Restrictions of time and money meant that not all the student ambitions were realised for the festival this time around. The leaflets remain available for future use... and we hope the collaboration will continue into the future with workshops planned with community groups... hopefully one day to realise the ambition of every local group having made its own earth oven.

The wider aspiration of bringing together two communities, different ways of thinking, differing knowledge but the same ambition, happened at the sharing picnic. Several of the students took on the wider issues exposed during the festival and one has gone onto write his thesis based on his work for the NASF.

This was a short lived intervention into urban life but one that was inspiring for the students involved and perhaps one that has potential to reach into the future life of communities both in Machynlleth and in Shoreditch!

Text by A. Pooley

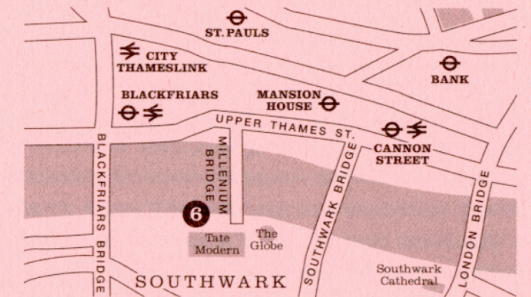
Thanks to all the students who participated; Adam, Alice, Andy, Ben, Caroline, Dan, Elena, Emma, George, James, Jonathan, Katie, Lisa, Matt, Nir, Ralph, Scott, Simon and Will. Special thanks to all those involved from the Friends of Arnold Circus, Shoreditch Community Garden and Hackney City Farm.

[www.cat.org.uk/graduateschool](http://www.cat.org.uk/graduateschool)  
[friendsofarnoldcircus.wordpress.com](http://friendsofarnoldcircus.wordpress.com)

## 6.

### Alice Pavilion

Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne  
Tower Bridge Plaza, Riverside Walk, South Bank



#### What we found there

'My NAME is Alice, but —'  
'It's a stupid enough name!' Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?'  
'MUST a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.  
'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: 'MY name means the shape I am — and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.'  
Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

#### ALICE - Atelier de la Conception de l'Espace

ALICE is a laboratory at the school of architecture (ENAC/SAR/IA) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, Switzerland. It was founded in October 2006 and offers an experimental approach to teaching design in architecture. The team consists of a group of architects and researchers from across Europe and Switzerland. All members of the team have built up their own practices in different European Cities, including London, Berlin, Zurich, Copenhagen and Lausanne. ALICE benefits from this international background at a day to day level, most members commuting between those cities and Lausanne.

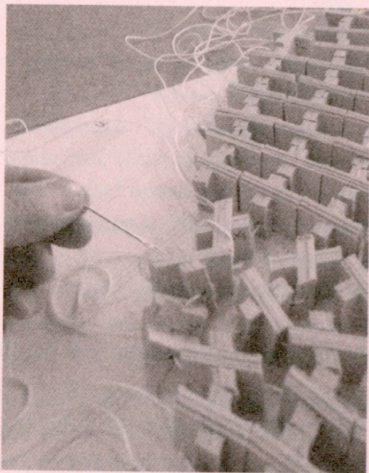
#### The Designer Within

One of the key ideas underlying ALICE's approach to teaching design is a constant discourse between a conceptual framework of an architectural idea and its translation into an actual project. While projects are usually developed with typical architectural drawings and models to represent a given proposal, we are presently exploring the potential of expanding the project scale into a one-to-one condition. The intention is that the structural constraints present at this scale as well as the potential physical and

spatial impact will encourage synthetic thinking and a holistic approach to design issues.

In the academic year 2007/08 a series of explorations of gravity formed the beginning of the semester. The students first produced a physical construct declaring gravity at work. This initial artifact was then subjected to a process of analysis, reevaluation and reinterpretation in 3D software, physical models and architectural drawings, and was finally transformed into a proposal for a site-interactive installation or 'pavilion' for the London Festival of Architecture held in June 2008. At the end of the first semester, these proposals were entered in an internal, juried competition, resulting in a team of twelve students who would further develop the design and bring it to completion.

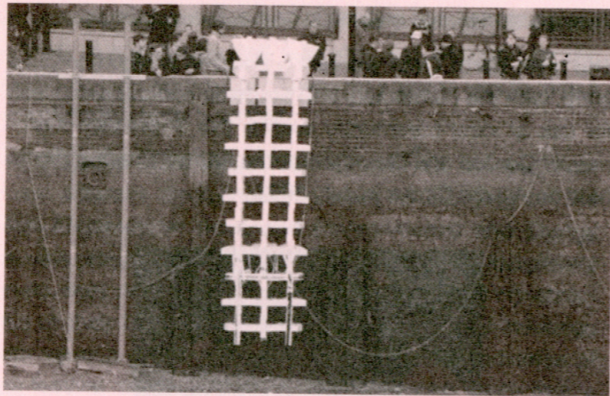
To realize a construction of a pavilion or an installation in a remote city with a second year design class is an experiment. The basic idea behind it is to expose students to processes in architectural production, from conception, to planning, to realization, to the ultimate removal of the architectural artifact—thus, the full life cycle of an object.



At the same time, such a project calls into question the position and the viewpoint of the designer. Here, the architect is not just a creator, he is also a craftsman, a producer, an engineer, a manager, etc. Thus the designer is not only acting from without or above—from a top-view position or a bird's eye perspective so to speak—but also from within. The employment of digital and physical tools, in combination with the actual building of a one-to-one structure, presents a framework of multiple reference frames for the maker of the design, while at the same time transgressing these frames. This altered position of the designer-architect implies understanding architectural design as an emergent process.

### Overflow

In the spring term 2008 the ALICE pavilion team designed Overflow as a large-scale archi-tectonic artifact interacting with the tidal movements at the Thames River. Conceived



as a flexible post-tensioned polystyrene structure, fastened along the embankment handrail as a hinge, it was reacting to the tidal amplitudes in the Thames River.

Overflow was originally designed for Tower Bridge Plaza. This site was strategically chosen in order to investigate how a natural force such as the tidal movement occurring in the Thames could be amplified and extended over the land in the form of a spatial screen continuously transforming the perception of the iconic London skyline and its presence from the plaza.

This spatial structure behaves as a tectonic overflow, from water to land. Although the Thames has largely influenced, over time, the development of the urban fabric of London, a personal and physical connection to the river is restricted today by an imposing embankment. As a matter of fact this buffer zone twice a day absorbs an almost unnoticed level change of water of over six meters, mainly vertically along its retaining walls.

The proposed installation attempts to first accentuate our awareness of this phenomenon and then transfer it into a physical experience expanding from a vertical to a horizontal spatial configuration over the embankment walkway.

Overflow was erected on the Southwark Walkway in front of Tate Modern. It was assembled on June 18th and 19th and staged as an ephemeral event from June the 20th – 22nd.

The ALICE London Pavilion was awarded the prize for 'Signposting' and won first prize as the festival's 'Best Overall Project' by the final jury of the NASF.

In fall 2008 ALICE presented a documentation and an installation on Overflow at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2008 as part of the exhibition in the Swiss Pavilion.

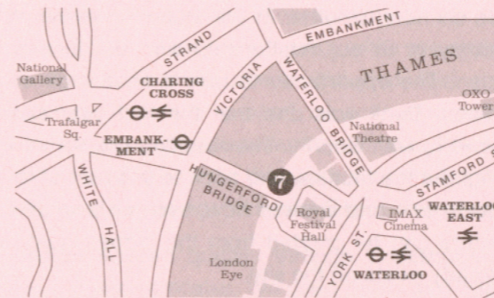
ALICE students 2007/08: Adrien Alberti, Monica Rita Basbous, Moukarzel, Dorette Baumann, Matthias Bellmann, Fatma Ben Amor, Malaica Cimenti, Esteban Coto Chavarria, Konstantinos DelliOliivo, Nicolas de Courten, Nathalie Egli, Clio Gachoud, Ann-Madlen Gfeller, Andreas Gubler, Axel Harari, Steffan Heath, Sebastian Hefti, Lila Held, Alexander Hertel, Loic Jacot-Guillarmod, Philipp Jakob, Aurèlie Krotoff, Thaddèe Lucan, Aurel Martin, Patrick Meier, Auguste Michaud, Mikael Monteserin, Minh-Luc Pham, Edouard Philippe, Augusta Prorok, Bertrand Sauterel, Christopher Tan, Sandro Tonietti, Andrès Tovar Nuez

ALICE team 2007/08: Dieter Dietz, Olivier Ottevaere, Isabella Pasqualini, Daniel Pokora, Katia Ritz, Marc Schmit

## 7.

### Polyvocal Investigations into Liminal Space by Group A

Goldsmiths College  
Hungerford Bridge, South Bank



### Introduction

The space under the Hungerford Bridge on London's South Bank poses a series of questions pertaining to the ownership, control and accountability of the South Bank. This area can be identified as a liminal zone, located within the otherwise increasingly homogeneous leisure environment of the South Bank. This status is exacerbated by the fact that it falls just within the Westminster protest restriction zone, (enforced under Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (2005) and while it has the appearance of public space, it actually comes under the jurisdiction of the Southbank Centre.

The space under the bridge is an anomaly, in that it is underused and transitory, featuring a diverse range of users. Group A opted to use this rupture in the activity that punctuates the South Bank, as a point of departure to

interrogate the broader area. These concerns provided the basis for a set of three aims, with which Group A guided its intervention into the area:

- To experiment with the potentials of ourselves, and others, in places of liminality
- To activate moments of community and re-sensitise the everyday
- To frame invisible relations based upon accidental or habitual activity

### Publication

Consequently, Group A set out to produce a provisional record of the South Bank's physical, social, psychological and historical geography; in order to encourage a recalibration of perceptions of the built environment of the South Bank. The intention was to provide a vessel for the circulation of information, outside of the readily established mechanisms for the production and distribution of architectural discourse. The response was produced as a fanzine, entitled Exchange & Arch.

The medium of a fanzine was chosen, since a vocabulary of amateurism and playfulness are inherent to its format and history – thereby democratising access. It was planned to constitute an attempt at knowledge production. Influenced by the writing of Michel Foucault, the hope was to produce a momentary claim for power, by an otherwise under-represented multitude. Yet it was also designed to be a publication where hegemonic views of the South Bank could be articulated. At best, the premise was that this would lead to the production of paradoxes within the publication, commencing the unravelling of ill-conceived rhetoric in the process.



Contributions were obtained from the Southbank Centre, the Save Southbank campaign and a former Hayward employee, amongst other users of the site. Distribution took place under the Hungerford Bridge and was restricted to an exchange economy, with an object, story, joke or similar relating to the South Bank being required to obtain a copy – subsequently furthering the dialogue outside the



**Alice Pavilion**

Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne



Overflow in construction (left) and Overflow across the river (above)

## The Final Review

The Final Review for the National Architecture Student Festival 2008 took place at Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh Place, London WC1 on Thursday 3rd July 2008.

Art and architecture students from across the UK presented their installations and interventions in an informal review setting.

The review panel, which included a selection of key figures from the built environment professions, reflected on the interventions' strengths, weaknesses and how well they answered the brief alongside local people who had been involved in the projects.

This year's panel was chaired by Anne Markey of London Metropolitan University and included Kieran Long and Kaye Alexander from the Architects' Journal; Jason Prior of EDAW; Gary Rollison of Cundall; Jason Bruges of Jason Bruges Design Studio; Robert Mull of London Metropolitan University; Je Ahn and Maria Smith of Studio Weave (previous NASF winners) and Sarah Ichioka and Zoe McLeod of the London Festival of Architecture.

Prizes were awarded to students for those who best met the brief's 4 key themes of 'Reveal' the genus-loci or sense of place, 'Reuse' materials in construction and reuse the intervention post-LFA, 'Signpost' the LFA to passers-by, 'Inclusive' of diverse local people and those with accessibility challenges.

### Reveal Winner

'Future Diggers' at Alexander Gate in the Kensington, Chelsea and Knightsbridge Hub by students of MA in Creative Practices for Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design.

### Reuse Winner

'Made from Smithfield' an installation held in Smithfield in the Clerkenwell and City Hub by second year architecture students of the Department of Architecture and Spatial Design at London Metropolitan University.

### Signpost Winner

'Overflow' in the Southwark and South Bank Hub by ALICE studio from Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

### Inclusive Winner

'Mirror' in the King's Cross, Bloomsbury, Fitzrovia and Covent Garden Hub by students of MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design.

### Overall Prize

An overall prize was also awarded for the best project to Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne for 'Overflow'.

