



MAT.ZINE #11 RESILIENCE

# resilience

mat.zine 11

"the bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists."

A large part of the creative process relies on resilience and in mat.zine 11 contributors have positioned their work in relation to this theme.

Nestled within this brimming edition, **resilience** introduces 3 new features which we hope to become regular inclusions: subject; object; concept. These refer to the fundamentals of our shared pursuit: people, ideas, material and its absence.

We hope that mat.zine continues in its creative resilience to inquire and inspire.

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*rust on cotton*

traces of an anonymous object

andrew morris



# wallpaper

andrew ross

In 1993 Aleksandar Zograf, living in Belgrade, observed people selling their money as wallpaper.

Yugoslavia had been in a state of war for two years. Those in power were printing money to fund it - lowering the value of everyone else's in the process. The population was in a state of extreme uncertainty and poverty.

Perhaps the wallpaper was used to create a space away from the toil, where people could surround themselves with the illusion of wealth.



mat.zine

5

5

5

plenum  
seán mcalister

whole homely host,  
encompassed outward,  
the inward cage

dark thickness bound,  
presence inward,  
the outward rage

in remote mass,  
gravitas outward,  
decay inward laid

whole homely host,  
unknown innard,  
unkept, outward unspared.



# baloney

ben williams

emmeline quigley

Edwin Forrester slept until nine at the new Parkside Inn. He was much refreshed. He had a Number Three Breakfast with whole-wheat toast, and certainly had the appetite for it. Strangers were watching him shovel waffles and pork sausage into his mouth. His happiness outweighed his guilt as he stoked himself with calories that would get him through another day. He felt as though he could eat the whole galaxy if only there had been a plate big enough.

As he left he spoke softly to himself: "Stoking up for another day."

\*

"What are you looking at?"

Edwin looked up to see the old, bespectacled man next to him was staring at the book he was holding. He might have only been ten or fifteen years older than Edwin, but he thought he looked a lot older. This man was a descendant of criminals, but possessed a wild imagination. He had an imagination that had never been tamed.

"Umm... It's just a book."

"But what's it about?" spat the elderly man impatiently. It was difficult not to hate this kind of guy. He stank like he was from another planet, but the bus was full up and Edwin was nearly at his stop so he figured he could rise above it.

That was the problem with buses, you had to rise above them.

"It's about a world where nobody owns anything, they just share out what they all have. It's a kind of anti-ownership book I guess."

"That sounds like a load of baloney," muttered the stinker.

"You may as well be reading a book where the world stops turning."

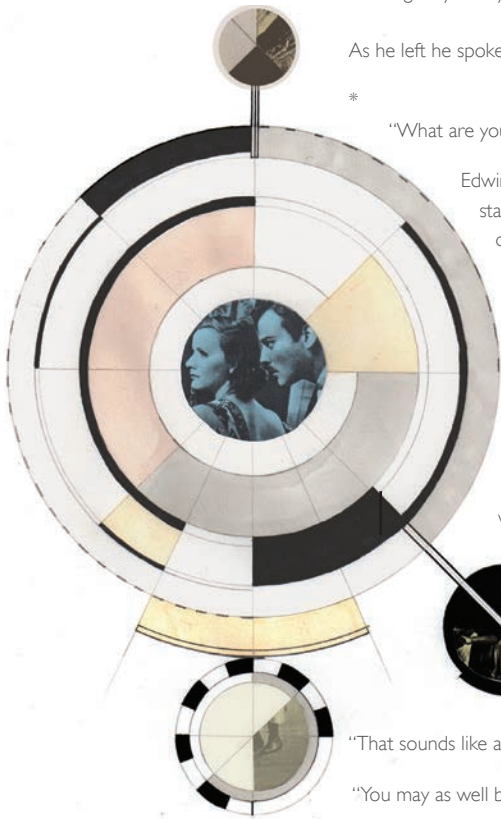
"I don't think I understand what you mean."

"Well everyone would have to build cities on tracks that whizz around the world just so that they could get night and day back. Night and day, night and day. The whole thing sounds bloody pointless to me, just like your book."

\*

Edwin let out a long sigh as he rolled onto his side to sleep. He imagined that he was a little baby. Then he thought how good it would be to be a baby's baby, and so on. It was like counting sheep in reverse; except the sheep weren't jumping fences but shrinking into baby lambs that would climb back inside other sheep, which would shrink into other baby lambs, and so on.

Edwin slept like a log. Logs were legendary for sleeping well.





# the suit really needs two pairs of hands

matthew stock

*first published in Madame Wang issue 2*

The Spectator is much more than a mere member of a momentary group that go to see this thing, then move over there + observe that thing; they are a community. The position + power of the spectator, as implied by the work of art, has been a central question from the time of Denis Diderot + has been regularly contested from Roland Barthes essay *The Death of the Author* to Michael Fried's call for the passivity of the audience.

Jacques Rancière's

*The Emancipated Spectator* brings the spectator back into focus; once again asking us to re-examine its potential. Rancière's spectator is one that is developed through ideas raised in his earlier work *The Ignorant School Master*. This work converges on the theories of the eccentric Joseph Jacotot who believed in the pedagogical structure of intellectual equality. Rancière concentrates on this to discuss the relationship between the schoolmaster + the pupil. In *The Emancipated Spectator* Rancière uses *The Ignorant School Master* as a basis to discuss the spectator of an artwork; a position

that he always holds in doubt. For Rancière the spectator who sits + passively observes an artwork is viewed as an undesirable description of the viewing process for two reasons: firstly the spectator is portrayed as a position of ignorance unaware of the codes + signs that enable the transmission of knowledge from actor to viewer. Secondly the spectator remains immobile and passive he is separated both from the action on the stage + from the actions of other spectators; this is an ignorance that needs be countered to re-establish knowledge + action. Rancière goes further for he calls for a new spectator; + a new relationship, derived from his writings about the ignorant schoolmaster. The schoolmaster's role is to abolish the distance between ignorance and knowledge, by continuously re-establishing + breaking down this distance.

This pedagogical relationship between schoolmaster + pupil is one that can be seen as a parallel to the distance between the artwork + its spectator and may explain what is at stake for the spectator in contemporary art today.

"Emancipation starts from the opposite principal, the principal of equality. It begins when we dismiss the opposition between looking + acting, + understand that the distribution of the visible

itself is part of the configuration of domination + subjection. It starts when we realise that looking is also an action that confirms or modifies that distribution, + that 'interpreting the world' is already a means of transforming it." [Art forum review, *The Emancipated Spectator*; March 2007.]

The question of an audience + readership arose again during the *Self Assessment of Madame Wang*, held at *The Treignac Project*, France 2011. This journal is engaged in the potential for geo-distributed collaboration in order to call forth another site for artistic experiences, + in doing so is calling for a new way of approaching the art object. What is interesting is how Jacques Rancière + Boris Groys relate to this question. How can these artistic experiences + ideologies exist within a new site + what does this ultimately mean to the community that observes it? The contemporary art community is a self-aware community that has already been conditioned by the art world's numerous emancipatory + participatory projects. This community has already accepted its participatory role, actively welcomed its new authorities, + is ready to reject or accept any denigration offered. What would constitute a new site for art + what will its community of users look like? If we accept Rancière's position that the transfer of knowledge is dependent on maintaining the division of both mastery + ignorance, passivity & activity, then



another question arises. This passivity + mastery continues to support the configuration of the involved individuals into positions of domination + subjection, can the artist functioning as the ignorant schoolmaster change the relationship of the spectator as the pupil?

Boris Groys offers an insight in his essay *Politics of Installation*, where he discusses what happens when a mass cultural community encounters the context of art. Groys suggests that groups attending a film screening are transitory encounters + that their structure is accidental; they share no commonalities or previous history to bind them together but yet they are still communities. Groys calls these groups "radically contemporary communities" + makes it very clear that these groups are not be confused with radical political religious or working communities because these traditional communities all share, from the outset, a link to something common from the past.

"...a common language, common faith, common political history, common upbringing. Such communities tend to establish boundaries between themselves + strangers with whom they share no common past." [Groys, *Going Public*, P62]

In contrast the communities created by mass culture transcend any links to the common past: a community viewing a film screening or a pop concert is only able to look forward; this is due to the constructs of stage and the positioning of the audience. Groys suggests that this is not adequate to keep the community together: The key is found when this community enters the art context, for the arts space has the ability to evoke self-reflection through its use of the installation, curatorial practices, + most importantly mediated encounters with art.

"The contemporary art space is a space in which multitudes can view themselves + celebrate themselves... in a way that assists them in reflecting upon their own condition, offering them an opportunity to exhibit themselves to themselves." Groys, *Going Public* 2010 p.63

Arts Encounter with Madame Wang

How can these new communities suggested by Groys + Rancière be empowered to approach Madame Wang's self-reflexive site, + to understand the processes by which this new encounter + its information will take place?

The spectator is not a passive position that needs to be made active; it is a natural position,

it is what has always been. The community sees in an artwork that which it sees within itself and in doing so continues to reassert its position to itself. The artist aims to transmit an intensity of feeling, energy + action to the spectator; which is governed by the distance between them + the distance between the artwork + the spectator.

This then displays the Self Assessment world that Madame Wang navigates + in many ways is a product of. By altering the site for art, the encounter with art is also changed, + with it both the spectator + the artist. Madame Wang, the publication, is an object that is distributed, purchased, held + felt; its format is not necessarily new at all, but what is new is the way in which it is developed. In its dual call for both a new way of distributing writing, + an alternative collaborative process, it is placing demands on the centrality of the conception of the reader-writer relation. This openness is brought forth through the inclusion of the collaborators' processes + the outward stance of the text. It calls for collaboration in its creation + its reading, + in doing so it seeks to enable the re-conception of the audience. To be enabled is to give someone or something the authority or means to do something; this is a very powerful statement + in the end perhaps this is enough.

# china: raising / razing / erasing

max gane

In 2012, whilst the established Western world is struggling with a deep + severe recession, China is quickly emerging as an international superpower. The recent economic growth of the country is evidenced most clearly in major cities like Beijing + Shanghai, + in second + third tier cities such as Dalian, Chengdu + Nanjing, by a flurry of prestigious architectural projects conceived + executed by an established roster of high profile international architects. These buildings are icons, instantly recognisable forms that symbolise the progress that China has made in recent years.

Away from these flamboyant showcases however, there lies a different picture. In the backstreets of the old towns, the low rise muddle of traditional housing reveals something of the history + heritage of daily life in China. Many of these ramshackle buildings are in a poor state of repair; being held together by whatever materials are available. The lives of their inhabitants are ingrained in these buildings. There is a human scale, a feeling of intimacy, + a sense of community that is as old as the buildings themselves.

Many of these historic areas are under threat from development. Many have already disappeared, and many more are due to be razed in the name of progress. Yet not every new building can be a landmark. The vast majority of new construction is low quality, uninspiring, + completely devoid of any reference to the culture it is replacing. It is severing the past + creating a brutal loss of identity.

Resilience is inherent in the piecemeal construction of these old dwellings. Yet in the face of rapid changes driven by economics + power, this type of resilience alone is not enough. The motivation for protecting these increasingly sparse places needs to come from the same source that is currently engaged in their destruction. A more sensitive model for development is needed, with the primary aims of preserving, restoring + upgrading that which is existing.

house  
meera devidayal



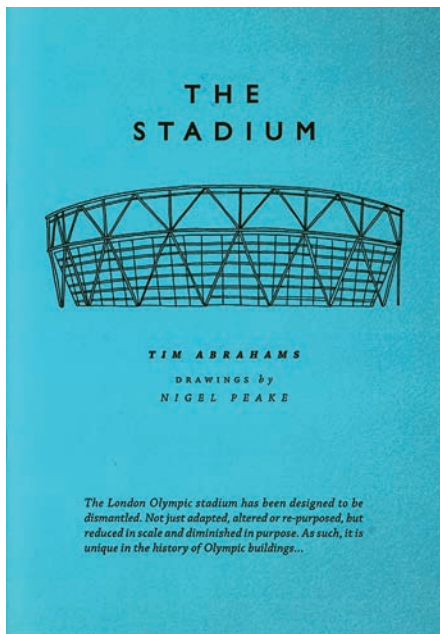
## diy publishing esme fieldhouse

Esme Fieldhouse talks to Tim Abrahams former editor of *Blueprint*, whose recently published book *The Stadium* is the first publication from Machine Books. The publishing label was established by Tim's friend and former *Blueprint* colleague, Kieran Gardner, for whom he has helped with the marketing and social media strategy. Tim writes the blog *Cosmopolitan Scum* and is about to start work as Editor in Chief for online publishing at the Canadian Centre of Architecture in Montreal.

### What would you say is the state of architectural publishing now?

A publishing dedicated solely to an individual profession or individual art form has never really interested me. With what I read, or have ever tried to be involved in, I've always been interested in reading about architecture written in the context of another medium – life, politics, news, society, philosophy.

Digital publishing provides the opportunity for architecture to be discussed in the way I'd always wanted and always envisaged it to be discussed. Architecture seems to be pretty well placed to think about things in a systematic way and to consider the implications of digital publishing in a way that publishers aren't.



### And is it moving in the right direction?

While publishing is confused, more books are being published than ever. Not all with the most amazing production values but I don't see this outpouring of publishing as a bad thing. I think that while certain older heads in publishing are waiting for a new model to appear; they are mistaken. We may never have a clear relationship between digital and print and each company, maybe even each book, will have its own approach.

### Do you think digital forums have allowed a meeting of different disciplines?

I think if you want it to then yes. One of the things not really understood by the publishing industry is that a lot of what is motivated behind digital publishing is thinking: 'hang on a minute, I want to publish something and I can do that using this platform. I don't have to go through this complex



system of talking to publishers and distributors, I can just do it all myself. It's not so much about changing the paradigm, it's about getting what you want to say out there – which is not necessarily reader-focussed.

Machine Books began with an idea of what it would be like for the reader; then we got involved in it and busy with writing and publishing. I realise now we need to think about the reader more, this is something yet to be addressed.

### **Is there a danger of becoming too immersed in your own agenda?**

Yes but that can also become more enticing to the reader: the DIY aesthetic. In much the same way as for the guys who set up Rough Trade Records, speaking with an independent voice becomes part of the appeal. That's what I've really enjoyed in writing about the Olympics, it's a good test point in a world where PR is saying everything's amazing and you've got a group of pissed off people who just want to moan about it. This combination of digital and print publishing sits in between the two, it's a ground to say neither of these things is true, here's an attempt to resolve this and present how I call it.

### **There's an ongoing argument about the absence of an editorial process in blogs, but is there also a sense that removing some of the layers in publishing can save an idea from becoming too prosaic or diluted?**

I think you have to be involved in a collective enterprise, which is why I love magazine publishing. The Stadium is the closest I've got to reconciling the world of magazine publishing and the world of blogging. The book is the third or fourth iteration of an attempt to write about the architecture of the Olympic stadium and has incorporated the comments of several other people along the way.

You reach a certain point when you realise that this is not something to just sit on a website, it has a place, either digitally or physically. The book as a cultural artefact is still sacrosanct, still safe in its attempt to realise and rationalise a series of complex thoughts, into a single entity and come up with some kind of conclusion.

### **How important is it to pursue an idea from beginning to end, and how do you know when that end is?**

Firstly, in terms of producing an artefact, it is very important to close your narrative. Secondly, for the publishing venture in itself, I think it's important not to have an end. One of the main benefits of the blogging age is that you can start something and not necessarily need to know where it ends. That's why Kieran (Gardner) called the publishing label Machine Books.

### **Can you explain the reasoning behind the name Machine Books?**

It's about creating something that can be used for any particular use; if it's a machine you can rapidly change what its use is.

### **In reference to a kind of adaptability and versatility rather than mass production?**

Yes I suppose it is more an antiquated idea of machines rather than a modern industrial one. It was also a kick up the arse. We knew that we would have to keep feeding the machine for stuff to come out of it. So the name was a way of keeping the purpose of anything we did quite open while also ensuring that we kept it going. And we do have plans for another publication before I move to Montreal.

Kieran has the technical ability to bring together software and hardware platforms, like combining cultural trends (such as the homemade printing look) with international distributing methods. We were able to put together our website and shop (for Machine Books) through mates returning favours.

### **So working as part of a network?**

Yes and Kieran's at the centre of it. He has the technical know-how plus he's a nice guy that helps people out who are then prepared to help him out. This mix of good instinct and identifying the people to work with is crucial with any self-start venture.

### **Do you think magazines about architecture are resilient enough to survive?**

I want to talk about resilience first. I think it's very interesting that it has arisen in response to ideas of sustainability in an age of recession. Sustainability creates a world now that embeds solutions for generations to come. The idea of recession has recreated sustainability so that it's even tougher to deal with economics. If resilience means making things resilient for the immediate problems that society faces then great, but if it means predicting some kind of future catastrophe then I would question it.

Conceptually, resilience has all the qualities I like, it's tough and robust, but it also has an unfortunate way of shifting attention from immediate concerns. You can write in a way that addresses the issues which are pressing. My favourite magazines, like *Private Eye* and *The Economist*, are resilient because they have extremely high editorial standards.

For architecture magazines, it comes down to whether the owners of publications see intrinsic worth in continuing them. It is amazing how resilient brands are, it can be a strange kind of resilience based on the cultural capital of the people who set them up. I've realised that readers will push through incredibly lean years.

### **The issue themes of magazines can sometimes feel like a forced afterthought whereas more modest self-initiated publications use a theme as a starting point to expand from – would you agree?**

I have to put my hand on my heart and admit I've never really been a zine reader – whether in music, architecture or literature – and that's a fault, or perhaps laziness. But I do worry about the erosion of a professional class of journalism. Magazines and publishing houses are self-supporting financial entities and very important to culture. Any state can have a subsidised theatre but to have independent newspapers and magazines – that makes you a democracy.

Zines are important too because they're an act of self-expression, this is their strength. That's the difference between zines and magazines, the latter is, at a very basic level, for information, the former is a platform for self-expression. You go to a zine for a creative shot in the arm, to look at it more like an artwork. Andy Warhol's *Interview* was not a work of art but it was a really good and influential magazine, and what *Blueprint* was modelled on, and has kept going long after Warhol died.

### **Thanks Tim.**

# resile

robert fieldhouse

A rubber ball bounces above the, high priapic Shard,  
soon ballooning to obesity.

Below, tiny pebbles fill the streets;  
often crushed by gross, SUV-driven tyres .

Recoiling back to earth, the ball falls down,  
resting on pebble lives, with streetwise softness.

The Shard's low-testosterone, now makes it shrink to  
a much lower; height.

The ball returns to its' original size;  
no longer stretched, flattened or compressed.

Pebbly people soon recover;  
becoming buoyant, floating river buoys.

They lap together; guiding barges through  
safe currents, set in the fast-flowing Thames.

Grey-cloud curtains open to reveal the new, resilient sun;  
now shining on bouncy lives.



# teotihuacan

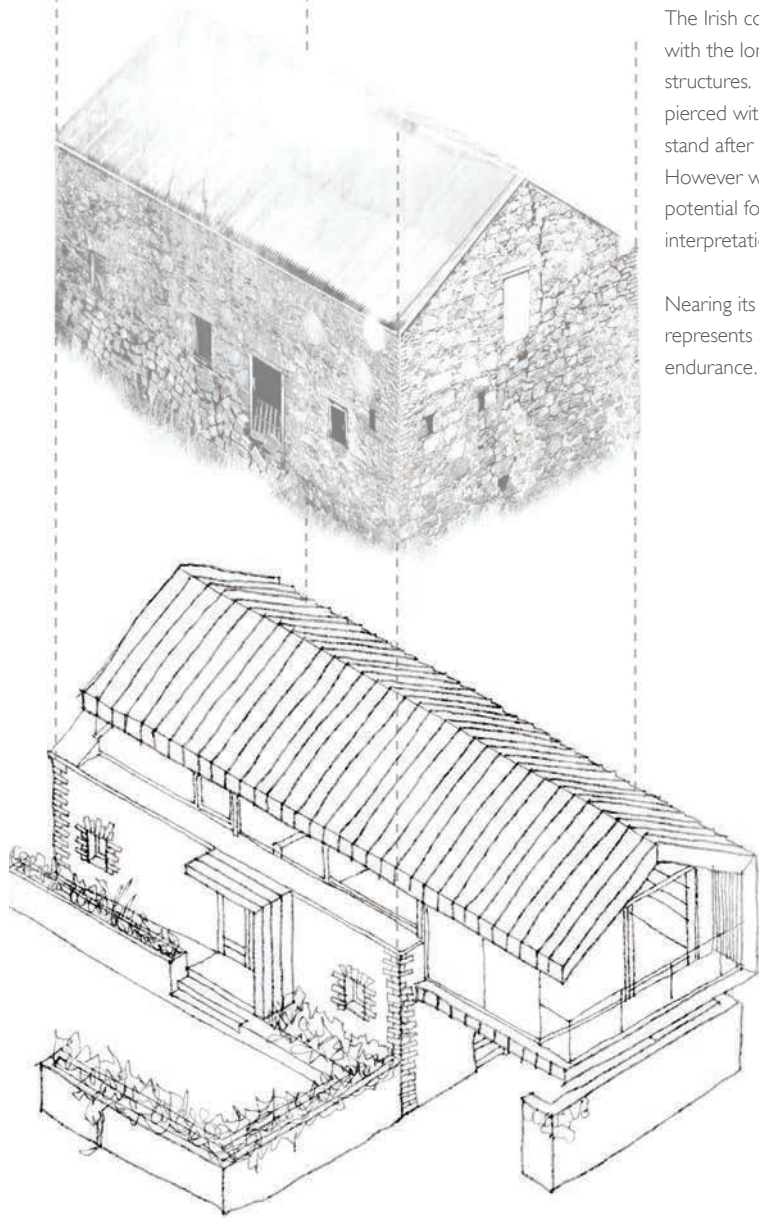
*man made solidity through the millennia*  
annie pace

## power of endurance

adam currie

The Irish countryside is peppered with the lonely figures of these stone structures. Cracked, weathered and pierced with vegetation they still stand after many years of dereliction. However within them exists the potential for new life and a fresh interpretation of the vernacular:

Nearing its completion this project represents architecture's power of endurance.





# resilience of the mundane

sean mcloughlin

So what makes poor housing design so resilient in Ireland when in recent years Irish design and architecture has become so fresh and exciting. There are some examples of excellent housing estates and one-off houses. I wonder why there is a perceived notion that to build a porch to the front of the house in stone or to add fake quoins or even to add plastic filigree to fascias that one is adding a grandness to the (less than) ordinary, based on some set of imagined imagery from a set of past architectural styles. The style of past Irish domestic architecture was quite different in its simpleness and lack of ornament.

It is also strange that in rural Ireland the same principles for the building of housing estates seem to apply as to those being built in urban areas. These principles include for density, edge condition, relationships to surrounding development (or lack of), design typology, etc. Surely in the countryside a cluster development placed sensitively in the landscape is better than the brash street, leading to nowhere, with a dense row of housing backing on to hedgerow and farmland.

Partly the blame can start at the door of Homebond insurance agency. According to their website they are the leading provider of structural defect cover for new

homes in the Republic of Ireland since 1978. They have produced a book (a bible for some) of details that if used correctly would guarantee defects cover providing that the Contractor carried out the works diligently. Often loans for mortgages are dependent on buildings being covered for defects insurance by organizations like Homebond. Unfortunately the book of details promotes the ordinary in terms of finishes, detail and style which results in an over abundance of PVC. It also results in most housing estates resembling that of the neighbouring estate as well as the estate down the road in the adjacent rural village (which not too long ago attracted visitors for its architectural quaintness). In fact most housing estates from the North to the South of the Republic have such a sense of being the same in terms of aesthetic, scale and density that local architectural nuances have all but disappeared.

The planners in Ireland do not have a background of aesthetic evaluation. Planners confronted with good design solutions are often confused by them, as they do not represent the norm + so the designers of good contemporary architecture are often put through the hoops to satisfy the planner's insecurities in terms of decision making on design. This obviously delays planning decision

+ therefore adds cost to the developer. This perhaps results in Developers choosing the easiest and safest route to Planning approval by remaining with the mundane architectural solution.

In a typical Catch 22 situation, developers of housing estates supply the least demanding architectural solutions to the unwary purchaser believing that it is the public that demand the mediocrity when the same public has never been exposed to anything different.

Finally the public must also take much of the blame, as it is the purchaser (or tenant) who can decide whether to accept such poor standards of design of their homes and the disastrous making of a sense of place in their estates where residents can safely enjoy amenities and socialize with neighbours.

Due to the lack of exposure of the people of Ireland to good design, a poor design ethic remains resilient in Ireland.

What chance does one have when a local authority promotes this development in their Development Plan?

# design for living communities

kaissa tait

In the 1990s anthropologist Robert Dunbar suggested that there was a cognitive limit to the number of people that an individual could maintain stable relationships with, often quoted as 150. Whilst Dunbar was referring specifically to social groupings, if one extends this idea further one could suggest that there is also a limit to our design ability - a point at which our capacity for designing on a large scale for multiple individuals breaks down and ceases to be successful simply because we do not have the necessary skills to map out or really understand how such a system would work.

This would explain why social housing projects have been, in general, such a failure. An individual house, well within our capacity of intuitive knowledge and design ability, is an exercise we can complete successfully and well. However the failure is to believe that the single unit can be multiplied on a large-scale

and still retain the integrity of the original. Because we do not understand how such large-scale social groupings function we create built environments which are psychologically and socially inadequate.

There is even more of a risk with 'Masterplans' which seek to overlay the illusion of control over an environment which we have created, but over which we have very little real understanding. Colouring maps into zones may visually appeal but does not address the three dimensional and dynamic quality of the city. This is clear in our design of public space. We think we have designed it for a particular purpose, but in reality have no understanding of how that space will really be used or how people will interact with it, and in reality we do not really need to know because it is this surprising and spontaneous quality which makes good public spaces so successful.

In many cities, it is those areas which have occurred regardless of what plan has been laid out, which are the most exciting. Rather than responding to a larger vision or city-scale design, they respond directly to their immediate surroundings. Responding to a local demand they relate to the stimuli of their environment. When one such business does well i.e. a café, it attracts other uses around it and thus becomes a seed or growing point for further activities, and thus

gentrification starts, a natural and organic process of growth and decay within the city.

A recent BBC documentary, 'The Secret History of Our Streets', on Deptford, London, explained how the original close knit community had been destroyed by the Council's ambitions for modern social housing, destroying in the process what had made the area so successful. What they failed to point out in the documentary was that Deptford is already on its way back up. The street market, which the documentary seemed to say had been annihilated, is as busy and full of life as any market in London. Whilst it may not be selling the high-quality goods that it was in its heyday, it is busy every weekend and has already attracted a more affluent demographic who are buying up houses in the area and converting them into expensive family homes.

The shops alongside the market are slowly filling with coffee shops, vintage clothes shops, and art galleries. The process of 'gentrification' has already begun. This is not part of a Council plan or the result of large amounts of funds, until recently, being poured into Deptford. It has been initiated by the people who saw the possibilities there and set up the elements which would allow it to grow.

And perhaps this is the way it should be. We respond with a certain arrogance to regeneration, as if pouring endless amounts of money into building luxury apartments, retail centres, and cultural hubs, will somehow work the impossible. Often such moves are made with little real understanding of a place – what is already working there, what really isn't.

A recent charrette organised by the Architects Journal to look at Peckham got together six architecture firms and a lighting design company to come up with some ideas for regenerating the centre. All the participants wished to maintain that unique Peckham feel – a mashing of cultures, an energetic and noisy street scene. The exercise was fast paced, requiring quick decisions, spontaneity and creativity. It forced a different way of designing, one more of collaboration and exploration. On this occasion it was set up by the Council and the Architects Journal, but it could be set up by the designers and communities themselves.

In a sense, the recession has encouraged such collaborative ventures as people seek a way around the lack of finances available and become proactive in setting up activities and organisations which have a more social and ethical basis. There is also a growing demand from consumers as well for companies

to be more than profit-driven, to have some kind of social agenda and ethical code.

In Brixton several initiatives have been set up incorporating another way of living or social system. Brixton Transition Town has taken on what Rob Hopkins outlined in his book 'The Transition Handbook' developing their own currency, the 'Brixton pound' - which can only be used in local businesses which accept it - and are active in encouraging local organisations and a more sustainable form of living. The Brixton Remakery seeks to offer tools and assistance to small organisations based on the re-use and upcycling of waste materials. Brixton Energy works as a co-operative, setting up solar panels for social housing and keeping the profits within the community.

This is just a small example of such ventures suggesting a level of self-empowerment and creativity which has been released. People have started to take control over their urban environment, to shape it in response to their needs, to take over spaces which are normally neglected.

Patrick Geddes, almost 100 years ago, encouraged us to observe and record. He had a vision that every city would hold vital information on its physical, social, cultural, and economic history effectively creating a valuable library of information which could help inform the planning process.

Unfortunately this has not been done to the depth that Geddes suggested, and certainly has not been compiled in a complete and easily accessible way.

The wealth of information that could be used to really understand our cities remains untapped, information which could help us really understand how to go about creating successful large-scale self sustaining developments.

We are still designing under an old model. A model based upon the belief that we can somehow control our cities, that we can force them down a particular route. Instead, in this recession age of community involvement and self-action, we need to understand that we need to respond to cities. That cities, its people, its environment, will show us what is required and to what we should invest our efforts towards. In essence allowing and encouraging a resilient community.

the other side  
charlotte vitaioli



Pen drawing, 21x29,7cm.



# a trip home

luke hebblethwaite

It had been ten years since I'd been back to my home town. Stepping off the bus from London Victoria into the town's marketplace and breathing the crisp, clean air of the Peak District was like a defibrillator to a part of me that had long since lain quiet. Not just the air, but the sound, or comparative lack of it, awoke memories of boyhood and teenage years spent throughout this town's streets. Don't get me wrong, this wasn't nostalgia, as for every good memory made here there were plenty I was less keen to recall. As I'd grown up I guess I'd never really loved my town, or certainly fallen out of love with it, but I was surprised at the immediate sense of "home" that it evoked.

Walking through the streets on my way to where I was staying, I spotted countless landmarks to moments long past, shops, streets, parks and alleyways all meshing together into a teenager's life, recalled through the rueful eyes of the person they became: a bollard in an alleyway that I ran into full pelt at night nearly breaking a rib, a tree I climbed and/or got drunk

underneath, a hospital I stayed in, the way I used to walk to an old job, a street corner where a friend was ruthlessly beaten up.

Had it really been so long? Every shopfront looked familiar and yet I guessed very few were the same; the cafe I'd first worked for £1.50 an hour washing dishes was now another crimson Costa, its sister bakery transformed into a rustic mini-mall for tourists. The toy shop I'd loved as a child, long since closed down, now a hiking shop for the town's ever-expanding coterie of affluent outdoorsmen. What independents remained were shorn up between building societies and chainstores, mainly selling clothes to the town's middle classes and tourists. Most had the look of businesses struggling to survive and I wondered how much impact the recent recessions had had here. The buildings themselves all told the same story though; life here hadn't changed a great deal. No amount of American coffee schmaltz or corporate rebranding could hide the ghosts of past businesses and lives that still seemed to echo through their stones.

Charity shops seemed to have proliferated along every available street, proclamations to support everything from cerebral palsy to unwanted pets, filled with the unwanted items of thirty thousand inhabitants who've never left, each one stocking the same once-loved dresses of departed old dears,

fading VHS cassettes and Jeremy Clarkson books, Black and White Minstrels records jutting out awkwardly from piles of ignored vinyl. Adrift in these stores were memories of underlying repetition, of lives in circular motion; rinse, re-use and repeat.

Just back from the high street, accessible through the spacious double doors of the long surviving Marks and Spencer; was the new Waitrose, inhabiting the huge stone box originally erected by Fine Fare, way back in the company's mid-80s twilight years. Tacked onto our then shiny new shopping precinct on a plot of land I have long since forgotten the original use of, the town has seen a steady rebranding of this beige warehouse by a series of ever more upmarket chains, Fine Fare ceding to Gateway ceding to Morrison's, over and over until eventually arriving at the door of Britain's supermarketiers du jour; a sign of the town's ongoing gentrification.

The now-Waitrose car park had always been a central point of the town's car driving youth. Boy Racers with Ford Escorts and their kin had been parking up in droves for decades, blasting out dance music from ridiculously overpowered car stereos, caps on backwards, courting impressionable fourteen year old girls, scaring fourteen year old boys and a worry to the parents of both. I wondered whether this still

happened here, under the middle-class white and green eyes of Waitrose or had the right pressure been applied in the right places to move them on to someone else's doorstep? Perhaps there had been some unconscious decision of the boys themselves to move on to a more working class place to hang out?

That evening, I'd arranged to meet some old friends at my old local pub. Arriving, I was struck by how little had changed since my previous visit, perhaps some new upholstery here and there or a new pool table but essentially I could have been away a few weeks rather than years. Of all modern places, I've often reflected how pubs somehow seem to have an unerring ability to hold onto some timeless feeling of the not too distant past, perhaps designed to evoke comforting memories of before all this got so complicated; a safe harbour in an ever progressing world.

Ordering a drink at the bar before my friends arrived, I'd not noticed a group of local guys stood over to my side. Glancing over, I wasn't too surprised to find them already looking at me with the beginnings of a predatory look in their eyes. Having been away from the town for years and taken on some of London's more liberal approach to fashion, I'd presumed I might stand out a little. Turning away to get on with my evening and resolving to think nothing of it, one of the men

clearly said in my direction "D'you know what time it is?" followed by a slight pause, and then a rather more malicious-sounding reciting of my name, "Luke".

Turning back to them to meet their now-leering gaze and noting that he was obviously already wearing a watch, it took me a moment to roll back a few years (and a few stone) to recognise that the questioner had been someone from a year or two below me at secondary school who, at the time, had always seemed to have had a problem with my existence. It was clear that this still seemed to be the case, even after all these years, and he was looking for an opening to something further. Being somewhat more even-tempered these days, I simply replied "No, sorry", picked up my beer and walked off to find a seat to wait for my friends.

Sitting down I was amazed, not only at the needlessness of the situation, but at the fact that he'd both recognised me and that he still apparently harboured some kind of grudge. It felt like the unchanging nature of the pub itself had somehow managed to keep alive this decade old animosity, which had only ever been fleeting in the first place, and bring it right back to the surface upon my arrival. I wondered how many other stories like this the pub contained, of old grudges brought back from the ages to exacerbate a confrontation, of

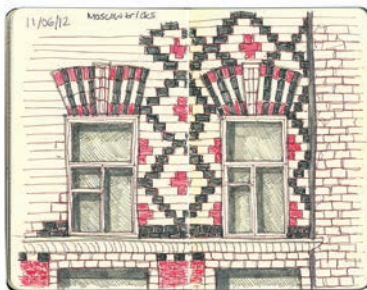
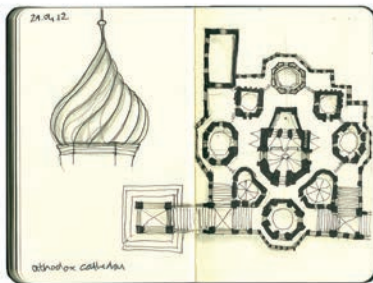
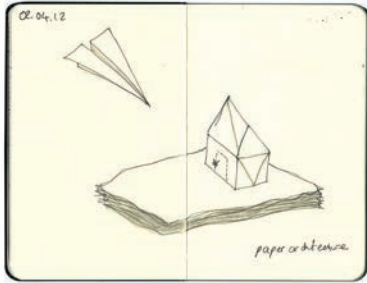
tales and rumours and emotions seeped into the woodwork to be lubricated free with lager? The first of my friends to arrive, I hadn't seen since I'd left town. After a quick nod and an "Alright", he bought a drink and sat down. Within minutes we were talking like we'd never been apart and I wondered how similar this was to the incident at the bar. Perhaps soaked into this pub, or all local pubs, are not just the animosities but the good times too, an historical asset of a community, for good or for ill, ready to be picked up at a moment's notice?

It wasn't long before London again beckoned and I clambered aboard the bus back to my other home. As I set off, it occurred to me that this was the same bus I'd taken ten years before and I'd started to think about how much had changed since then, not only in my life, but in the world in general. Despite all that there had been, there was something that had remained constant about my hometown; for all the technologies, wars, opportunities, hardships and countless other things that had happened, it had remained inherently the same. I tried to pin down exactly how or why or what had caused this and although I had some ideas, none really seemed to be a suitable explanation. What was the reason it hadn't changed? I guess I don't know, it just seemed to have resilience.

paper

architects

ross anderson + anna gibb



The research + conclusions of Paper Architects will be on display at the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale from 29th Aug- 25th Nov 2012.

The Paper Architects were an informal collective of young architects in 1980's Soviet Moscow. The group, whose title was adopted long after its disbandment, made work inspired by the Avante-garde movement of the early 20th century, and by old masters such as Piranesi and Ledoux.

In opposition to, and frustrated by modern methods of construction and its inherent style of architecture, which had been embraced by the Soviet State as the preferred architectural aesthetic, the group sought to creatively nourish themselves outwith their normal working hours. Often working individually, but also in small groups, the young architects began entering competitions. Primarily from Japan, these ideas competitions offered a welcome escape for the architects who found themselves working on banal projects that lacked the substance necessary to keep them engaged.

Some of the most notable works produced were highly detailed and intricate drawings and etchings; a graphic depiction of the ills of Soviet Russian society.

The group worked the system and managed to break through the arduous process of entering International competitions. Through perseverance and determination, they went on to win many competitions and took part in a number of international exhibitions occurring in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Resilient, wouldn't you say?

At the beginning of our architectural journey back in the early 2000s, we naively believed that we would be entering a buoyant industry; one where finding work would be effortless and that creative expression would come easy. Unfortunately after 6 years of study the truth is far removed. The bitter reality for many young architects is that this is simply not the case. Jobs are scarce.

In looking at the work and history of the Paper Architects we find parallels between their situation and ours [between us we have entered 16 competitions since graduation].

We hope we'll turn out to be as resilient.

# concept

urban resilience –

a potential approach

based on complex ecological patterns

ulysses sengupta | eric cheung | jonathan pick

As a practising architect, urbanist and educator, I have navigated my way through multiple definitions of 'resilience' in an attempt to appropriate the most useful conceptualisation of the term for the purposes of theoretical comprehension and actual implementation, within the context of urban change. The more limited associations, with social resilience – in terms of the ability of a community to survive natural and man made extremes from floods to wars – and, habitat resilience – defined loosely as the potential of natural habitats to sustain existing populations – while useful, did not allow a comprehensive position from which to utilise the theoretical potentials of the term within my field. Most of my work involves the study of highly urbanised and partially informal contexts like Mumbai and Izmir; the potential of discussing typical suggestions like the increment of greenbelts somehow left too much out of the equation.

Two years ago while exploring the possibilities of Systemic

Diagramming in a year long studio research and design project situated in Prato (Italy) - a city marked by obvious socio-spatial conflict caused by the decline of its existing textile industries and simultaneous documented and undocumented immigration from mainland China – the potential of 'urban ecologies' defined as systems that exist, flourish and decline over time, shaped by and shaping urban environments, came to the forefront. This led to a deeper investigation into the concept of resilience within ecological systems and the early work of C.S. Holling and the ongoing work of the Stockholm Resilience Centre who base their work on 'social-ecological systems'. While a number of interesting theoretical positions including that of Barthel and Sörlin's recent work on Constantinople regarding the importance of 'social memory' within cities has added to the changing framework through which we attempt to address urban resilience, I believe the major ontological shift occurred when resilience

and complex systems theory came together as this formed the basis of our current understanding. In terms of the project in Prato, this conceptualisation allowed us to develop tools for understanding how resource flows and environmental concerns are embedded in physical urban transformation, socioeconomic fault lines and underlying power relations.

The complexity based approach to resilience termed 'Resilience Theory' (C.S. Holling 1973) where one can understand urban ecologies as systems within overlapping systems, displaying the behavioural properties of complex adaptive systems, in combination with the perceptual shift proposed by Guattari in his description of the ecologies as a combination of environmental, social and mental worlds allows us to conceive of urban topographies as a series of visible and invisible relationships. Within this attempted definition, there are some obvious and less obvious problematisations which may be useful to consider from alternative viewpoints.



The understanding of complex systems having a singular definable/desirable identity and point of equilibrium to which the system returns unless its 'resilience is overwhelmed' thus forcing it to transform into another system has led to many protectionist actions relating to everything from greenbelts to indigenous communities. The idea of maintaining a static form of equilibrium or developing a preservationist attitude has never made much sense to me. Simply ensuring the existence of a community, organism or a forest, seems contradictory to current conceptual thinking, in that any such form of artificial maintenance in the long term, eventually results in a gradual depletion of a system's capability to survive shocks or changes. I would suggest that current theory asks for a comprehension of all systems as systems of change and adaptation, where a framework for intervention (this is after all the ultimate aim of scientists, designers and policy makers, to be able to successfully intervene within changes towards more positive and potentially sustainable futures) must attempt to define the agencies of change and the relationships between both the internal components of a system and external/overlapping systems, rather than the more traditional attempts to name a system and assign it an identity.

Another simplified definition of a system's resilience is its ability to 'function' in the way it is meant to function. In this context the 'tipping point' is another term borrowed from complex systems and in its use within the context of resilience often refers to the ultimate stimulus or event (which should be understood as either just one in a series of things or a combination of things) that pushes a system beyond its resilient capabilities to recover, forcing it to transform into a different system, which no longer has the capability to function as it previously did. Once again the idea that a system (usually a convenient artificial definition purposely limited to frame a certain set of interrelations or a certain scale of interactions) having a specific or easily definable function, has certain dangers. The strict definition of the function of a system has historically led to optimisation of the system, creating streamlined and efficient results seen in everything from railways to food production, and a related inability of such systems to absorb changes, disturbances or shock, sometimes leading to complete failure, and often to an inability to adapt or transform positively. While the built in redundancy versus efficiency debate continues to rage, there may be another way of defining systems that is neither based on identity, nor on mono-functionality. I believe there is a great unexplored potential for exploring urban resilience through

patterns (with reference to design patterns by C. Alexander) which can be used to identify temporal systems in states of change and work with high and low level systems through interscalar strategies.

An attempt to work in Jindezhen (China) and Mumbai (India) with 6th year students from the University of Nottingham, led to an exploration of several of the conceptual approaches mentioned above.

In 2010, Eric Cheung worked in the city of Jindezhen on a project called Heterogeneous Interface: The city of Jingdezhen situated in the JiangXx province in China is undergoing rapid and planned change, in competition with surrounding cities, despite an enviable history (the Porcelain City), it faces the danger of losing its historic residents and urban identity (a sociological rather than systemic definition) to typical approaches to planning resulting in gentrification, homogenous slab block housing and disneyfication of existing production hubs. In the face of imminent erasure of the historic city centre and its replacement with an 'acceptable urban face' for external investors, the project attempted to provide an alternative and open ended approach for future urbanity based on the identification of the importance of long term local residents and their association

to both place and each other, as integral components within the overlapping systems that were integral to positive future scenarios/systems, after transformation. The approach incorporated both historic and new patterns and spaces as layers that worked with each other; strengthening and continuing the possibilities of authentic social and cultural networks that form the underlying patterns related to the true identity of the city. The proposal was based on concepts related to space and pattern identity and the implicit relationship between spatial configurations, time, processes of self organisation and social networks/cultural habits. The aim was to retain spatial heterogeneity and hence urban potentialities into unknown but influenced future topographies.

In 2011 Jonathan Pick worked in Mumbai on a project called Addressing Imbalance: Mumbai is a city of more than 20 Million People. At least 60% of this population lives in informal (illegal) housing and slums. This implausible but true statistic formed the basis of our study. The primary influences affecting urban change in the city have been the geographic constraints of a city, in the majority reclaimed from the sea, and openly discussed political corruption, artificially keeping

the cost of existing land so high, that only extremely wealthy members of the population are catered to by developers building luxury flats in a sea of deprivation. As Mumbai strives forward in its mission to achieve 'Global City' status, the urban topography of the city is undergoing change at an accelerating rate. However, the changes do not incorporate the needs of the majority of the population, leading to instances of large scale gentrification and encouraging unacceptable conditions for the existing and increasing population living in slums. With recent examples of private developments following the economically lucrative trends of luxury flats and exclusive offices, even when occupying land previously designated for public amenities and affordable housing, there is a need to imagine a different city for the real people of Mumbai.

The project attempted to address the incorporation of the eastern waterfront of the seven island city (a strip approximately 14km long) currently owned by soon to be relocated port authorities, back into the city of Mumbai. The complex set of changing conditions and uses were explored as temporal events while attempting to re-stitch the urban patterns and typologies of the dense historic city centre to a newly designed waterfront through an understanding of the processes by

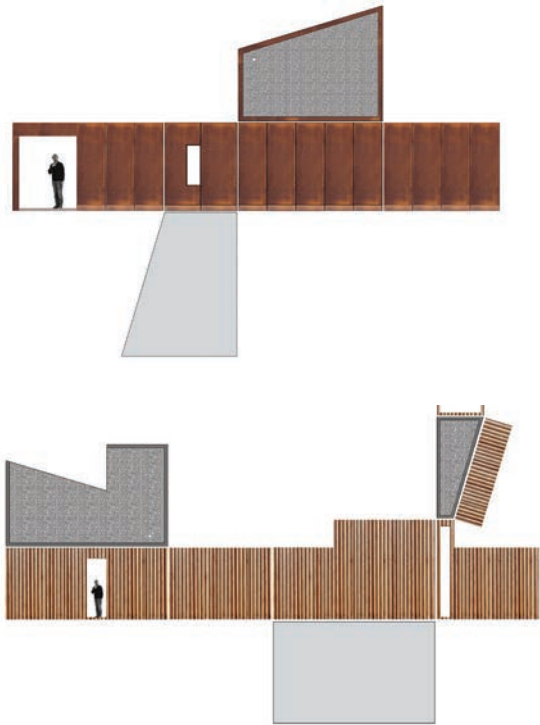
which the urban fabric of Mumbai hardens from the informal to the formal.

What the two approaches above have in common (despite the different locations, cultures and influences) are attempts to work with an understanding of existing and potential change, the agencies of change, and the related parts of overlapping systems, towards undefined rather than retained futures. Examples of overlapping systems and agencies considered, covered a diverse and multi-scalar array, including changes to land ownership and foreign investment policy, infrastructural plans, institutional ambitions, local level socio-economic interdependency networks, and the hardening processes of self organised informal houses. Instead of working with the idea of retaining a defined system (the traditional realm of resilient studies), the projects attempted to engage with the transformation (and transformative agencies) of the systems in question. The approaches were united by their use of patterns as ways of understanding and defining temporal and temporary conditions within overlapping systems.

# a question of self definition

fergus purdie

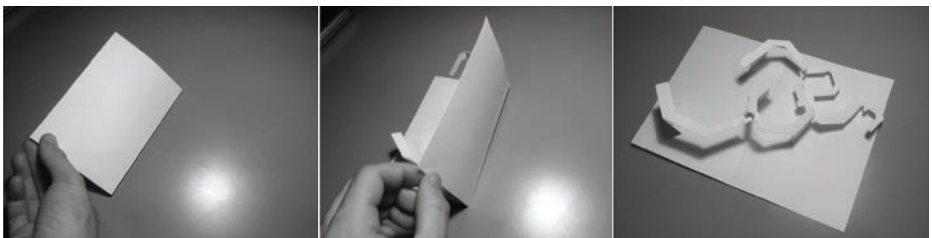
Studio 1 and Studio 2 are examples of current practice work in progress. Whilst conceived and directed within parallel lines of enquiry they parted company (on good terms) at critical points in the design process. Both projects represent and reflect the nature of each artist and their respective practices. However, the defining point of departure was in negotiating a contextual response, without which each building would remain placeless. As place doesn't exist on paper they have been represented in (paper) space as cut out's requiring a visual thinkers eye for reading and interpreting.



## pop-up-park-hill

(a folded paper prototype)

guy woodhouse



the  
contradictions  
of  
kisumu  
rick roxburgh



In late December, 2007, Kenya witnessed some of the worst violence in its post colonial history, when incumbent president Mwai Kibaki controversially held onto power over his rival, Raila Odinga. Kisumu, the third largest city in Kenya, and home to one of Kenya's largest Luo tribe populations, suffered particularly violent clashes due to rivalries in political support with another populous tribe, the Kikuyu. Many properties were severely damaged by fire in the unrest, and four years on, one of the final buildings to undergo restoration nears completion on the corner of Oginga Odinga Road and Accra Street (image 1). Less than a year from now, in March 2013, Kenya will vote again, in the first general election since the crisis.

A year earlier, in 2006, Senator Barack Obama, whose father was Luo, visited the town of Kisumu. The last time he had travelled to Kenya, he had given a keynote address at the University of Nairobi, criticising the corruption of Kenyan politics.

On this occasion, he was with his wife to dispel the stigma of HIV/AIDS by volunteering to be tested, there and then. Since his election success in the US, pictures of him appear all over Kisumu, from bumper stickers to window banners, but perhaps most appropriately on this medical fridge at the home of the Safe Water and AIDS Project (SWAP) in south east of the city centre.

The same year, a study conducted by the Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development (TICH) found the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in the city to be 15%, double the national average. An hour's matatu ride north of the city, the ARO Development Centre in Majiwa, lies nestled deep in the rural outback of Bondo District. Funded by ARC-AID of Norway, this commune-esque campus is home to a schoolhouse, boardrooms, herb gardens, and a the 'FabLab' workshop where young people, orphaned or stigmatised by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, receive support and education. Celestine, (image 2) talks enthusiastically about her experience schooling over one hundred 4 – 16 year olds, affected by HIV/AIDS. She wishes they could take on more. There are always more.

Joseph, (who thinks he looks old for 46!) is an energetic and tolerant man. Originally from Mombasa, he returned to Kisumu because of his Luo roots. If one were to venture a few hundred yards further down the road one would arrive at another Luo root; the home of (and still occupied by) Barack Obama's grandmother. Joseph tutors the older children in a wide range of electronic and mechanical skills. One such project involves adapting cheap Chinese-made lanterns to run on household batteries - readily available in Kenya. The modified products can be sold at markets, facilitating a crucial first step on the local trade ladder (image 3).



## childhood in palestine

whitney burdge

## social practices

nora wuttke

Whenever development takes place it is inevitable that change follows. This change is at the forefront reflected in material culture such as consumer goods, architecture, fashion etc, affecting the individual's psychological well being (Part Two, Norberg-Hodge, 2000).

As development becomes more and more normalised and the process of change rooted in society it transpires that true resilience seems to develop within the social realm rather than material culture.

True resilience in our environment

lies with the social "every day practices" (De Certeau, 1984) carried out by individuals. These so called social "tactics" operate outside of the "proper", seizing opportunities and informal spaces outside of the establishment (2. Tactics of Practice, De Certeau, 1984). In turn these bendable and adaptable everyday practices can create material culture; new designs, altered architectural expression or sustainable urban patterns. Architecture and Urban planning can be influenced by practices of everyday life that have engaged with development,

adapted to change and become part of the current culture despite often being local and rooted in a vernacular heritage within a globalised context.

Architects and Urban planners, in order to foster positive change and sustainable development on all levels, social, economical and ecological, should observe social practices, their engagement with material culture, understand the process of change tactics have been allowed to go through and ultimately to learn from them how to introduce the same resilience into their designs.



# invitation to heaven

jonathan marks

What chance did one have to absent oneself from the proceedings? Answer: none. Zero chance. So one absents oneself mentally. Here he was a 38 year old man in the position of being gripped by a curious kind of inertia, an inertia that held itself over him for sustained periods. What could be done about it? Solutions were yet to occur to him. Life wisnae so bad apart from the fact one had the tendency to become immersed in torments. And then there was these tunnels you could end up in and not even fucking realise it. Hopeless, completely hopeless, one had the urge to abandon all hope.

A fifth drink was to be ordered, and then consumed. But he would have to be wary of the rate of consumption. He could already feel a slow, heavy stupefaction settling over him. Not a disagreeable sensation he supposed. His friends were arranged in groups away from him. Some were dancing, others just talking. This was fine, the condition of sitting alone at the bar being preferable at the current juncture. Perhaps he could slump forward, still gripping his bottle of beer as he was sometimes wont to do. So, his friends had seen fit to abandon him. This was fine, a completely agreeable state of affairs. Really. The cunts got on his fucking nerves anyway. The need sometimes to just be fucking left alone. He held the beer bottle tight and took another swig, his eyes gazing at nothing in particular; the dim gleam of bottles behind

the bar perhaps or the purposeful movements of the two barmaids. So, ye had zero fucking chance, okay, so we've established that, okay, so what now? Thus liberated from the constraints and burdens of hope or potential, he began to drink faster and faster: Mibby a wee whisky. His girlfriend looking over at him. Fuck sake, why was every cunt avoiding him? He should just go home, right fucking now, go home and have a good greet. The thirty fucking eight year auld man boy in the fucking huff. Perpetual resentment, man, he was addicted to it. Another beer please. The barmaid brought it to him wordlessly, perhaps a bit alarmed at his rate of solitary consumption. Perhaps he would stand up and immediately vacate the premises. Was this something he was capable of? Fuck. He had fallen over. He grinned. A couple of young guys were helping him up. He chuckled and grinned. Face flushed like fuck. Man. He felt fucking amazing. Time fir a wee dance. A wee fucking boogie. He had both fists raised in the air as he ventured onto the dancefloor. He began thrusting his hips. Then he began this synchronised motion whereby he thrust his hips in time with his fists, like as if he was pumping a burd. Needed to find some wee honey to grind up against, fuck the burd Displeased with the situation, yes, definitely Christ, things took their fucking toll, it couldn't be denied that things took their fucking toll because they fucking did.



“a pox on the olympics.

voodoo is barbarous capitalism

cloaked in magic”

ada jusic

I cycled past the Olympic stadium and around the new Westfields shopping centre.

I'd watched its construction from my flat, it seemed to be getting closer as well as bigger.

Like playing grandmothers footsteps.

Up close it's like circumnavigating a small country, comprised of

technology and wasteland, I was turned away at a checkpoint for getting too near a no-go area.

Figure I didn't have the right documents.

The author Iain Sinclair talks of how the occult is at work in east london,

however this is an occult of politics rather than ritual and voodoo dolls.

clearing communities and allotments to make way for totemic structures, the cult

of legacy. The year of the olympics coincide with a mayan apocalypse prophecy;

“...the year of the olympics is an “end date”...  
the neurosis of stadium building is nothing more than an unconscious desire to prepare for ritual sacrifice”

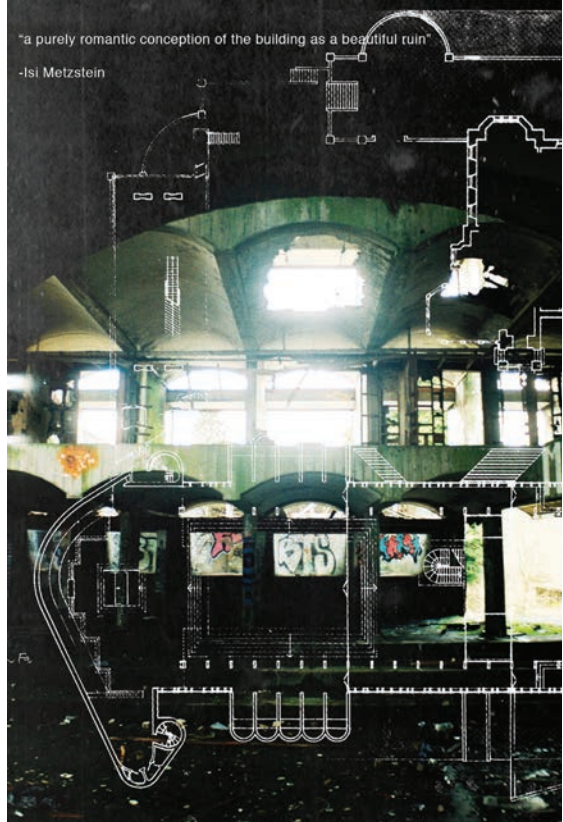
there's already speculation whether the stadium, like the mayan pyramids, will be left deserted afterwards? symbolic ruins. The gods, having reaped their profits, abandoning the altar.

*quotes from Ghost Milk , Iain Sinclair.*

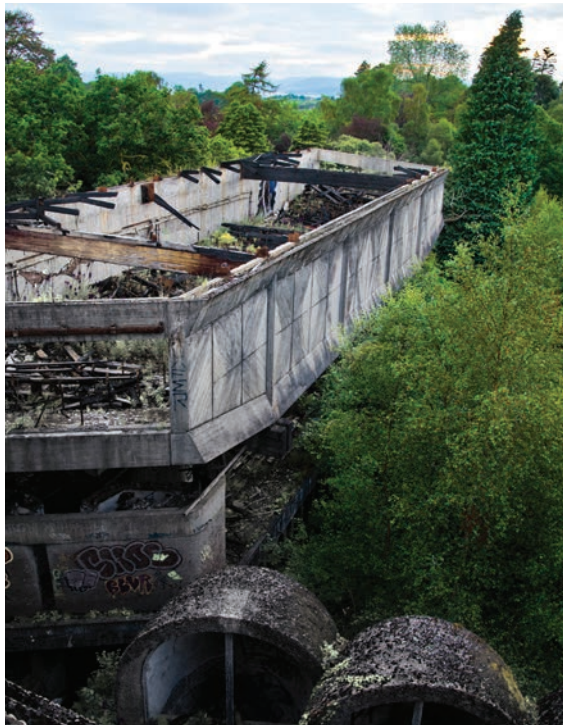
cardross  
andrew skulina

'a purely romantic conception  
of the building as a beautiful ruin.'

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alex pearson

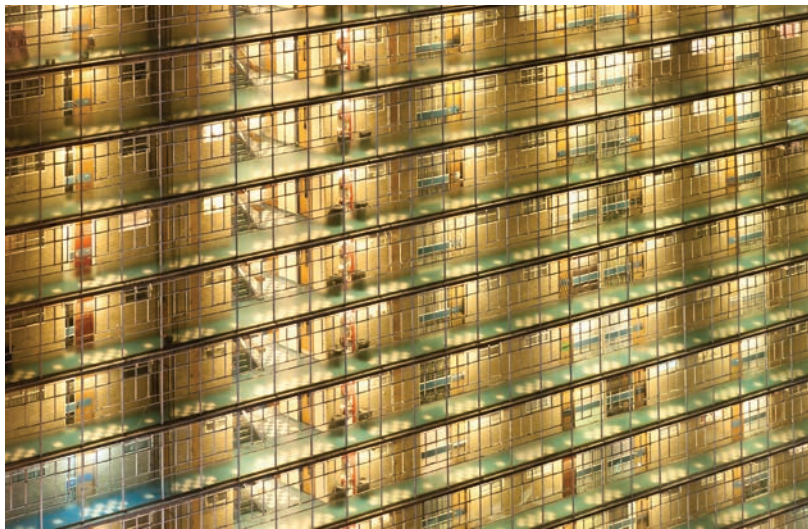


both images:

st peter's seminary | near cardross | argyll  
gillespie, kidd & coia | 1961–1966



braamfontein  
andrew bell



# resilience: environmental scaffolding or individual capability?

laura harris

Compared to 21 other high income countries, the UK and USA were rated poorest in terms of childrens' subjective well-being, family and peer relationships, and behaviours and risks (UN Childrens Fund, 2007). Early research into resilience focused on risk, in particular identifying children who had

achieved successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances. These children were known as "the invulnerables". However; this was problematic as it did not provide practitioners with a sense of what strategies they could put in place to reduce these risks. More recent researchers have emphasised the importance of identifying 'Protective Factors' that can build resilience.

The construct of resilience is difficult to conceptualise as some researchers define resilience in terms of individual traits, whilst others define it as a process. Evidence suggests that there are certain intrinsic qualities that resilient individuals possess namely

social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future. However intrinsic qualities cannot develop in isolation. Instead, evidence suggests that in order for resilience to occur, intrinsic qualities must be scaffolded through the relationships that we have with our family and with our wider community. Resilience is the product of a constant interaction between the individual and their environment.

Hence, it seems likely that the most effective means of systematically building competence within individuals is by adding assets at all levels of their ecosystem, rather than focusing solely on intra-personal capabilities.



## tenderfoot

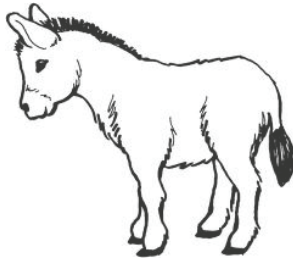
maria huar

film still ; full film available on mat.zine and <https://vimeo.com/46162107>



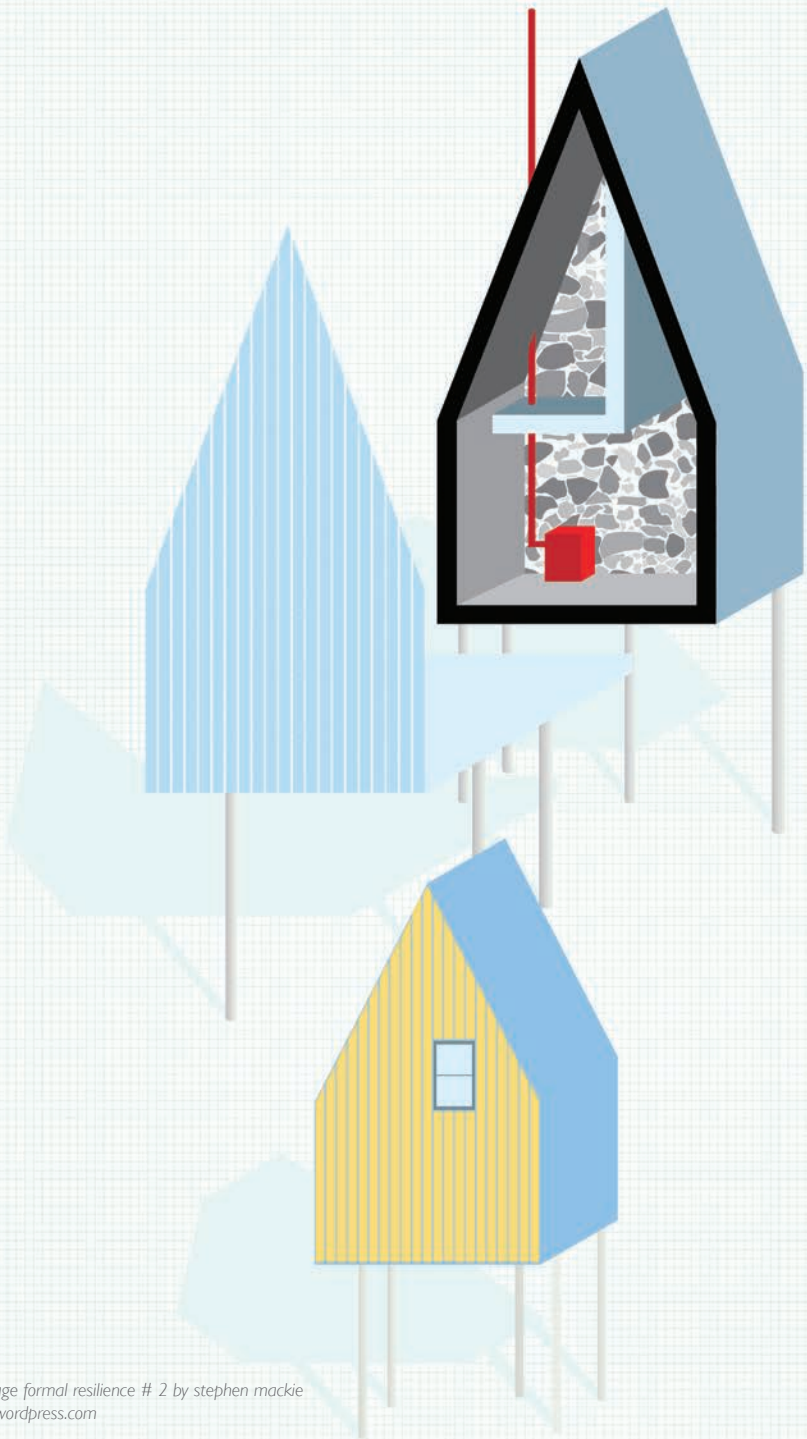
mat.zine #12

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



deadline 6 november 2012  
editors and theme  
to be announced

[submissions.matzine@gmail](mailto:submissions.matzine@gmail.com)



cover image formal resilience # 2 by stephen mackie  
matzine.wordpress.com