





















cityscapers cardiff chimera²⁰²⁰ a porosity studio small city/big neighbourhoods



Cityscapers 2009 Porosity Studio 9

For two weeks in April 2009, 60 outstanding architecture. urban engineering and visual arts students from Wales, Australia, China, India, Japan and Singapore worked on a 'creative city' brief in Cardiff, Wales' capital city. This was the second Cityscapers/Porosity Studio and an exciting opportunity for students from around the world to come together and hone their thinking about issues specific to Cardiff as it undergoes development - from the potential erosion of social and cultural character and the meaning of neighbourhood, to problems of connectivity and the challenges of a changing climate. The students were asked to investigate the neighbourhoods of Cardiff in and around the centre of the city and the bay, and respond to issues specific to the city and of international relevance.

Following a reception with the then First Minister of Wales, Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan AM, the students met with a range of local experts form Cardiff and the arts community. A special events programme about the city, its history and its future included a series of debates and presentations by practitioners. Glenn Jordan, Director of the Butetown History and Arts Centre brought to life the history of communities in the Cardiff Bay area; urban planners from Cardiff Council presented the blueprint for Cardiff's future; the Director of Safle, Wiard Sterk, explored the nature of art in the city with poet Peter Finch and artists Jenny Savage and Emma Price; filmmaker Tapio Snellman from London-based practice Neutral presented their search for urban identity through film; and the Design Commission for Wales convened FutureCityScenarios, a debate chaired by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM and with partners from Design Circle and the Royal Society for Architects in Wales.

The events programme, the generosity of partners, and people who shared their experiences. knowledge and histories. even their homes and workplaces with the participating students revealed the rich textures of the city: its social, economic, creative environmental and Over the two weeks, the students infiltrated and became intimate with the city, creating interventions on the streets, offering solutions and new thinking. Their multiplicity of readings, responses and solutions were presented as a series of short films and shown on the final day of the studio as a multi-screen installation in the faded grandeur of the former National Westminster Bank.

Cityscapers/Porosity Studio is a partnership between the British Council and the Porosity Studio at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales in Sydney. This studio is led by Professor Richard Goodwin, Director of the Porosity Studio and developed in collaboration with John Punter, Professor of Urban Design at Cardiff University; Marga Bauza and Allison Dutoit, from the Welsh School of Architecture; and Huw Swayne, Head of Design at the School of Cultural and Creative Industries, University of Glamorgan. Studio tutors included all of the above along with Emma Price. Erica Liu. Jason Bevan and Abigail Lockey.



Anamorphic Illusion, Cardiff Bay Barrage, Felice Varini



British Council 11

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations. We build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide.

Our work focuses on building understanding between cultures and promoting positive social change; developing skills and creativity in the knowledge economy; and building and sustaining an international consensus for action on climate change.

We do this through a range of projects and activities spanning education, English language teaching, science, climate change, arts and creative industries, intercultural dialogue and sport. By strengthening trust and understanding between countries and cultures we build respect and dialogue and generate opportunities for individuals to fulfill their potential.

This series of Cityscapers studios is part of the British Council's three-year Creative Cities programme which looks at how arts and culture can help make cities, both in the UK and East Asia, better places to live and work in. The Cityscapers studios focus on the professional development of the next generation of urban designers, artists, architects, technologists and engineers who will shape the cities of East Asia and the UK.

Cityscapers has been devised by the British Council and Richard Goodwin to create lasting links and networks between individuals. education institutions and organisations in the UK and East Asia to explore new ways of thinking about what makes a city. www.creativecities.org.uk

















A geometric rusty-red frame sits, stalled in limbo, in Cardiff's city centre. Intended as apartments, it now rests, squeezed between two heritage houses, awaiting its fate – an unplanned product of the global credit crisis.

Unintentionally, the steel frame says more about the current state of the world than Cardiff's celebrated Millennium structures ever could. It is like a newly retrenched banker, given moment to pause and reflect – given time and occasion to question the very fundamentals of the system. Our banker may find another job as a banker. Or he may not. He may instead re-adapt and re-mould; re-new and re-skill; and in the process, no doubt, rethink what it is that he is – and, in turn, become something else.

So, what then for our rusty-red frame? What is its future? And what about Cardiff's orphanage of other vacant and disused buildings? Should we smash 'em like Duplo, and then rebuild a new eco-trendy utopia? Or, perhaps, a more subtle renewal of the existing is preferred?

propositions from Consider these environmental perspective, and in nearly all cases, the subtle approach will be preferred. And we make this point not out of disdain for eco-trendy utopian design - in fact, we love the stuff. The challenges it presents will keep a whole generation of engineers and designers invigorated and in work, plus help save the planet. What we do have a problem with are the misconceptions in the area. And that's why the following point needs to be made clear: when comparing the emissions required to Demolish, Reconstruct and Operate a best-practice eco-trendy replacement to the emissions to Refurb and Operate an existing building, the Refurb is almost always the environmentally preferred option.[2] It is a quantifiable conclusion.

pole dance

Oscar McLennan + Lauren Hadley









This situation creates a challenge for all politicians, property developers, urban planners, architects, artists and engineers. How do you readapt the existing for use in the future? What do you do with the rusty-red frame, and the orphanage of other vacant and disused buildings?

Well, our project 'Pole Dance' could be described as a comment on this challenge. It could be seen as a wrench that opens your mind to the imaginative possibilities of reuse in life, building, or anything for that matter.

The crux of 'Pole Dance' is a direct intervention on a 1:1 scale, right up the guts of the rusty-red steel frame. This entailed the construction of a vertical four-storey play-pole from materials found primarily on site, except for a high-tensile rope. In a somewhat absurd and impractical fashion, it converted the space into a testing ground for human limits and fears. This comes through strongly in the performance aspect of the piece, where the frame is climbed and the pole slid down in lemming-like repetition. The fear and accomplishment of the action comes through strongly in the piece, which is documented on film. The film is matched with droning electronic music that heightens the suspense and tension. Watch the DVD and you'll understand what we're talking about. Enjoy!

And 'Save the Vulcan'.

- We see the 're' words like descriptors of the banker's process of change, and therefore descriptors that highlight the possibilities for his future.
- 2. Building and Social Housing Foundation, New Tricks with Old Bricks: How Reusing Old Buildings Can Cut Carbon Emissions (2008) http://www.emptyhomes.com/documents/publications/reports/New%20Tricks%20With%20Old%20 Bricks%20-%20final%2012-03-081.pdf> at 20 April 2009.





The world at large
Brought back the break-neck wigs,
It always affects the weaker sex.
You can judge a place by empty gold rooms
...and thousands without homes,
But, for a captain of industrious vulgarity,
Common sense and posterity
were never meant to meet.
We are the predictions of Victoriana

Five in place of one
Who would've been better
We feed the land to our betters
Whose lifespans are mocked by those of sheep
...and in every Dreamhome a Butetown...
Whose very name predicted

Like the font of a failing culture,

Like a Cardiff Chimera Which means...

We stand -

Fallout

Everything crammed in together For the sake of growth into...

A world-dominated contender

And at the same time...

A beast That never existed...

nat never existed...

Anywhere.

The tide of humanity flows on Leaving all in its wake;

We keep going,

We trudge on.









break-neck wigs
Zoe Robertson















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