

RECONSTRUCTIONS

Reconstructions is an exhibition and event conceived of as part of a programme of events held on 20 October 2018 at the Bartlett School of Architecture for the 2018 Bloomsbury Festival.

Reconstructions brings together a selection of projects created during the Critical Spatial Practice: Site-Writing module, part of The Bartlett's Architectural History MA and Situated Practice MA. This exhibition consist of a series of artist's books and performative readings exploring a practice-based approach to storytelling and criticism. As a method, site-writing invites the writer to reflect upon their subjective position—both critically and emotionally—in relation to their research. This practice of writing aims to uncover and reconstruct varying interpretations of objects, subjects, spaces and histories.

The student works are exhibited and performed as part of Bloomsbury Festival's 'Urban Storytelling' event at The Bartlett, comprising ten site-specific works by the 2018 cohort that can be read, heard, observed, and discussed in the context of the festival's theme, Activists and Architects of Change.

'Site-writing explores the position of the critic, not only in relation to art objects, architectural spaces and theoretical ideas, but also through the site of writing itself, investigating the limits of criticism, and asking what is possible for a critic to say about an artist, a work, the site of a work and the critic herself and for the writing to still "count" as criticism.'

(Jane Rendell, Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism)

Exhibitors:

Anastasia Balykina, Kai-Wen Chen, Emma Filippides, Eliza Grosvenor, Rafael Guendelman Hales, Maria McLintock, Valeria Muteri, Anna Livia Vørsel Max Wisotsky

Exhibition curator:

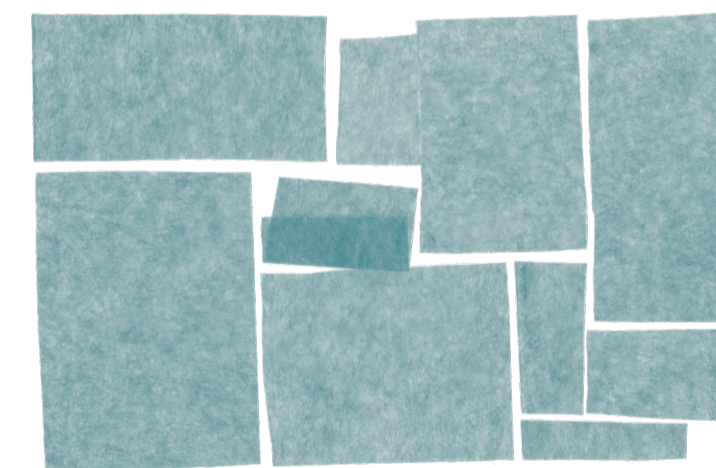
Emma Filippides

Special thank you to Jane Rendell and Emily Stone at The Bartlett for helping us organise this exhibition.

The Site Writing module was conceived of by Jane Rendell out of her own site-writing practice. We extend our thanks to Jane, as well as practitioners David Roberts and Polly Gould, whose work we proudly display alongside our own.

A warm thank you also goes to the roster of practitioners who delivered workshops and talks throughout, and the writers whose work informed, the module. We are endlessly grateful of your commitment to situated knowledge as an emancipatory writing strategy.

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MA Architectural History +
MA Situated Practice

The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

R E C O N

Kai-Wen Chen | *The Pass*

The Pass is a video work that aims to merit the mass labour involved in the production of food. ‘The Pass’ derives from a kitchen term referring to the space adjacent to the front and the back of the house, where transactions of orders and plates take place. The project aims to reveal the configuration of this space, and how it models workers’ behaviour to raise the notion of ‘apparatus’. Or, in Giorgio Agamben’s terms, how such institutionalization of food offering in metropolis might put the authenticity of regional food at stake.

Kai-Wen Chen is a commis chef. He holds a BArchitettura from Shih-Chien University and is currently undertaking the Situated Practice Master’s at The Bartlett. Kai-Wen is interested in the codes and gestures of city dwellers, exploring the complexity of the hospitality industry while working on a minimum wage at JKS, an award-winning restaurant group in London.

Anastasia Balykina | *Crystal Arcana*

Crystal Arcanas is inspired by the original twenty two major arcana tarot and contains twenty-two short stories of the past and present, that have been collected from visitors to Crystal Palace Park. Each story is supported with colourful illustrations and, with this deck, the locals and visitors of the place can predict the future or create their own cards using instructions inside.

Anastasia Balykina is a Master’s Situated Practice student. With a background in architecture, Anastasia’s work explores the quality of space and the interactions of people within it. For her MA project, she continues to explore the tarot system to collaborate with local people in the district of Hackney Wick and Stratford, creating a method that empowers local residents to participate in the future of the site.

Emma Filippides | *The Windowless Hotel Room*

The Windowless Hotel Room is based upon the recalled memory of three characters, shared over the duration of one night and one morning in an unidentifiable hotel room. For the human subject, the nature of the hotel room encounter can be transient and fleeting. For the hotel room subject, the nature of the human encounter is similarly forgettable; the memory itself belongs to parallel cycles of experience. Revived in the material form of the script, the narrative and the roles enclosed await inhabitation.

Emma Filippides is an architectural historian and designer. Influenced by anthropological methods, she engages in practice-based research to examine the rituals of inhabitation and the interior experience of architecture. Her most recent body of work examines the contemporary domestic condition through the proliferation of self storage in the UK. She holds a Bachelor’s in Design from Goldsmiths, University of London (2015) and has recently completed a Master’s in Architectural History at The Bartlett (2018).

S T

Eliza Grosvenor | *My Island Gardens*

My Island Gardens is a collective call to reveal and celebrate the importance of Island Gardens, a public park on the Isle of Dogs, London. The book is a translation of histories and memories, conversations and scenes, all played within the space of the garden and its surrounding area. To be read from one of the fourteen benches along the river front, preferably the sixth bench from the main entrance, it is for past stories to be told and for those of the future to be added. To be enjoyed by children and adults alike, it is an invitation to create your unique *My Island Gardens*.

Eliza Grosvenor has a background in the history of art and illustration, and has recently completed her Master’s in Architectural History at The Bartlett. Her practice often moves between academic research, illustration practice and community projects.

Rafael Guendelman Hales | *History begins with the vanity of kings*

History begins with the vanity of kings is a replica of The Taylor Prism (691 BC) which was acquired by the British Museum in 1855. The text inscribed on the original prism details war campaigns said to have been brought by the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal against the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In Rafael’s version, he inserts the original text in dialogue with two narratives from the same territory in modern-day Iraq: a text taken from Dabiq, an online magazine used by ISIS for Islamic radicalisation and recruitment, and extracts from George W. Bush’s address to the nation during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Rafael Guendelman Hales studied Visual Arts in Chile and is currently studying for a Master’s in Situated Practice at The Bartlett. His research focuses on the relation between humans and their contexts, as well as the mutual influences of identity and territorial transformation. In this way, historical, spatial and personal narratives are key to critically rethinking our original contexts.

Ishita Jain | *Dear Mr. Jung*

Dear Mr. Jung is a mytho-poetically constructed space of an epic, recapturing the landscape generated internally as Ishita performs the act of reading Carl Jung’s *The Red Book*. As she reads, she time-travels across historical, mythical and personal time and conducts a dialogue with the author, Carl Jung. This dialogue is carried out through a series of letters that Ishita writes in her dreams, transcribed in waking consciousness. These letters become sites of record and reflection during reading and aims to make visible the inter-textual travels that occur while reading and the transformation of a reader to an author.

Ishita Jain is a performative researcher. With a background in Architecture, English Literature and Indian Classical Dance, she explores formalist techniques within and outside of academia to create academic models of research and dissemination. She has recently completed her MA in Architectural History from The Bartlett, and is currently a fellow at Hemis Monastery, Ladakh in India, developing awareness models for cultural practices and objects native to Western Himalayan region.

R U C

Maria McLintock | *Soft Landing*

Part theory, history, popular culture, news, and autobiography, *Soft Landing* explores the consequences of the Irish economic crash through a deeply personal account of its ramifications, by placing it in an economic grid of money and time. It tracks the ten year period from Ireland’s early economic boom—otherwise known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’—to the three years following the tragic event that brought the global economy to its brink. Maria’s writing documents how neoliberal policy and political power relations can reshape—not just financial markets—but also human life, community and a body politic. ‘*I moved from a council house in Coventry to a tiny town called Ballybofey in the North-West region of Ireland in 2004; I left in 2011—this was my attempt to trace the ways a grandiose political event shaped my family’s shifting identity.*’

Maria McLintock is an interdisciplinary activist, writer and curator based in London. She holds a Bachelors in History of Art from the University of York (2015) and is currently studying a Master’s in Architectural History from the Bartlett School of Architecture (2018). Her research centres on curatorial ethics, specifically in relation to the display of refugee architectures, as well as humanising neoliberalist policies through spatial writing. In 2016, she co-founded System of Systems with designers and researchers Rebecca Glyn Blanco and Danae Papazymouri, which explores the intersections of technology, bureaucracy and legality in the European asylum-seeking process. The project has thus far involved an exhibition in Athens, the publication of a book and a series of events across Europe. Maria works as a Curatorial Assistant at the Design Museum in London. [@McLintockMaria](mailto:Systemofsystems.eu)

Valeria Muteri | *Il balcone*

Il balcone is the document of the event that took place in Castelvetrano, a town in the South West of Sicily, in April 2018. The site-writing performance was conducted from the balcony of an uninhabited house, through a chain of thirty-six metres of paper that develops metaphorically and physically through the space of the house. The text was a reading in two voices about the journey of a lost wallet as an allegory for the different participants in Sicilian society. The balcony is a threshold between public and private and is used as a tool to explore the distortion made by mafia culture on the concept of public and ‘other’ in Sicilian identity. The provocative and ethical approach of the project is reinforced by the fact that Castelvetrano is the place where the current Godfather of the mafia originates.

Valeria Muteri is an architect based in London. She is currently studying a Master’s in Situated Practice from The Bartlett, having obtained a Bachelor’s in Architecture from the University of Palermo, Italy. Before moving to London, she worked for architecture practices in Barcelona, Venice and Milan.

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Anna Livia Vørsel | *Poetic Water Boundaries: Towards a Possible Borderless Sea*

Poetic Water Boundaries collates the United Nations’ policy document, ‘Law on The Sea’ with found and made materials, questioning the possibility of a potential borderless sea. With a focus on the national borders between the UK and Denmark, sharing a line in the North Sea, this project questions where this border physically is, why it is there and not anywhere else, and what this shared line and its surrounding body/bodies of water could become.

Anna Livia Vørsel has a background in Architectural and Interdisciplinary Studies and has recently completed an MA in Architectural History at The Bartlett. Her research engages with the intersections of architecture and jurisdiction.

Max Wisotsky | *Spaces of Grief*

‘An autobiographical exploration of how different kinds of space allow for grieving, Spaces of Grief explores my personal experience during the aftermath of my father’s death in 2016. Instead of trying to define my grief by typology of experience, I began to notice and define my grief by a typology of site. It isn’t the anger, depression, acceptance, or sadness that is changing—but the space you are in. Different spaces allow grief to come forward in very different ways, alluding to the multifaceted experience of both emotions and space. This project aims to express the connection I have experienced between certain types of spaces and being able to grieve: the personal space, the public space, the journeying space, the memorial space, and the boundless space.’

Max Wisotsky is a Swedish-American architect, theorist and historian from Los Angeles, currently based in London. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (2015) and a Masters of Architectural History from the Bartlett School of Architecture (2018).