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TEST

Compiled and edited by
Ambrose Gillick and Lee Ivett

TEST UNIT —
a summer school
exploring cross-
disciplinary
approaches to city
development.

**GLASGOW
URBAN LAB
THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART**

Test Unit is a summer school exploring cross-
disciplinary approaches to city development,
initiated and run by Agile City, A Feral Studio
and Baxendale.

For more information go to:
agile-city.com/test-unit/

0.PRO LOGU

PROLOGUE

2018 will see the delivery of the third consecutive Test Unit summer school. It will bring together students and practitioners from across a range of creative, cultural and social disciplines to consider potential modes of intervention within the Spiers Lock area immediately north of Glasgow city centre. Having completed two iterations of Test Unit the organising team determined a need to document and reflect on the aims and objectives of the programme and critically consider the areas of interest within which it operates. This publication, completed with the generous support of the Glasgow Urban Lab, seeks not to assess and critique the various outcomes of Test Unit so far but instead to research, determine and present those areas of interest that have informed the project and which Test Unit also seeks to inform and influence.

Before and following each edition of Test Unit we spend time identifying and articulating the potential value of the project and the thematic and contextual spaces within which we are operating. Themes of 'the post-industrial city', 'turning words into action', 'alternative education' and 'legacy' consistently come up in these discussions, not only informing the development of the summer programme but have now been used as a means of guiding and structuring the content of this publication. This book, then, is a way of documenting some of these discussions, exploring the logic and rationale of the programme. In so doing, the production of this book has enabled us to analyse Test Unit broadly, from a range of perspectives, but also in a thorough way. Each chapter digs into a single theme, exploring the way Test Unit works in relation to the life of the post-industrial city. It is not definitive, and there are many overlaps between themes. Nonetheless, the variety of disciplines and specialisms the authors are drawn from brings new and diverse insights.

Is an assumption that either Glasgow or Spiers Lock is 'post-industrial' entirely valid when productivity, industry and creativity

are still visibly apparent and still critical as a device for informing the development of our city? Is it perhaps a question of scale? Have we shifted from the macro to the micro in terms of our industry and in the process of becoming less visible has 'making' become a less obvious component of Glasgow's collective identity?

As an environment within which to learn, Test Unit essentially takes the position that this particular kind of learning environment does not currently exist within the existing structures and curriculum of formal education models. Is this really the case and if so then why? Has the relentless creep of administration, bureaucracy, health and safety and assessment conspired to remove risk, action and an engagement with the complexities of the real world from the pedagogy of our high schools, art schools, architecture schools and universities?

The idea of legacy and what it entails is a consistent but potentially unresolved topic of conversation within our team. Should we be seeking to produce permanent but small interventions each year, whether they be physical or non-physical interventions? Is it the things we make during Test Unit that need to last or the ideas that are embedded within them? Perhaps it's not even changing the condition and amenity of a place that's critical, perhaps it's making a change in people. By informing the attitudes, approaches, influences and methods of our participants, stakeholders and funders we catalyse a mode of change that might be less immediately visible, but which is sustained and applied in ways that we don't need to dictate or predict.

This publication takes the form of a series of thoughtful essays, case studies and conversations from individuals who have contributed to and supported Test Unit over the last two years. These contributors include producers, facilitators and participants who are also leading thinkers or practitioners within their discipline. Each contribution documents and/or disseminates the themes Test Unit engages with, questioning current models of urban regeneration and design education through an active

research process and realised in projects that consider context, practice and learning.

As well as providing an opportunity for the production team to reflect and determine the agency, utility and agenda of Test Unit this publication also acts as a useful introduction to the programme for future participants and those with an interest in what we do and why we do it.

What is Test Unit?
Test Unit is a summer school exploring cross-disciplinary approaches to city development. Through an intensive week we aim to turn talk into action by testing ideas in public space. Each year we inhabit a building or site and learn through engaging with ideas, materials, people and place.

The project is based in Speirs Locks, an area linked to the canal in north Glasgow. It is a post-industrial area close to (but in many ways separate from) the city centre. Since its industrial decline it has gone through significant change. The latest masterplan, which included large-scale building works and huge capital investment, didn't materialise after the economic crash of 2008. Since then an alternative approach has been developed, placing cultural activity, alternative use and temporary activation at the heart of the regeneration process.

This process is ongoing, and Test Unit aims to be a method of ongoing enquiry and learning. Through a week of collaborative experimentation, the summer school takes ideas from conception to realisation through a week-long build-test-learn development cycle.

Each year we invite skilled facilitators to lead a unit exploring different themes that focus on a specific site to give a defined framework for experimentation. By bringing together people from various disciplines and skill levels we aim to create an open forum for critical dialogue and peer-to-peer learning for all participants, partners, local stakeholders and audiences.

We also programme a public facing events and symposium

programme to connect with people who can't attend the summer school – this includes talks, debates and a symposium for the participants to present their work to local audiences and strategic partners.

Test Unit is produced and delivered by the independent live action research platform Agile City. Agile City was created by Rob Morrison and Helen Teeling as a vehicle to explore inclusive city development through projects, events and research. As well as running Test Unit, Agile City also is also developing Civic House, within Spiers Lock, as a workspace, café and venue and working collaboratively to establish the Glasgow Canal Project – a local co-operative to support the democratic development of the local area.

On the following pages Agile City co-founder Helen Teeling explains the background and development of Test Unit to Jess Meyer and writer Laura Snoad. Jess is the co-director of Zetteler; a London based creative communications agency, and was introduced to Test Unit as an attendee of the 2017 public symposium.

Test Unit offers an alternative approach to bringing change in cities. Do you believe the current system is failing? If so, why?

Agile City is based in a part of north Glasgow where regeneration is happening. Situated on the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal, Speirs Locks used to be a major industrial powerhouse. Like many other places with a similar profile, the world changed faster than the place could and the good times came to an end. In the 1960s, the building of the M8 motorway effectively cut the local area off from the city centre, further damaging the quality of life and stalling development. In the last decade or so, the local council and Scottish Canals – amongst others – have been working to reinvigorate the area. Big improvements have been made to the infrastructure along the canal. A number of high-profile cultural tenants, including the National Theatre of Scotland, Scottish Opera and the Royal Conservatoire, have set up camp in the area and The Whisky Bond, a 100,000sqft former warehouse is now home to hundreds of artists, designers, makers and creative businesses. In 2017, the Glasgow Canal Cooperative was established, bringing together cultural partners, urban sports groups, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Canals, the local residents' association, and other local community groups, in an attempt to coordinate efforts to improve the area for the greater good. We're making progress but the fact remains that our area and surrounding neighbourhoods still ranks high in the index of multiple deprivation. In the past decade or so, there's been a lot of local community consultations, conversations and charrettes on how to improve the local environment, but very little action. It was hard to see any visible change.

How did this lead you to set up Test Unit?

When designing Test Unit we were inspired by the tech sector, where there is often a much more rapid, iterative design cycle – design, make, test directly with the audience and design again. The Google Design Sprint takes place over the course of

one week – you just don't get that with urban design and city development and so we felt there was an opportunity to design a programme that applies the quick-thinking sprint methodology to urban development, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration and the production of tangible prototypes in a live context.

How has it evolved from the inaugural event in 2016?

In the first year, the issues we explored were probably more influenced by the interests of our practitioners, whereas our focus is now trying to align with what's going on right in front of us. Each of the Units will still be open-ended and there are no pre-determined outcomes, but the issues and themes being explored are more closely aligned to real-life developments in and around Speirs Locks. And that's the way we want to continue with Test Unit, so the programme as a whole has a longer-term relationship with the development of this area.

What is the value of putting people and education at the heart of regeneration?

In the case of Test Unit, we see value in bringing together a diverse group of creative people with a wide range of specialisms – we're leveraging creative talent to generate a rich flow of ideas and solutions. We've had archaeologists, geographers and community workers take part alongside architects, graphic designers, planners, performance artists and researchers. We've had participants from all over the UK, the US, France, Malta, Germany, the Netherlands and beyond, coming together for a week to learn from each other, to learn from our group facilitators and to learn by doing, by applying their own knowledge and experience to the live issues in front of them. Everyone who's taken part in Test Unit has mentioned the value of this peer-to-peer learning, and the value of diversity when it comes to generating ideas. It's the opposite of four guys from a government agency, in shirts and ties, sitting in an office in another part of town, devising a plan for an area they've hardly spent any time in.

As you mention, the event is hugely successful in bringing together all sorts of people from different sectors. How do you begin to select a line-up of speakers and workshop leaders?

Inviting speakers and practitioners is the really fun part of Test Unit! It's an opportunity to bring together some of the most innovative and exciting individuals and studios operating in the realm of alternative city development. We get to host people and studios who we want to learn and engage with but who will also provide an amazing experience for those who take part in the programme. We work in a very specific part of north Glasgow and we're committed to developing the best solutions to the issues in that part of the city. At the same time, we're determined to keep abreast of new approaches on a national and international level – Test Unit offers a means to directly connect with those practitioners who we think are leading the way and doing exciting things. Glasgow's always been an outward-looking city; that's how we try to stay relevant.

Why is a proactive approach important?

It's about turning talk into action and, as the name suggests, it's about testing out ideas, activating a site, physically and visibly. It's the opposite of the meeting room, locked up for the weekend after a six-hour meeting, the wall left covered in post-it notes. We gather a group of brilliant people, get outside and get our hands dirty over the course of one very collaborative, intense week and try to embed a sense of agency.

Writer: Laura Snoad
Platform: Zetteler

A. Phoenix Nursery / B. Baird's Brae
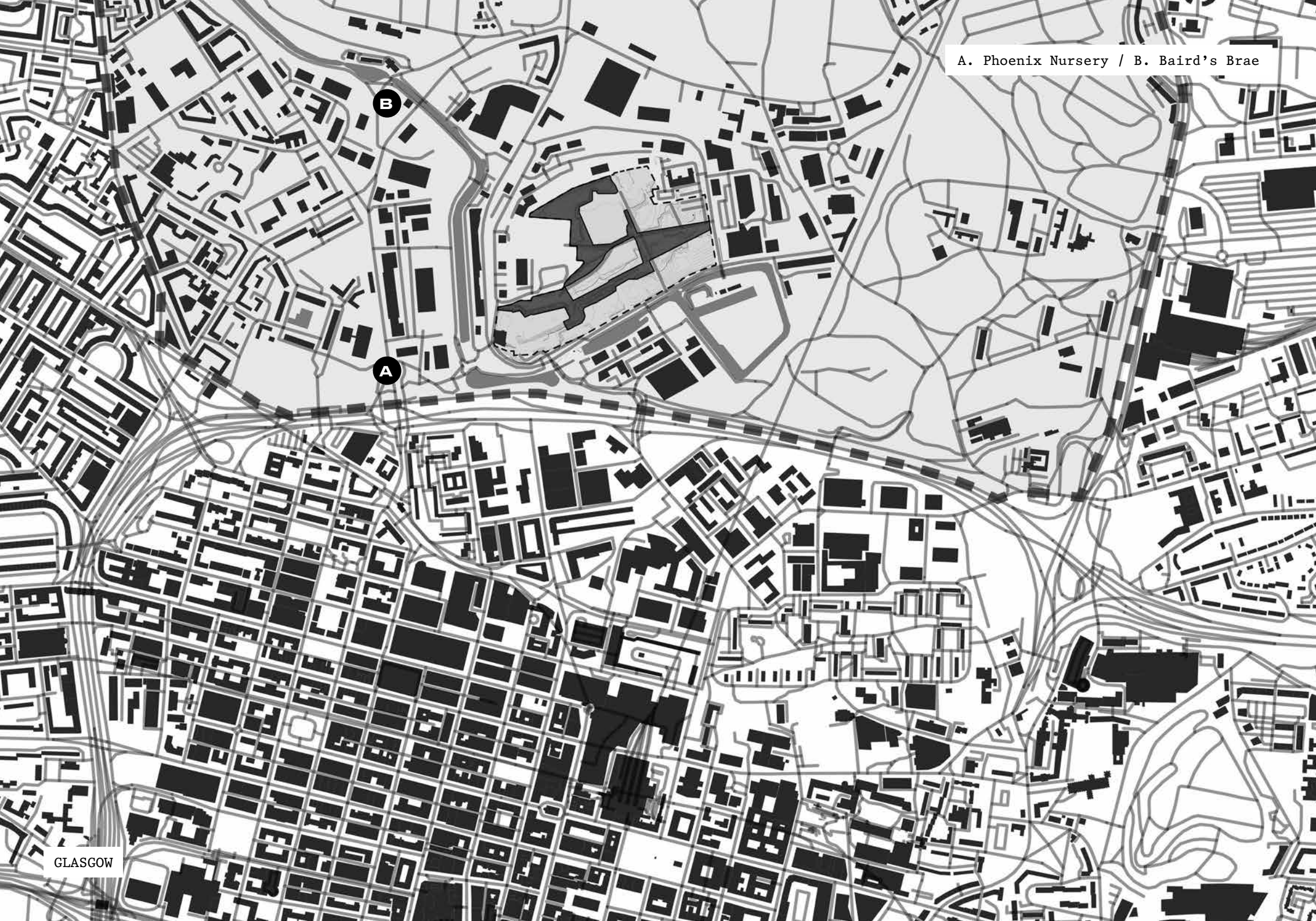
GLASGOW

Speirs Locks Map

CULTURAL VENUES

1 Grey Wolf Studios
2 The Whisky Bond & Skulpture Studios
3 National Theatre Scotland
4 Glasgow Academy of Musical Theatre Arts

5 The Glue Factory
6 Scottisch Opera
7 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
8 Civic House

SPORTING + LEISURE

9 Trim Trail
10 Wake Park
11 Pinkston Paddle Sports Centre

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

12 100 Acre Hill – custom build housing development
13 Student accomodation – Speirs Locks Students Campus

1.CON
TEXT

One mean city

In the years following the Second World War, Glasgow began a process of modernization and deindustrialization which saw the peripheralization of many of the lower and middle income communities from the urban core.[1] To achieve the goals of a modern city with a decently accommodated population two plans for Glasgow were developed: *The First Planning Report to the Highways and Planning Committee of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow* of 1945, commonly known as the *Bruce Plan* and the *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* of 1946 by Patrick Abercrombie and Robert Matthew for the Scottish Office. The Bruce Plan proposed the implementation of a motorway scheme and the decanting of large numbers of the inner-city population to the peripheries, but importantly within the city boundary. The Abercrombie plan proposed instead the development of new towns and the decanting of much of the economic activity of the city too. A hybrid was realised which saw the development of four estates – Castlemilk, Pollock, Easterhouse and Drumchapel – and new towns and the motorway. Glasgow's council were opposed to the new town model at first, seeing it as a threat to the coherence and sustainability of the city.

And the Council were right – the city population began to collapse from a high of 1.1 million in 1961 losing about 250,000 souls in twenty years. The physical spread of the city became unmaintainable and decay soon followed, arguably because the city lacked the taxes and energy to function well, unable to sustain the social infrastructure that had both supported its existence and defined its identity. Vast holes developed in Glasgow's fabric but newly suburbanised populations lacked effective density too; community cohesion was obvious by its absence. Urban sprawl had become endemic, contingent upon a motorcar dependent population.

1. Paice, L. (2008). "Overspill Policy and the Glasgow Slum Clearance Project in the Twentieth Century: From One Nightmare to Another?" Reinvention: International Journal of Undergraduate Research 1(1).

In 1961 Jane Jacobs, an American journalist and urbanist, published *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* to widespread acclaim and horror. The book had significant impact on the way cities and urban space was conceptualised. In it, Jacobs proposed an alternative vision of urban form based around organic social complexity which could not be replicated by top-down processes. She led resistance efforts in her New York community to proposals not dissimilar to those underway in Glasgow and became an international figure-head for what we might see as the emergence of a postmodern, or 'anti-modernist', idea of development.

Then
Both the Bruce and Abercrombie Plans for Glasgow were orientated towards clearing the fabric of poverty which blighted the city's inner areas. Population densities were high in parts and crowding, dirt and disease were issues of specific concern to a postwar society tired of inequality, objectification and death. The city council undertook a synthesis of the two plans, but the work led to the municipalization of the inner-urban core, which now became populated, if at all, with a disproportionally high number of non-economically active citizens. The shift from urban industry to suburbanised service labour also precipitated the emergence of a new role for the inner city based around leisure and entertainment. In this context cultural assets and heritage gained new value, providing the scenery for consumerist lifestyles.

Underlying these strategic changes ran profound ideological ones, reflected in 1967's *Cullingworth Report*, which established a new model for the distribution and allocation of council housing and began a process which initiated the disestablishment of certain old tenets of the social state, principally that the state was capable of providing for the needs of marginal people single-handedly. This idea of redistributing civic responsibility for urban space was consolidated in 1968 by the *Skeffington Report,* which detailed the manner in which 'participation'

could be included in the creation of development plans. Whilst *Skeffington* suggested no active role for citizens in the implementation of any development, it was this report perhaps more than any other which changed the way cities in the modern period had been planned. *Skeffington* enabled a new, small-scale, locally sanctioned approach to grow which both reflected the democratic urges of the day and the critique of diminished rights available in the modern city, but also worked as a way to begin the slow renewal of inner cities as a way of stemming the haemorrhaging population.

Skeffington, then, sits within the practical context of grassroots activism towards improved housing conditions which was occurring throughout Britain at the time. As Alison Ravetz describes it, tenant action had emerged both out of the new post-war housing estates, where issues of democratic underrepresentation and design and building standards had become campaigning issues, and simultaneously out of 'anti-clearance' protests from within the inner city.[2] In Glasgow, the Reverend David Orr had instigated tenant action through the Christian Action Association, helping residents gain money to undertake basic housing improvements. Parish vicar in Govan, Orr would later guide Raymond Young in his work in 1969 as he developed a model for modernizing and improving a small number of flats for a self-organised community group or Taransay Street, Govan. Young was responding to tenant's own reluctance to be decanted from their homes as part of city council improvement and infrastructure plans and together they established a model for restoration which would maintain not only the objectively decent housing, but also the lives and community these houses supported. Young's work was supported by Strathclyde University, where he was a student, and consolidated in ASSIST, a company which provided technical,

2. Alison Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment', Anthony Sutcliffe, ed., Planning, History and the Environment (London, New York, Routledge, 2001), pp.151—153.

design and social support services [from] within the community and was based on the principle of voluntary, community- and resident-led building improvement. Young later went on to help form Govan Housing Association, the first community-based housing association of its kind, a model which rapidly spread as community groups sought his help to fight back against government plans to demolish poorly-maintained housing.

The attitude of residents in Govan was not isolated but reflected both a wider unhappiness at state approaches to city planning, but also an emerging civic voice. The foundation of the New Glasgow Society in 1964, which concerned itself with publicising the attractions of Glasgow's historic architecture and 'renewal through conservation', preceded the formation in 1967 of the Scottish Civic Trust. But the conservationist mentality was not restricted to connoisseurs and enthusiasts – normal people saw the active and casual destruction of Glasgow as something to resist. The Great Storm of 1968, which resulted in widespread destruction in the city, had revealed chronic decay in the housing stock. Central government responses were of a kind with the spirit of the age, seeking to divest the state of responsibility for smaller issues of maintenance, broadening tenure-types in the increasingly municipalized inner-urban core and handing responsibility for urban regeneration to embedded and responsive community organisations. The effect of these moves, seen in Govan, spread throughout the city as various groups began to take action within their neighbourhoods according to their needs. In many places, this led to the development of new urban governance bodies and systems, such as community-based housing associations in Govan and development trusts in Woodlands, to hybrid systems of asset management, such as at Castlemilk and Maryhill. In each of these cases, the renewal was characterized by hybrid, agile, multi-scaled activities between state and regional government, commercial, third-sector, communal and individual needs, and which were established and used to achieve specific, direct ends. The housing association

model, developed in the streets of Govan to meet specific and immediate community needs, for example, was adopted and 'rolled out' across Scotland by the national housing agency, Scottish Homes.[3]

More recent years have seen the consolidation of these approaches – housing associations have grown in size as diverse organisations have consolidated – the 'market' is dominated by a few social landlord 'big hitters' although diversity of provision is still apparent - and the heritage-memory industry has come to dominate the urban landscape, arguably having instrumentalised the localised and embedded action of conservation movements towards neoliberal economic goals. Traditional heavy industry has continued to struggle although a culture of boutique and craft based making, of the 'creative classes', has begun to take hold in some areas, with knowledge increasingly commodified. The student community has grown precipitously as universities have been created and expanded, with the resulting knock-on to house prices: Glasgow remains a tough place to raise a family. Even so, until 2001, population continued to fall, bottoming-out at half its 1961 peak. Large areas of the city remain redundant and renewal is slow. A major restoration of the Clyde undertaken between 2003 and 2014 saw billions of pounds invested in activating the river towards new urban lifestyles with the objective continuing in various schemes on both the north and south sides of the river, mostly focusing on residential and commercial-leisure activities. This continues in the form of yet more student accommodation and retail-leisure.

Now

This, then, is the environment in which Test Unit sits – one where modernist certainties are faint memories, and its urban and architectural emblems have been largely set aside if not physically demolished. In its place participatory language

3. McKee, K. (2010). "The future of community housing in Scotland: some thoughts and reflections." People, Place & Policy Online 4(3): .103-110.

and rhetoric has become established; pluralism is the name of the game and urban hybridity dominates, unintentionally (by definition). What began as grassroots resistance to unsympathetic, top-down, uniformalising agendas through the development of civic agency and synthetic approaches of state, commercial, charity and community entities has morphed over time into an uneven landscape, characterized by narrative and fragmentation. Where once concerns over industry, inequality and labour rights dominated civic life, we are now confronted by a no less complex situation of cultural marginalization, embedded in urban renewal processes which foreground bourgeois values to the exclusion of other ways of being and doing. This logic, almost fifty years old now, appears to have missed the emergence of new urban geographies, not least new economies growing out of the possibilities of digital and open-source systems. Coalitions and informal gatherings of practitioners, activists, fellow travellers, anybody really, have started to transform city space in new ways, adopting and adapting situations and spaces in response to new cultural conditions. Test Unit is part of this; an inquiry into urban potential. How then can the city be remade as a space for meaningful, varied civic association? And what role is there for creativity and creative practitioners? How does creativity become normalised again, who is going to do it and how?

TERRITORY

A Provocation
B Reflection by
  Rob Morrison

2.TER RITO RY

PROVOCATION

The story of Glasgow's recent history has been the subject of numerous, varied portrayals which have served to dislocate the city as a concept from reality, producing a city of the imagination at the expense of the ordinary. Fixating on either its deprivation or as a site of postmodern culture, Glasgow's story orientates around developing and feeding contemporary appetites for 'authentic' and alternative culture, using this as a mechanism to ready the ground for commercial development. As such, the city has been presented as a space of consumption, as a consumable, rather than as principally a home to over half a million people. This has direct material consequences with regards how resources are spent, with renewal areas receiving increased investment in pursuit of new commercial opportunities; design is instrumentalized towards this end and the embattled urban landscape is thus transformed into something like a virtue, providing space for urban pioneers to occupy and fertilize. These tensions, between narrative and reality, form a landscape into which contemporary urban renewal is placed. Orientated towards the production of gentrification or 'resilience', between exclusion and inclusion, a language of renewal can be seen to constitute the territory of Glasgow's post-industrial regeneration.

REFLECTION
Territory / Rob Morrison

Territories are fictional entities, ambiguous and open to myriad interpretations. As such, there are few hard borders and the narratives about them are personal. Whether it's territories of nation, ideology or influence, few things have generated more friction and conflict.

On this basis, I think it's important we first place our discussion in context. This text is part of a publication about Test Unit, a week-long summer school and events programme based in Speirs Locks, north Glasgow. 'Speirs Locks' is a fictional territory, it is a name given in 2006 to a forgotten industrial area between Port Dundas and Firhill, next to the Forth & Clyde Canal to the north of the city centre. In the early 1900's the area was one of the most densely populated in the developed world – predicated on heavy industry clustered around the canal. By the 1960s, as industry was declined, the canal became dormant as industrial infrastructure. Shortly after, the construction of the new M8 motorway severed connections with the city centre and both split communities up and divided them from immediate connection with the city centre. By the end of the twentieth century vast areas of vacant and derelict land and buildings had opened up in the area.

To address this, a masterplan for the area was developed in 2006. With typical pre-crash confidence this proposed to demolish the majority of the existing buildings to 'make way for a shiny new development. As such, it followed a tradition of clearance common to post-war Glaswegian urban renewal. Fortunately, this vision didn't materialise but a new strategy emerged aimed at growing the place from the ground up. A partner from 7N Architects (who developed the original masterplan) wrote an article in 2010 advocating a 'controlled bottom-up' development cycle that made use of cheap land until:

'finally developers wake up to the opportunities and move

in. At this point the original pioneers are usually long gone due to rising values, but this can be managed and used positively. Growing the Place aims to replicate this process. A form of accelerated urban evolution, emulating the nomadic colonisation of cities by these specific creative groups, to transform negative perceptions and drive the regeneration of the wider area.'[4]

I disagree with this position. To state that a process of displacement can be managed and used positively is to advocate for stimulated gentrification. This is the language of colonialism: the industrial estate as the new frontier - an island of opportunity to welcome artists with the offer of cheap space in exchange for creating fertile ground for developers to arrive in five years to yield profit. This position does not recognize that processes of this kind are ones that contribute to inequality and undermine the sustainability of the arts and cultural sector. It's important to recognise, however, that although the aspiration outlined by 7N at that time maybe difficult for contemporary readers, their proposal came at a time when issues of gentrification weren't as poignant and problematic as they are understood to be today.

The strategy of 'growing the area' from the ground up – facilitating not governing urban renewal – is one which has been progressively adopted by those driving strategic development via the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership (Scottish Canals, Glasgow City Council and BIGG Regeneration). This approach has laid the foundation for a variety of projects to come to fruition, including the 'Glasgow Canal Co-op' - a cooperative of local organisations formed to drive the localised and democratic development of the area. Test Unit is another project that has been supported by this incremental approach, and we have been fortunate to have been involved in discussions about the value of the small-scale action linking with strategic, long-term ambition.

My relationship with Speirs Locks began in 2011 when I

worked in collaboration with seven creative practitioners to set up 'The Glue Factory CIC', a community interest company with a programme of leasing, developing and programming a disused industrial building as an independent arts venue and studio space. After five years (and over 20,000 visitors) it became the target of acquisition by commercial developers for conversion into student accommodation. At this point we realised the importance of research and learning around these issues, which led to the foundation of Agile City (the organisation that produces Test Unit) in 2016. It started as a simple blog to explore and share examples of projects which had encountered similar or parallel conditions. We wanted to develop a network of information to support the 'pioneers' of urban renewal – the creative groups and people who were performing an ad-hoc fertilisation of run-down neighbourhoods. Through developing programmes and discussions, we hoped to support people who create social and cultural value in urban development to be the benefactors of their contribution.

The territory of Test Unit, then, is the combined social, political, environmental, urban and cultural sites in which it sits. Now primarily based at Civic House, a Victorian warehouse until recently occupied by National Theatre of Scotland, the programme unfolds within the shadow of the M8 motorway, within a stone's throw of the commercial heart of the region and alongside the wilful dereliction and abandonment that typifies urban infrastructure and architecture in north central Glasgow.

Test Unit emerged in response to this context, developed in collaboration with Baxendale and A Feral Studio, both of whom continue to be actively involved in delivering the programme. The project is a modest endeavour, but over the last three years we have collectively learnt a great deal about the role of on-going learning and experimentation programmes which are embedded in an area going through significant change. Being asked to write about 'territory' in the context of a publication about Test Unit, it felt appropriate to perhaps write some reflections and learnings

4. Anderson, E. (2010). "Growing the Place in hard times - Speirs Locks, Glasgow." Urban Design International Spring (114): 18-20.

from our experience.

Embeddedness

I believe good city development is done on an incremental basis with a long-term commitment and vision. In many instances this is at odds with the project nature of commission-led work. This is the challenge that is faced at the intersection between development and the architectural business model, which is often underpinned by professional fees for skilled work. How can we value and sustain this insight? What are the development models that facilitate this? I suggest that the key to this is based around the role of education instead of consultation and re-imaging the role of localised education/ development institutions.

Professional territory

It seems there are two things happening in conflict with each other: over-specification within professional practice and generalisation within arts and community engagement. Artists are now being deployed to conquer unknown territories and expected to take on a multitude of disciplines - social work, community engagement, design, development, business modelling, strategy. Does this ask too much? Or is it the responsibly of the spatial practitioner to push the boundaries of their influence in the pursuit of holistic design? As we move towards more inclusive forms of development, are we expecting too much from too few? By empowering communities to take control of their land (or territory) can we expect them to leverage local capacity to deliver services, activities or developments that were once the responsibility of the state and/or local authorities?

Territory of influence

Cities are constructed habitats for multiple people. Like social constructs, open markets and natural eco-systems - they are impossible to predict as they relate to wider principles. Change comes from a multitude of factors in concert. For small practices (such as ours) this level of complexity is daunting, so we have tried to define limits of influence and areas of focus. We have resisted working in other parts of the city (or country) and instead

try to build relationships and a layered understanding of the area. We have now been working in the area for eight years, and the amount we are still learning has shown us how long and complex development cycles are.

Territory of change

How can we toggle between the big picture and the small incremental steps that join the dots? We hope this is where a project like Test Unit sits. It aims to create a space for free-thought and experimentation within a context of significant change and strategic city development. As with most creative education and learning – it also aims to provide space for uncoupling the potential of the imagination from the parameters of reality, and create new spaces for alternate realities to be imagined, outside the realm of fiction or fine art. One of the previous Test Unit facilitators, Valentina Karga, eloquently described her work as creating 'simulations':

'simulation can be used to show the eventual real effects of alternative conditions and courses of action.' [5]

If a concept is effectively simulated for people to experience a new paradigm this situation becomes a memory, which becomes a powerful tool for behavioural change. A relevant example is the riots in England in 2011 - for many people there was a realisation about the precariousness of societal order and how very quickly new modes of conduct can emerge. When the challenges we face are so stark - inequality, environmental collapse, gentrified futures – creating moments to imagine positive new possibilities are becoming increasingly important.

As an annual summer school and events programme Test Unit's sphere of influence is limited, but small actions can create large change. My main learning from the project is the importance of having the space and tools for people to collectively imagine potential futures, fictional territories and realise ideas through physical, experimental means.

5. Valentina Karga, Pecha Kucha presentation @ Test Unit, 20th June 2017, The Whisky Bond, Glasgow

A Provocation
B Reflection by
Heather Claridge

3.STR
ATEG

PROVOCATION

Glasgow's renewal following urban planning exercises in the mid 1940s saw the intentional fragmentation of urban populations into peripheral estates, new towns and urban sprawl. Pursuing new, egalitarian visions of healthy, spacious and motorcar-orientated urbanism, Glasgow's centre was rid of much of its Victorian tenemental architecture in favour of point-block, tower and slab typologies after the high modernist visions of the International Style movement. This led to a rapid decrease in population, trade (tax) and opportunity in the city. In response to this decline and the emergence of grassroots civic action groups concerned with the loss of fabric and the identities this supported, and in conjunction with a deeply negative global image of a city on its knees, Glasgow's civic authorities responded with a programme of inner-urban renewal centred around the development of a leisure and commerce-orientated inner-urban core. Through branding, large-scale civic events and the transformation of older industrial/ commercial fabric into dwellings and leisure infrastructure, Glasgow pursued a strategy of renewal based around drawing population back in to the city centre. In recent years, part of this strategic approach has included the development of an attitude to 'meanwhile use' projects and the temporary occupation of under-used and derelict urban land in pursuit both of occupation and consolidated ownership, but also with a view of adopting the cultural language of temporary urbanism now trending in post-industrial cities.

REFLECTION
Towards a more adaptive, resilient and locally calibrated means of regenerating lost space / Heather Claridge

Context and conditions

The world is becoming increasingly urbanised. As a consequence, cities are requiring more effective and alternative approaches to cope with this shift. In recent years, the concept of 'urban resilience' has rapidly come to the forefront of cities' regeneration agendas, including Glasgow. This concept is largely defined as 'the capacity of an individual, community, organisation, or system to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from disruptive experience'.[6] Whilst the types of disruptions that cities are trying to grapple with differs from place to place, for most post-industrial landscapes like Glasgow's Canal Corridor, it is the phenomena of 'lost space'[7] that presents one of the most significant set of challenges and opportunities to regeneration.

Often characterised by abandonment and inactivity, 'lost space' can be attributed to the waves of planned and unplanned urban evolution - industrialisation, modernism, and industrial decline. Its disruptive impact on the health, prosperity and urban form of cities and citizens has been well documented.[8] However over the last decade, a trend has emerged which has seen these gaps in the urban fabric adapted for inventive use. Often operating within the cracks between formal planning, speculative investment and local possibilities, spaces have been transformed

6. Rodin, J. (2015).The Resilience Dividend. London: Profile Books.
7. Trancik, R. 1986. Finding Lost Space - Theories of Urban Design. New York:Van Nostrand Reinhold.
8. Németh, J., and Langhorst, J. (2013)."Rethinking urban transformation: temporary uses for vacant land," Cities. (40): 143 - 150. ; Maantay, J. (2013).The collapse of place: derelict land, deprivation, and health inequality in Glasgow, [online]; Adams, D. (2015). Compulsory sale orders as a response to hardcore urban vacancy and dereliction [online].

in to the vibrant breeding ground for a multitude of activities[9] through temporary or short-term occupation.

Emerging as a manifestation of a more flexible, adaptive and participatory form of urban regeneration, temporary urbanism has appeared to thrive in the current climate of economic uncertainty and lagging pace of mainstream redevelopment. As such, many City Governments and Strategic Agencies have sought to embrace temporal use and integrate it in to their long-term strategies for urban renewal. This has helped shift mindsets from a preoccupation of planning for permanency towards a more locally calibrated and flexible means of regenerating places and building resilience. Yet, the concept of temporary use is neither new nor novel, having always existed in cities. The temporal activation of public places for civic gatherings or the periodic use of spaces for festivals or street markets, has long been embedded in to human cultures, however it is the current increase in frequency, diverse range of activators, different locations and nature of projects, which is rooted in the particular conditions of our time.[10]

In the context of Glasgow's Canal Corridor, regeneration has evolved in a similar nexus between lost space, creative urbanism and long-term redevelopment planning. Within this terrain, the Test Unit programme has emerged as a compelling, multi-layered form of adaptive urbanism, one which has been embraced and supported by both the City Council and other Strategic Agencies in the area. Through exploring some of the spatial, cultural and strategic context surrounding and preceding Test Unit, this chapter will seek to unravel and reveal the set of conditions which have enabled the programme to offer an alternative and complementary form of urban development and a more resilient paradigm for reactivating lost space and regenerating places.

9. Tonkiss, F. (2013)."Austerity urbanism and the makeshift city,"
City:Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture,Theory, Policy,Action. 17(3):
312 - 324.
10. Madanipour,A. (2017). Cities in Time: Temporary Urbanism and the Future
of the City. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Exploring Context

The regeneration of Glasgow's Canal Corridor has been strategically guided by the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership. Operating in some form, for the last 10 years, the core partnership was renewed in 2015 to include - Scottish Canals, Glasgow City Council and Bigg Regeneration. Collectively these organisations have helped assemble and curate much of the strategic activities and financial investment in the area. Although dealing with uncertainty is a challenge for any development partnership, the Canal Regeneration alliance has actively promoted the corridor as a place for the urban pioneer to innovate and experiment. This culture has not only manifested itself in the wide spectrum and scales of organisations who have relocated to the Canal, it has helped forge a new identity for the area as an emerging cultural quarter and stimulated the established of a local Canal cooperative in early 2018.

At a city level, a philosophy of supporting the temporary activation of lost space has been nurtured since 2010 in Glasgow. Through the establishment of the Council's Stalled Space Initiative, locally driven projects have been strategically and financially facilitated. In 2012, support was given to the Bothy Project to transform a vacant Canal site into a walled wildflower garden and alternative outdoor events space, with various artists residencies occurring. Although the project ended in late 2013, the pioneering experiences and markers of its undertaking have remained and germinated in the area by the Test Unit organisers.

The challenge of lost space still prevails in the Glasgow's Canal Corridor. The historical opening up of the dense urban form, coupled with rapid industrial decline and relocation of heavy industry from the inner city has left a realm of sites condemned to the waiting loop with no prospect in the medium term.[11] As a response to this, two intensive planning charrettes were embarked on in the Canal neighbourhoods of Port Dundas

11. Oswalt, P., Overmeyer, K., and Misselwitz,P. (2013). Urban Catalyst -
The Power of Temporary Use. Berlin: Dom Publishers.

in 2014 and Hamiltonhill, Firhill, Woodside and Applecross in 2015. Whilst charrettes tend to provide a solid mechanism to extend participation beyond the realms of traditional consultation and an ability to generate more imaginative outcomes, often the lag-time between engagement and physical change is considerable. Within the Canal Corridor, this particular scenario presented an opportunity and motivation for temporary activities to develop. Consequently, Test Unit was able to create a forceful platform to advance concepts from the charrettes and pilot ideas with the involvement of others. By directly embracing the elements of time and change, Test Unit's approach to lost space activation highlighted that the final or fixed state of a place is often seldom achievable nor desirable.[12]

Over the years, strategic investment in the Canal Corridor has largely focused on reconnecting people to the place. Through improving links, activating the canal path and water network and developing urban attractors, projects such as the Phoenix Flowers, the trim trail, Then/Now artworks, Pinkston Watersports and the Whisky Bond, have grown. Evolving from the Port Dundas Charrette, the redevelopment of fifteen acres of lost spaces at Dundashill for 600 new homes, will provide a step change in the physical transformation of the Canal Corridor over the next five years. Included within the masterplan is a portion of custom build housing. This inclusion, coupled with the self-build plots established in Maryhill (further up the Canal Corridor), suggest a strategic shift toward a more incremental form of regeneration, 'harnessing the benign force of gradual money and small scale, fine-grained and diverse development'.[13] One which exhibits some of the similar principles to that of temporary use activities such as Test Unit.

Reflections

The events and experiences examined above only represent a small snapshot in to the complex, extensive and multi-layered evolution of Glasgow's Canal Corridor over the last decade. The elements, however, do suggest a particular set of conditions which has enabled temporary urbanism to be strategically embraced.

The nexus between the prevalence of lost space, the lagging pace of mainstream development, the length between urban design and delivery, the culture of the strategic partnerships and local authority for pioneering activities, and the experience and energy of the local organisations to develop temporary use has created the right conditions for temporary urbanism to be effectively deployed.

Conversely the experiences in the Canal Corridor start to reveal an overall shift towards a more incremental, flexible and locally calibrated form of regenerating places. Activities, like Test Unit, which build capacity, help prepare, adapt and grow out of city challenges such as lost space, demonstrate a unique role in building urban resilience. Finally, on this trajectory, the future of regeneration will require a mutli-scalar, multi-actor approach and one which positively embracing the elements of time and change within strategic planning… deriving from local agency..?

12. Oswalt, P., Overmeyer, K., and Misselwitz,P. (2013). Urban Catalyst -
The Power of Temporary Use. Berlin: Dom Publishers.
13. Barbour, G., Romice, O., & Porta, S. (2016)..“Sustainable plot-based
urban regeneration and traditional masterplanning practice in Glasgow,”
Open House International, 41(4): 15 - 22.
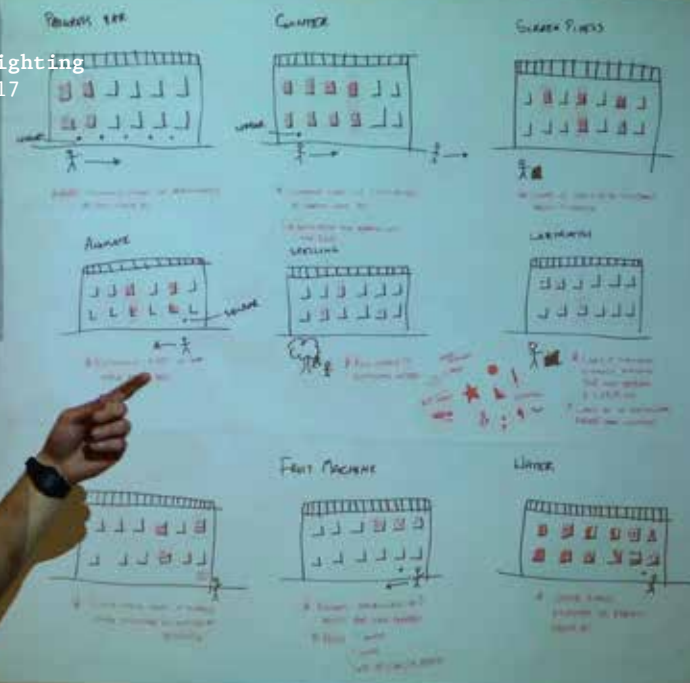
A Provocation
B Reflection by
  Ambrose Gillick

4.THE
[POST
INDU

PROVOCATION

De-industrialization has presented affected cities with a number of significant issues relating to work, the production of revenue and tax, demographic changes and changing social and economic roles between social groups. In addition, postindustrialism, that is, the culture of 'being deindustrialized', represents a shift in the way cities have approached reconciling their urban condition and character with the socio-cultural and economic imperatives required for maintaining and building sustainable urban life.

Governmental approaches to rectifying capital and labour flight out of cities, not to mention population loss largely caused by policies of suburbanization, the clearance of working class inner-city housing and their peripheralization in schemes and estates at the city's limits, has been to re-imagine innercity space as a framework for service industries and leisure culture. Arguably, this has seen the replacement of the poor with wealthier, more economically and culturally dynamic groups, who additionally now occupy the infrastructure and buildings of the industrial working classes, but in a wholly different way, as that of conservers of 'heritage' through the transformation of factories and warehouses into offices. But the postindustrial city is seen as an issue too large for any single agency to deal with and in this context, and following significant early schemes in western Europe and North America in the 1980s and 90s, synthetic approaches between state and commercial actors are increasingly the norm.

The continued marginalisation of poor and less-educated communities from meaningful rights to the life of the city represents something of a recurrent theme in urban history. However, the fact that tales of economic and social marginalisation are increasingly commonplace amongst those social groups for whom education has been abundant and for whom the equation work + prudence = comfort was supposed to be true, is something new. In this context, new approaches to urban renewal are needed and institutional, third sector and commercial actors' goals are coalescing around the production of spaces required if new economies are to emerge. From attempts to innovate new approaches to urban development practices, objectives to streamline and simplify planning and development processes, the provision of funding and support, the increasing willingness to partnership towards mutually beneficial goals and an emerging (ever so slightly) willingness to be led in urban policy by resident and grassroots groups, cities are beginning to partially re-orientate themselves towards alternative practices that will help fill in the cracks in the urban realm.

REFLECTION
Still an industrial city /
Ambrose Gillick

"Give a bowl of rice to a man and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to grow his own rice and you will save his life."

As with so much, Confucius was right. Work goes beyond dignifying humanity; it is necessary for personhood, relates to our ontological and axiological selves. It not only gives a type of value to our lives but becomes the framework against which we enact our values in the world. It is rather strange then that post-industrial society seems to have accepted underemployment and worklessness, particularly amongst those populations and communities historically linked to industrial production and manufacture. Instead, extensive education towards service and administrative roles is seen as the way forward, thereby further excluding physically and socially marginalised communities from work and, in some way, excluding them from pride in their history of being working people.

In 1961 51% of working age people in employment in the west of Scotland were employed in industrial production, most of these in Glasgow and the Clyde valley region. This number declined by nearly two thirds by 2006.[14] Despite this contraction, Scotland's manufacturing industries contributed £12.5 billion to the UK economy in 2015 with Glasgow's manufacturing base contributing 8.6% of this total, in excess of £1 billion.[15] Glasgow's postindustrialism has been extensively catalogued and great emphasis is placed on the loss of heavy industries, notably ship building. The loss of economic activity along the River Clyde serves as a constant reminder of the dramatic and difficult changes imposed on the city, not least because of the maintenance of pieces of industrial infrastructure which now serve as heritage for the touristic gaze. The Clyde as such has become something of a metaphor for the city as a whole, a sort of post-work wasteland for after work drinkers.

The idea of postindustrialism has become something of a totem in the way we consider the city's identity too. But does it really have to be this way? Is it really an immutable fact that Glasgow doesn't make things any more, as unassailable a truth say, as the migration of geese in winter or the coming and going of the tide? Certainly the continued promotion of the alleged horrors of industrial culture, however false, have become part of the narrative of the city, part of its USP; everyone loves a good *Phoenix from the Ashes* story, but it may also function to paint the manufacturing culture of the past in only tones of grey, devoid of colour or light, thereby embedding resistance to renewing the city's manufacturing heart.

Contemporary manufacturing doesn't need to be grim at all. High-tech and digital business, energy, precision engineering, biomedical, pharmaceutical and drinks companies[16] as well as proposals to begin ship-building once more,[17] in combination with smaller-scale maker, artisan and boutique industries,[18] are advocated as legitimate objectives for contemporary Glasgow, in recognition that the city contains both the infrastructure and knowledge to reindustrialize and begin making at scale once again.

The social and economic context of all this is an apparently uneven landscape of employment in Scotland (and the UK

14. Walsh, D., M. Taulbut, et al. (2008). The Aftershock of Deindustrialisation: Trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe. Glasgow, Glasgow Centre for Population Health and NHS Health Scotland: p.18.
15. Scottish Government. (2017). "Scottish Annual Business Statistics." from www.gov.scot.

16. 2017, T. (2017). "The UK's digital tech ecosystem." from https://technation.techcityuk.com/about-this-report/.
17. Patrick, S. (2017). It is time to shine a light on Glasgow's manufacturing prowess. Glasgow Herald. Glasgow; Scott, K. (2017). Tycoon Jim McColl reveals bid to bring shipbuilding back to historic Govan docks. The Sunday Herald. Glasgow, Herald & Times Group.
18. Anderson, C. (2012). Makers: The New Industrial Revolution. London, Random House.

generally) with some areas characterized by considerable problems of worklessness[19] and multiple deprivation.[20] Associated with this are critical problems in addiction and mental health, violence, poor urban conditions and continued limitations to opportunity.[21] Such conditions negatively impact later life attainment.[22] Income inequality in Scotland 'is in the middle to upper range of post-industrial areas';[23] such conditions are associated with wider social, health and access problems. The need for meaningful, purposeful and adequately paid work is therefore clear. This is not to promote a return of the heaving, filthy and unjust environments of the past. Technological, social and legislative developments should be trusted to defend workers from inappropriate working conditions. But the positive socio-cultural impact of industry and contingent civic association on working class communities particularly, cannot be ignored and its loss is apparent in the type of social fragmentation, ghettoization and isolation we now witness in marginalized parts of the city. Work makes people classy. The extraordinary output of working class cultures across Scotland, from the steel, ships, seafood, jute, jeans, jam, *Oor Wullie*, oil, coal, cutlery, pottery, cloth, hosiery, cheese, glazes, puddings and porridge was spectacular for its diversity and amazing quality. And through

the commonality and communality of the experience, through shared enterprise and hardship, through making and doing, culture grew. Music, bands, choirs, poetic traditions, fairs, boxing, dogs, church, schools, care homes, theatre, hospitals, dress-making, home economics, allotments and plotlands, all of this and more than can be imagined or recalled came out of the civic association formed through industrial labour, in short, out of the act of dwelling in a place.

Postwar urban planning in Glasgow has been characterized by autocratic and unilateral decision making without reference to a sensitive (or intelligent) engagement with the holistic human needs of the residents, including the right of the poor to work; industry has been eviscerated. Research has established positive correlations between work and wellbeing.[24] Urban regeneration still seems to focus on the development of leisure space and housing with little space provided for employment for more marginal and less academic people. As such, the industrial strategy of the last seventy years has specifically and consciously marginalized the poor to the benefit of the wealthy; continued disengagement with ideas for re-industrialization gives the impression that this continues to be an objective of institutional actors. Strategies such as the Clyde Waterfront Scheme appear to privilege leisure and commercial/ office facilities over anything concerned with production.[25]

The agenda of Test Unit has emerged in part in relation to this post/re-industrial condition. The physical landscape of north central Glasgow is one of deep poverty with spaces of opportunity slowly opening up. The immediate environment is thus one of extreme disparities, with areas to the north statistically some of the most deprived in Scotland.[26] Deprivation in these

19. Watson, B. (2017). Workless households for regions across the UK: 2016. Office of National Statistics. London: 9.
20. Scottish Government (2018). "Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation." 2018, from www.simd.scot.
21. Glasgow Centre for Population Health. (2018). The Glasgow Indicators Project - Understanding Glasgow. Glasgow, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Council and University of Glasgow. www.understandingglasgow. com; Gunson, R., I. Hatfield, et al. (2016). Jobs and skills in Scotland: Addressing productivity, progression and in-work poverty. Edinburgh, IPPR Scotland.
22. Glasgow Centre for Population Health. (2018). Glasgow Centre for Population Health response to the Scottish Parliament Inquiry on Poverty and Attainment. Glasgow, Glasgow Centre for Population Health: 4.
23. Walsh, D., M. Taulbut, et al. (2008). The Aftershock of Deindustrialisation: Trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe. Glasgow, Glasgow Centre for Population Health and NHS Health Scotland.

24. Waddell, G. and A. Kim Burton (2006). Is work good for your health and well-being? London, Department for Work and Pensions 257.
25. Clyde Waterfront. (2018). "Vision and achievements." from www. clydewaterfront.com.
26. Scottish Government (2018). "Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation." 2018, from www.simd.scot.

areas function to dissuade participation in the civic life of the city. Urban renewal includes skin-deep oral consultations, often in the form of facile, therapeutic and manipulative faux-creative activities, on pre-ordained development proposals, sapping the strength from already splintered communities who are well aware that they've become a sort-of playground for better off creative practitioners to build their portfolios on. Alongside this are several centres for creative enterprises which, even with the best of intentions, do not and cannot be expected to address post-industrial urban problems. Through spatial prototyping, however, Test Unit foregrounds action as the principal mode of investigation whilst simultaneously supplying an antidote to institutional participatory processes. In so doing, it hints at another mode of praxis, which has potential on an urban scale to promote making, production and creativity at a small scale. By instigating the prototyping of physical things, small pavilions and installations designed and made by the participants with support by experts, Test Unit serves as a mechanism for exploring the potential of sites as discrete physical and social spaces and as potential loci for urban creativity. It promotes production and making as the foundation for knowledge. And it demonstrates that institutional systems and permissions are not prerequisites for creative action. In its current form Test Unit acts as a setting for broader discussions about the nature and potential of urban renewal; expanded and given greater leverage, it could in fact become a model for contextualised renewal based around the making of things, buildings, installations, art, saleable stuff, as an end in itself. Teaching people how to make culture in urban space, how to think creatively, to be creative makers has economic value. In addition, as a live making process Test Unit avoids the tendency towards abstraction that can declaw participatory practice and dissuade engagement with more marginal socio-economic groups.

Test Unit also operated at a number of scales and for a number of audiences. To use Arjun Appadurai, it enabled the scale jumping inherent to a 'deep democracy' approach,[27] allowing the participants, groups and institutional actors to engage with the programme towards plural ends - skills acquisition, social experience, promotion, site development and occupation and ideas generation, as well as visibility and community engagement. The programme, therefore, can be read as a cottage-scale example of how making and manufacture can be nurtured within unusual environments.

Still in its infancy, Test Unit cannot be seen as an end for renewal practices. Nor is it a suitable appendage to business as usual, nor should it be read as a 'meanwhile use' type of project. Rather, Test Unit suggests at another way of doing urban life, one which perhaps harks back to a time which accepted the logic of thoughtful making as a mechanism for the production of cultural, communal life. It begins the slow process of tooling people up to become makers who will act well, with thoughtfulness and generosity, towards the renewal of the city.
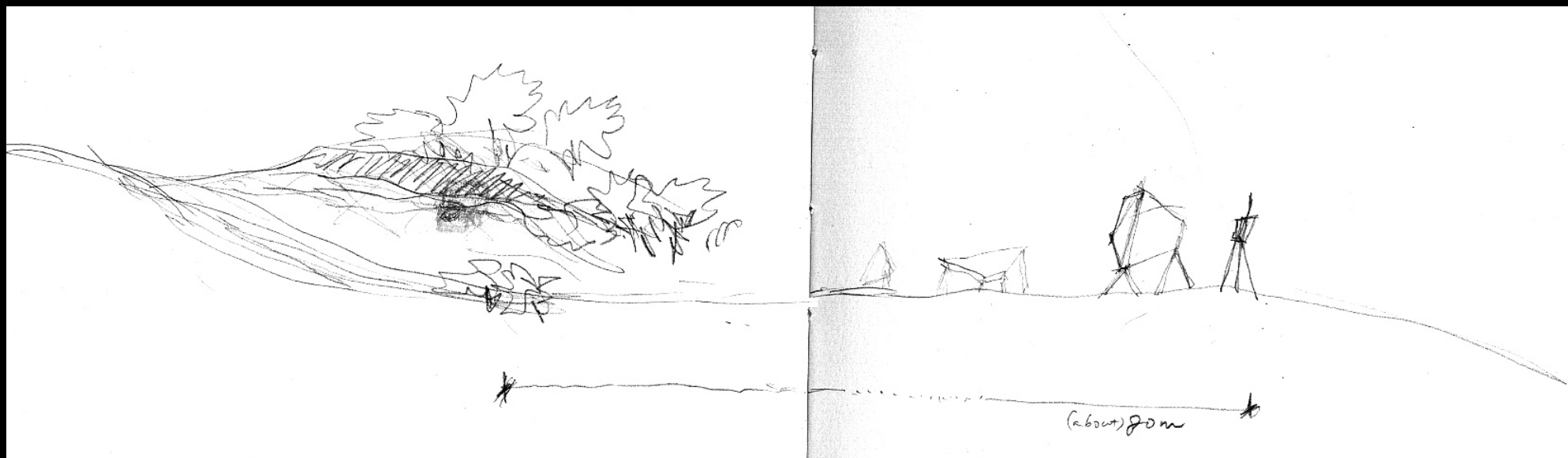
27. Appadurai, A. (2001). "Deep democracy: urban governmentality and the horizon of politics." Environment & Urbanization 13(2): 23-44.

SITE

A Provocation
B Reflection by
Kate Darby

5.SITI

(about) 80 m

PROVOCATION

The 'site' remains the critical aspect of the designer's space of creativity, against which the suitability and efficacy of their ideas are measured. The site, however, exceeds the physical space and must be understood to include to socio-cultural, economic, environmental and human dimensions, all at numerous scales. In so doing, the designer becomes conscious of the complex, multi-dimensional nature of urban space and develops a sensitivity to intervention. This does not preclude dynamism, originality or agility in design thinking but instead makes it more likely to occur, as the designer begins to solve project briefs in an holistic and process-orientated way.

The functionalist model of city planning of the postwar period was, in contrast, characterised by goal-orientated, top-down process which had very little space for grassroots engagement and influence. Vast areas of cities were destroyed and rebuilt along lines which seemed to have no origin within common ideas of urban space, dwelling, street and garden, but derived from narrow, objectivist and largely materialist notions of the human person. Resistance grew throughout the Sixties as civic associations were established specifically to resist the bulldozers of the state, through mutual support and common causes. Conservation of historic inner-city urban fabric was linked to the protection of the lives and communities such buildings and spaces supported and concerted efforts were made at community level to demonstrate the validity and value of both. The emergence of new forms of community organisations capable of enacting renewal at scale, particularly development trusts and community-based housing associations, and the growth of collaborative renewal practices, between community groups, private enterprise and third sector organisations, pointed towards another mode of practice.

Growing institutional recognition of the failure of the urban clearance and peripheralization programmes was thus highlighted. Policy began to change towards participatory engagement, foregrounding the relationships between social, material, historical and environmental aspects of a site as the bedrock of sustainable urban renewal.

REFLECTION
Architecture/making as a register of place / Kate Darby

Architecture can make visible things that are hidden. The more finely tuned a building is to its context the more it can be said to reveal about that place. Whilst globalisation has the effect of homogenising architecture, places continue to remain distinct from one another with differing climate, topography, cultural history, cultural present and so on. These attributes were key in determining the form of traditional vernacular building. The relationship of contemporary built form to its context is less direct. In a world of global communications and exchange, how can architecture be locally distinctive when the materials, skills, technology and knowledge are as readily available in Shanghai as in Hull?

Constructed Analysis

Over a number of years I have been working with Gianni Botsford to use the vehicle of annual design and make workshop, Studio in the Woods (SITW) to create small scale structures that in a precise way are a register of that place. We call this approach 'constructed analysis'.

Each piece is a structure that has been designed and built by a group of approximately 10 people over the course of 2-3 days. Our aim is to reveal something that is particular to that place, but it is important that we start without a pre-conceived idea of what kind of structure we are going to build. That should emerge from the act of measuring and making. In general, the more surprised we are by the result, the more successful the project. We start with a question, a tool or a task (or perhaps all three) and in most cases these are linked to a desire to record some aspect of either sunlight or daylight in a particular place.

The project 'Solar Mirrors' was constructed in the Isle of Wight. This island, located to the East of the Jurassic coast in the South of England is characterised by a seam of chalk that bisects it. The location for SITW 2010 was a hillside meadow dotted with outcrops of chalk forming dusty white cliffs in the landscape. We arrived at the site with a interest in how light might reflect off this bright white surface and we brought with us seven 40x40cm square pieces of mirror with which to experiment. The sun was shining when we first encountered the site in daylight, so we tried reflecting sunlight using the mirrors onto the cliff face from different angles and distances. It was surprising how bright the light on the cliff was even from a distance, but the really exciting discovery came from a mirror located approximately 90m away when the reflected square of light became a circle, a whole sun. As we watched, this reflected sun slowly tracked across the chalk face. We were witnessing the speed at which the earth was spinning. At this point that we decided what we wanted to construct: a form around 3 mirrors that would enable the phenomenon that we had just observed. A shading device that would keep the sun off the mirror until the moment had arrived for it to reflect off the chalk. Three times in one day the sun reflection would be allowed to track along the chalk cliff but then disappear. We set up the mirrors at the precise distance at which the square of light became a circle and at each allotted time measured the shape of sunlight approaching and reflecting off each mirror. One drawing remains to document the rudimentary but accurate enough method of locating and recording these dimensions.

Having measured the space of sunlight we had to solve the practical problem of how to build these complex shapes from the materials that we had available whilst making a myriad of design decisions: should the structure of the shades be internal or external? How should they be clad? Should the boarding be waney edge or sawn? The test in each case was to understand whether a particular outcome was necessary for the legibility of the idea. If not, then the most pragmatic approach would be taken. In that way there emerged a nice relationship between,

on one had the constraints resulting from this unique event: 10 mostly unskilled people, hand tools, local timber, 2 days and on the other hand the clarity of an idea: to construct the space of a short period in time.

Constructed Analysis is inherently site specific. It is an act of making that in some ways is more akin to archeology than to design. The phenomena that we make visible are already there. Our job is to discover it and to curate a response.

The structures that result can be interpreted in different ways. It is important to us that they are at a scale that can be occupied, they are not tools but spaces, wayfinders, markers that might suggest how a landscape could be navigated or occupied. Most recently we constructed an occulus in a woodland in Bath which became a gathering space filled with all the available daylight, aligned with a hole in the canopy. The solar mirrors created objects in a landscape that were interconnected in a meaningful way. Our first SITW piece, Solar Cloud was a structure that located a place to find sunshine in a shaded woodland on a specific day.

The context in which these projects have so far been constructed has been rural England. However, this process could be a vehicle for uncovering characteristics of any place. It reveals simple elemental relationships that could form the basis of an urban plan, a landscape plan or a building strategy.

The speed with which the interventions take place force us to be economical with our means. We are short on time, material and tools, we have to work with what we have got. When the piece is acting as a measure, its resolution is important. If the resolution is too high (too detailed or too precise) we do not have the time, material or expertise to construct it, if it is too low (too imprecise) it is not legible. Getting the balance right is normally the first key design decision. When forced to focus on the essential, very quickly a hierarchy of ideas is established. This is good training for larger more complex projects.

One of the constraints, the material from which our

interventions are made has become increasingly important. Using material from the site instead of a generic palette from the local builder's merchant has a huge impact on the appearance and tectonics of the outcome. And perhaps more importantly it reinforces a connection to that place.

There is a level of personal engagement through making which locates the participant. Discoveries are made through the act of making that cannot be anticipated in the code space of an architectural drawing. Using this methodology we hope to create an architecture that is place specific and that begins to reflect the extraordinary variation and richness that occur in the natural world around us.

Constructed Analysis is a method of live enquiry developed in collaboration with architect Gianni Botsford and applied through the Studio in the Woods summer school programme.

6.DIS RUP- TION

PROVOCATION

The practices of post-industrial city regeneration have become formulaic, characterised by a small number of very similar spatial and commercial-cultural strategies used to reinvigorate urban fabric. Orientated towards the production of gentrified neighbourhoods which will support the kind of leisure-based lifestyles deemed appropriate for twenty-first century communities of creative, agile, hot-desking, dressed-down practitioners, supported by relentlessly promoted city branding exercises, there appears ever decreasing space in the city for genuine, non-institutionally 'visioned' alternative creativity. Further, mandated creative 'quarters' exclude large swathes of enterprises which cannot meet overhead costs in such reinvigorated areas. In addition, strange and byzantine processes of procurement ensure regeneration is overseen by a select group of design practices. In this way, an orthodoxy has emerged in regenerative processes which precludes the very thing – creative thinking – it proposes to promote. The idea that creative people can be operationalised towards essentially neoliberal spatial planning objectives is difficult enough, although sufficiently widespread to evidently be at least partially true. How, then does an artist act with integrity and towards environmental justice? What can they do and what is beyond the pale? How can designers be good?

REFLECTION
Participation in Place: Using the act of making to investigate and articulate the nature of a condition / Lee Ivett

Within the fields of urban design, architecture and community practice there is an increasing realisation that the mere beautification of a physical environment does not, on its own, create a sustainable, active or vibrant place. What most communities need is a physical environment that provides an invitation to act and interpret; people want to experience, participate in and consume the productivity, creativity and activity of each other whilst also developing their own agency.

Despite a growing appreciation of the role of participation and 'co-production' within community development and regeneration these processes are often applied to communities rather than generated from within. Quite often a 'development agenda' is already determined and the role of the community as a participant in this process is as a consultee rather than an instigator or critical actor. In this scenario the community gain a 'sense of ownership' in relation to the process and its outputs instead of actual ownership. These processes often place an emphasis on delivering new, permanent physical infrastructure as a means of improving a condition but tend to be applied without the development of accompanying activity or the resourcing of a programme that can sustain it. This new infrastructure will often take the form of a new community centre, arts centre or public realm with its potential use based on an assumption that activity and programme is not possible without a suitable standard and quality of infrastructure - the 'build it and they will come' model of regeneration.

Programme and regular activity is essential for any public building or public space to be successful. This can be facilitated by the activity associated with surrounding buildings and

environments (cafes, shops, thresholds, routes etc.) or it can be formally arranged and facilitated (performance, markets, carnival, display etc). A truly sustainable and successful place will often be enlivened and activated through a combination of both. Creating and testing potential activity and programme provides a more organic and a more robust way of generating a need for critical infrastructure, whereby instead of investing large financial capital in a project that essentially speculates on its potential success we instead incrementally develop and test activity and evolve the infrastructure and capacity required to support that activity. This method employs the idea of 'learning through doing' and creates a process where both programme and place are prototyped and developed symbiotically in a constant cycle of action, reflection and response. The prototype becomes the method though which a range of possibilities within a community can be tested at a scale and degree of complexity that is relatable to the skills and capacity of local people. The role of the architect and designer is to introduce beautiful, useable, well considered and tangible interventions that can facilitate the type of activity the community wishes to test. The potential for participation in the manifestation of the object creates other opportunities to share knowledge and build skills and confidence.

Over several years Baxendale Studio has developed these methods of live action and making as a means of both embedding ourselves and participating in the life and condition of a place. This is enables us to:

a. Test/prototype potential desires and possibilities that emerge through participation with people and place
b. Document, engage and register the nature of a place and its people

Prototyping Public Space
A project we recently delivered in the Pollokshields area of Glasgow, in collaboration with artist Rachel O'Neil, tested and demonstrated the potential of collaboration between architect,

artist and community to activate an unused space as a testing ground for the development of programme and place. The Pollokshields Playhouse project provided an opportunity to create an environment that became a catalyst for the ideas and agency of local people. Regardless of age, gender, sexuality, wealth, knowledge and ability it was an open, safe and supportive space for people to pursue their own creativity and develop their individual and collective capacity.

The premise and ethos of the *Pollockshields Playhouse* was simple but extremely rare, a place to 'play' and learn through doing. The *Playhouse* suggested a method of creating conversations within a community that always resulted in action. People had the very real opportunity to not just suggest an idea but to act on that desire, test it and develop it. The *Playhouse* was an almost entirely unique project insofar as its programme and development were not predetermined; it developed naturally and organically in response to the contributions of those who engaged with the project.

Because both an artist and architect led project, the *Pollokshields Playhouse* offered an alternative view of how 'culture' can be utilised as a vehicle for transforming people and place. Generally, within urban renewal projects, culture is applied *to* a place, with some opportunity for participation permitted. Presented as an elite and complex activity, the production and comprehension of culture needs be taught through opportunities to consume it and participate in it. The *Playhouse* provided people with the opportunity, the tools, the knowledge, the infrastructure and the support to create culture from within the existing life of a place and to create it through multiple forms and mediums. The level of variety in the creative output at the *Playhouse* was what ultimately pleased me the most; swing dancing, stained glass making, raves, den building, performance art, visual art, listening to records, drawing dinosaurs out of rubble, cinema, food, sculpture… all unexpected, all grassroots, all delightful, generous and ambitious.

The *Pollokshields Playhouse* has affirmed my belief that every community should have such a place as an essential form of civic amenity. This form of amenity should be just as essential as the baths, the library and the school; a place where ideas and agency are encouraged rather than dismissed, where risks can be taken and creativity supported; a truly democratic space that encourages a community to create its own future rather than accept the one it is given.

A Register and Documentation of Place

Over the past ten years the terminology and practice relating to engagement, consultation, co-production and participation has become more than just commonplace; it has often become uncritically normative. Contemporary consultation and engagement practice create abstract and unfamiliar scenarios that remove both the inquisitor and participant from the literal reality of a condition. These consultation scenarios often involve creating maps, models and games for participants to engage with as a device for coaxing information out of them. This kind of consultation is often presented as empowering when, in reality and even at its most impactful, it rarely transcends entertainment.

Community consultation increasingly adopts processes and attitudes which appear to emotionally coerce members of the public into providing information and knowledge through obscure exercises in mapping, game playing, post-it-notes and questionnaires, later to be disseminated back to the community by community engagement professionals as banal phrases and pithy hashtags. In response, Baxendale Studio has attempted to develop alternative forms of engagement and enquiry. Instead learning within the context of the contrived realities of contemporary participatory practice - through an enforced collection of words, pictures, phrases, sketches - Baxendale's work is a process of participating in many aspects of a place through making to create an embedded and responsive process of critical and creative enquiry. Through the application of

this method we gain knowledge through experience. These experiences are very simple in their application and utility; we use local shops and amenity, we spend time in parks and pubs, we attend events, functions and consume the culture of a place as it exists in the present. We buy a coffee, we spend time in peoples' homes and within the places they work. We converse. We Enquire. We observe.

The act of considered and critical observation of people's behaviour and the impact of this behaviour on the visual amenity of place presents another form of documentation. Capturing evidence of behaviour and the impact of this behaviour not only reveals the existing physical and visual condition but also reveals desire, frustration, conflict, oppression, agency and ideas. In some cases, these characteristics are implicit rather than explicit but always revealing. This type of analysis reimagines the built environment as a now ubiquitous post-it-note; we believe that the marks, scars, reactions and interventions created by the actions of individuals, collectives and institutions create a story of place that can be read and interpreted as if they were chapters in a book. The documentation and interpretation of this physical narrative then reveals desires, needs, functional and dysfunctional behaviours. To act as a participant in the existing life of a place and to observer that condition creates insight and knowledge that isn't predictable and which is genuinely learnt through experience instead of being taught.

Riverside Solidarity, a recent project undertaken by Baxendale in collaboration with artists and activists, demonstrated and explored the idea of a temporary object as a means of registering people and place. Using found material relevant to two locations we created small spaces of sanctuary intended to engage with the conditions and people of each location. Our work delivered two temporary interventions that we utilised as as a tool that would force us to register and document the contested post-industrial condition of the Govan and Gdansk shipyards. The first installation was built on the derelict Govan Graving Docks

using 9cm thick rope that we found on the site. The installation was used as a tool to document how the site is occupied informally by a range of actors, including local young people who use the site as an informal playground, photographers and a refugee integration group. All these groups assisted us in the building of the structure in a variety of ways. The finished piece provided two unique places to sit and engage with the landscape; one seat facing symbols of Govan's past and one seat facing symbols of Govan's future. After completion of the artefact we continued to engage with the young people who had assisted and then adopted the structure and who said that, once they lost interest in the structure, they would set fire to it.

The opportunity to make a parallel project in Gdansk created an opportunity to test this mode of architecture as a tool for registering a place in a foreign context but with similar conditions. Over four days in Gdansk, we recreated the form and method of the intervention delivered in Govan, finding and using old shipping rope in the possession of an artist collective that occupied a former bakery within the shipyards. We then worked collaboratively to create a place of shelter and enclosure that referenced the three current modes of re-occupation of post-industrial space in Gdansk: artists occupation of vacant property, the state sponsored construction of large cultural institutions and the development of new private housing for profit.

The realisation of both installations in Govan and Gdansk produced several key insights. We found that:
1. work of this type creates curiosity through live, visible action that invites conversation, engagement and participation with and from local people.
2. the act of making within a defined condition coupled with the challenge of sourcing material and/or labour locally forces local resources to be both mapped and experienced
3. the possibility of changing the manner in which people perceive and utilise a space is tested and documented. In Govan those who had participated in the making decided to destroy the object which was a continuation of a behaviour and action that they regularly enacted within the Graving Docks. In Gdansk participants and local people adopted and maintained the structure using it as a place for shelter and rest.
4. work of this type identifies informal actors and users of a space who might feel marginalised by other consultation methodologies.

Baxendale creates objects and things in order to enact and embed permanent and sustained change. Changes in behaviour at an individual and an organisational level. The small and the temporary is a mode of change that is immediate and tangible, is an opportunity to display agency, amend a condition and shift the social/cultural or economic dynamic of a place. For people who have been consulted to within an inch of their lives and promised big change and big ideas that they may have informed but will never own, it is an incredibly enticing and powerful new mode of practice.

Pollokshields Playhouse

A Provocation
B Reflection by Amica Dall
and Lee Ivett

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PROVOCATION

Since the 1960s urban renewal practices have been characterized by an enhanced consciousness of the role and rights of communities as they relate to institutional objectives for urban change. The capacity of any given person or social group to affect mainstream architectural and design practice has been a recurring theme in architectural discourse for a very long time, with efforts to demonstrate not only the ethicality of such a position, but also its essential normativity, as seen in the growing fields that reflect on indigenous and non-professional cultures' self-guided social and creative practices. The study of the epistemological divide that separates the lay from the professional is of increasing interest, particularly in less developed contexts where external, professionalised agencies are challenged by engagement with modes of being and knowing different from their own. Ways of knowing are not uniform across the social landscape of the global north either, and this presents something of a challenge to the production of meaningful, pluralistic urban and architectural space. How, then, can the designer intervene justly, in ways that respond to other knowledges, practices and cultures?

Issues of agency are bound-up with these epistemological differences. Theories of power have increasingly recognised its relational nature and its 'three-dimensionality' has been used as a framework to interrogate and understand the production of knowledge in non-professional social and material processes. Further, it has been used to develop modes of engagement which work with existing indigenous practices. By genuinely foregrounding non-formal knowledge rather than using it as an aesthetic wash, professional practices have been developed which promote and support relationship, communication and connectivity and from these, power. But! Can it be taught?

REFLECTION
Educating Agency /
Amica Dall and Lee Ivett

Extracts of a conversation via Whatsapp between Amica Dall and Lee Ivett concerning the role and form of education in developing the capacity to act

LEE: I'm initially trying to figure out how to describe the idea of 'teaching agency'. It sounds patronising to suggest that people might need to learn ways to act or to simply try things, but a loss of individual and collective agency seems to be ever more apparent throughout society and appears to have a dehumanising effect.

AMICA: One of the ways this is talked about in educational theory is an idea called 'locus of control'. The basic idea is that it's possible to measure, through testing, how strong a sense of your own potential agency you have.

On a spectrum of highly internal - you think that you are in control of most things that happen to you, to highly external - you think that external circumstance controls most of what happens to you.

How you score on a locus of control test at age 7 is a really good predictor of life satisfaction across a huge range of factors in midlife; which backs up your idea.

LEE: That sense of your own agency is interesting. We seem to have evolved a society that suggests successful living constitutes a reduction in the amount of actions you need to take for yourself. Most people now work towards being able to pay for things to be done for them as a means of 'feeling successful'. The cumulative effect is greater anxiety, confusion, social detachment, a loss of basic skills and a diminished sense of choice and possibility.

AMICA: Whilst your agency in some things decreases you certainly gain power in other areas. For example; sending an email is almost free, people with normal jobs can afford air travel etc.

LEE: I wonder then if we have lost the idea that it's permissible to act without the fear of humiliation or recrimination. In architecture and design most people working or operating within these professions are people with some form of privilege or power and I think that the extent to which someone has capacity is related to different forms of privilege and power.

AMICA: Yes! But not necessarily attached to privilege but privilege of many kinds is good at breeding those conditions, arguably to devastating effect.

LEE: I've started to consider that a possible and core aspect of my own work has been sharing privilege or aspects of my own privilege. I used to think it was knowledge and skills I was sharing and making accessible but now I think it's also privilege

I have access to a whole lot of things and experiences that many people are denied access to

That, ultimately, is my 'privilege' I suppose

AMICA: yes, yes, it's unusually easy for some of us…and that is a deep injustice

LEE : It is, because that injustice is an accident of birth, the nature of the condition that you are born into and to what extent those conditions deny access to possibility.

AMICA: Well I do wonder about that; whether the new kinds of possibilities are different in some way from acting on the world which immediately surrounds you, and feeling it responding to you. It's a very intimate dynamic world forming relationship, whether you are talking about material or social action.

Maybe the capacity to act through abstraction doesn't make or form you in the same way, I guess it might be related to being tied to a place, in the broadest possible sense of place.

LEE: I am starting to believe that the abstract world is one that is created as a means of avoiding the real one rather than a means to understand or explain it.

AMICA: Well created to understand or engage with the concrete, but increasingly becoming a place to escape, to avoid. Without the roughness, surprise and otherness of the concrete.

LEE: Learning through doing and situating the act within a real situation of live and fluid conditions then avoids avoidance. In this situation reaction, response and a considered and creative analysis of one's own actions becomes the generator of knowledge and learning.

AMICA: Certainly placing yourself in the world and starting to reach into that which is outside of yourself although I don't know that 'live build' type stuff is necessarily or always good.

LEE: I've struggled to explain that the value of 'live build' is not in learning how to make but that in the act of making, in a 'live' condition, we force ourselves to engage in multiple scenarios within the real world. The learning is then about how that act of making becomes a means of registering and documenting.

AMICA: Is it also about learning the value of labour? A way of realising that everything around you that is constructed and what that means in human effort.

LEE: I think the idea of graft and endeavour is interesting and something that has also become diminished and perhaps demonised.

AMICA: yes

Glenn Adamson - among others I'm sure - argues that the disregard for manual skill is founded on and fired by class prejudice

LEE: It's another aspect of life where success is increasingly defined as being related to maximum return for the least 'physical' effort

AMICA: what is? construction?

LEE: No, labour, or manual effort and graft.

AMICA: It's a funny thought because we have to be careful not to accidently pander to a romantic idea of graft, industry and clas.s

LEE: I don't think it's romantic to recognise that acts of individual and shared physical endeavour might be mentally and physically rewarding.

AMICA: No it's not

LEE: I'm interested in why many people can't even conceive the possibility of taking small and simple acts anymore. Either because they believe the knowledge/skills required aren't available to them or because they are fearful of acting without permission.

AMICA: I think you are right, I'm interested in the same thing, but I have a different idea about the problem, in the sense that if you get as far as forming an idea of what you might do, fear can hold you back and fear of failure as much as fear of punishment

LEE: And many people that we might engage with, either students or just 'lay' people can't conceive of acting at a large scale but don't believe smaller and more immediate and more tangible acts are permissible. I suppose I come at this from two perspectives/positions. One being the belief that there are always small and immediate acts we can take to improve the status quo and the other being that learning through doing and testing ideas is a useful way of developing capacity and knowledge

AMICA: you make contexts in which things can be learnt, and that learning is taken full possession of, which is utterly different from the idea that most people have of knowledge-making.

LEE: And in terms of being a student of impacting the built environment then you go study architecture.

AMICA: right

LEE: But what that teaches you about how to impact the built environment appears to be quite limited and quite abstract in lots of way which can actually limit what you might need to learn and the context within which you need to learn it to change architectural or public space in useful ways.

The importance of examining and then looking to change the conditions we operate in is absolutely critical. Assemble and Baxendale go further than just designing objects and

places. We've both created or 'designed' entities, modes of dissemination, organisations, processes etc

How do you teach even the importance, if not the method, of that within a design or architecture context?

AMICA: well it's partly about knowing the limits (and therefore the real strength) of design. Somehow hovering between an idea it can do everything and an idea that it's impotent and easily over thrown.

LEE: I wonder what the role of education is and what a suitable learning environment is for building someone's capacity and confidence to act and how to do so responsibly? I'm not sure an architecture or art school in their current forms is the right place, hence the desire to create initiatives such as Test Unit.

AMICA: They could be though. The relative infrequency with which they enable that kind of thinking and acting isn't intrinsic to the form, I also think you don't need to do 'live build' type stuff to achieve that; I learnt that through reading and being taught to read rigorously.

The increasing financial pressure on students makes it hard for education to open up of a space for thinking that it was for me and for some of the people I work with. This often leans us towards training rather than education .

LEE: If you add a layer of critical enquiry, creative thinking and reading alongside training then are we getting somewhere? or is that what university or art school thinks it is.

AMICA: Something to do with establishing independent thought?

Whether that's proportional or critical?

LEE: I think establishing the ability to figure things out for one's self; a component of that might be independent thought. In its simplest form this might constitute problem solving , but then I'm also interested in how you teach an ability to determine and identity the problem in the first place.

AMICA: Feeling implicated is important, I guess it's really a way of being in the world. So that learning is mimetic and supports a

longer, lower intensity kind of teaching.

I guess I'm somewhat informed by the habits of other disciplines in this.

Material culture studies I guess, although loosely and also more literature / critical theory.

[…] using the techniques / approach of 'practical criticism' to engage with environments.

It's a way of paying attention, of holding only what you have in front of you in mind, building careful links to elsewhere. Or at least to describe it in a way it can be understood as method or practice.

I think getting out of the mind-set that you are treating problems, so in arch school, which I really have very limited knowledge of, I think maybe that doubles up. The solutionism of the industry combined with the pressure to have an idea.

LEE: Well I think maybe architecture school asks the pupil to solve problems that are extremely contrived….

AMICA: but somehow even the idea of solving…

You have to be humane and to partake but places don't have solutions, lives don't have solutions, lives together in places don't have solutions.

It is also about humility. You can act with confidence, decisively, emphatically, but you also must know that you don't know and can't know what will happen because of what you do.

LEE: A sense that you're not allowed to 'act' or a perception that you don't have the skills/capacity/knowledge to act is extremely dehumanising.

AMICA: Yes, yes, two things at play here; mode of attention and capacity to act. When it comes to what holds back action, or the belief in the possibility of action, or the space to imagine what action might be or indeed the kind of learning we were chatting about earlier

Your key question is… Can we teach agency?

I'd say no

I'd say however, we can be part of creating conditions in

which someone or a group of people might be more likely to believe in the possibility that things might be other than they are, and it might be possible to be actively involved in changing them

everyone has this capacity and lives it to some degree and we are all constantly learning new ways our minds have shaped the world and how we might intersect that.

LEE: Well I hope that is where Test Unit is at or at least trying to get to in terms of its application and impact and is probably and appropriate point at which to wrap up this conversation.

OUTSIDE THE ACADEMY

A Provocation
B Reflection by
Neil McGuire

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PROVOCATION

Further and higher education cannot provide the full range of design practices possible through non-formal, agile and single-issue organisations and groups. New educational developments have sprung-up in response to increasingly pluralised demographics and increasingly discerning, 'bespoke-style' consumer markets, as well as in response to post-institutional public discourse. Learning outwith the academy presents possibilities and problems, therefore, at both practical and conceptual levels. Should education be provided through such instruments? Is it not simply the marketization of learning, and therefore does it not simply privilege the already privileged? How is quality assured? And what of oversight? Are non-formal education experiences educational (in the traditional sense) at all? And if not, what function do they serve? How do such programmes get designed? What are they trying to achieve and why? Can they achieve it at all, or are the radical agendas of non-formal programmes destined to come up short? Increasingly, such programmes are supported by institutional educational bodies, however, providing a gloss of credibility and impact to the design of learning programmes. Questions of agency therefore emerge; who is designing what and for whom?

Glasgow's recent urban history is dotted with examples of grass-roots activism. Institutionalisation has often followed, as civic authority seeks to instrumentalise public energy towards civic goals. Non-formal educational groups are not numerous in Glasgow but in response to a perception that formal modes of education are not addressing key aspects of contemporary postindustrial urban life, and top-down approaches to this problem ignore key insights, activities and enterprises are emerging to fill gaps in knowledge.

REFLECTION
Twin Paradoxes (Outside and Inside the Academy) / Neil McGuire

'A School is a Building with a School in it' writes designer Paul Elliman.[28] What he's getting at is that there is nothing particularly 'school-ish' about school buildings or spaces, other than to say they support the core activity of a school - school as an active 'doing' word rather than noun - be that learning, teaching or a combination of both.

When thinking about the place of creative education in a contemporary local context, it is difficult to avoid framing this in the emerging political and economic narrative in which it finds itself. It's important to do that - to recognise the conditions that we exist within - but we also need to be alive to its subtleties. When the mechanisms of mainstream school, college and university education increasingly answer to a transactional neo-liberal logic - of skills (in return for payment and debt) and 'employability' in a job-based economy that might not even exist in twenty years' time - people naturally become more interested in possible alternatives. To reflect on the role of initiatives such as Test Unit, we're going to entertain the two key paradoxes that are at the heart of this debate, and in the process, raise some questions for the future of the Academy, and initiatives outside of it.

Paradox 1: Simples Structures = Complex Outcomes

In an environment that is increasingly mediated (student as consumer, 'this is what you put in, this is what you get out'), it is becoming increasingly difficult to be responsive within the academy; by responsive I mean being able to entertain the following ideas: that all students are different and might have quite different interests and needs; that learning is a layered incremental process (and more often lurches, rather than follows a smooth trajectory); that as both a student and teacher (and we all oscillate between these roles all the time) responding to (being alive to) new knowledge and insights is an important part of any learning process; that surprise, the unknown and the unexpected are all vital parts of any creative process.

In the academy, curricula now need to be clearly and explicitly stated at the start of a year or course and teachers are contractually obliged to deliver across a set of pre-articulated 'learning outcomes'. In order to deliver on this promise, the structures and personnel required to administrate these functions have increased massively in recent years. To paraphrase my grandmother, the academy's increasingly bloated strata of administrators and managers 'know the performance metrics of everything and the value of nothing'. What this conspires towards is a systematised and compartmentalised learning environment where encounters and experiences are increasingly over-managed and deterministic. This in turn squeezes out chance encounter, the ability for students to seize control of their own journey and the time and space for staff and students alike to respond to the conditions in which they find themselves. To use a crude analogy, what used to be akin to inter-railing (you knew roughly where you were going and the method of travel and roughly how long for, but had an open ticket and could take detours and diversions, or lengthen stay-overs as you saw fit), is more like a package holiday cruise, with fixed schedule of stop-offs and visits, which everyone experiences the same, regardless. This reduces agency through the over-peddling of a supplier/ consumer model and creates an environment where people who identify primarily through their creative agency are increasingly funnelled through a frustrating and limiting set of over-complicated 'learning experiences'. Without a doubt, many of these changes are the result of external global factors - the sausage factory that is the

28. Choi, B., Wieder, A., & Armstrong, Z. (Eds.). (2011). Generous structures. Utrecht: Casco.

Bologna Process[29] and the pan-European need for all courses and learning to articulate across nations - realising an illusory (and in itself paradoxical) notion of increased 'mobility' and 'choice' for the consumer, but choosing from a diminished range of options.

Conversely, what might happen when these structures are stripped back? I think it was the artist Claes Oldenburg that said 'the best art school is a warm room'. It was my friend Rhona who put me on to this; it struck a chord as it confirmed a gut-instinct that the best art school might simply be a group of people in a room together, left to their own devices, equipped with tools and materials for making and their own imaginations and knowledge.

The academic Alberto Toscano put it bluntly when he suggested that "around us the new is dying, and the old cannot be born - scores of tiresomely new-fangled schemes, reforms, targets and initiatives continue to be aggressively rolled out, in observance of the twinned cults of austerity and innovation, while the simplest and oldest practices of reading, teaching, writing, studying are menaced with obsolescence, or travestied beyond recognition."[30]

So maybe it's time to reclaim some simplicity, in the search of more complex and more interesting outcomes. Other disciplines are already learning from this and applying the logic to all sorts of other fields, from computing to science. The 'agile' adage goes that starlings follow a simple set of rules - fly south, keep going, don't crash in to each other - and produce the most complex murmurations. Tax law on the other hand, or any other complex set of bureaucratic procedures, frequently produce stupid and erroneous results (or maybe it's just me).

29. To read more on this topic, E-flux Journal 14 is a good starting point: www.e-flux.com/journal/14/61300/education-actualized-editorial/
30. Chicago, J., Hansen, S. M., & Vandeputte, T. (Eds.). (2015). Politics of Study: Judy Chicago, Andrea Fraser, Melissa Gordon & Marina Vishmidt, Brian Holmes, Gal Kirn, Suhail Malik, The New Cetre for Research & Practice, Gerald Raunig, Ruth Sonderegger. London: Occasional Table/Open Editions.

Paradox 2: Constraint = Freedom

It's easy (especially when one is a left-leaning liberal such as I) to become massively preoccupied with the minutiae of the forces we think are constraining our learning and creativity and to see these extra-curricular and outside-the-academy initiatives as an antidote. But in spite of this, art schools in the UK still seem to be places that cultivate dynamic, independent students. I'm not convinced that students are any less creative or ambitious than they have ever been. Could it be that the constraints of the academy actually provoke inventive responses and strategies from participants? And are we underestimating students' agency in this process? Are the resources that the academy can marshal (libraries, staff, workshops) the essential building blocks on which a creative education is built and these other concerns mere distractions? How can outside-the-academy initiatives ever hope to recreate the material resources that might be necessary to this type of learning experience? While we think that longevity is not necessarily a benchmark of success, does the reassurance that comes with knowing that the academy will most likely still be there next week, next month and for the next few years, bring with is a stability that allows creative thinking and skills to develop?

This thinking is emerging. It is by its nature messy - 'undisciplined' in the best sense of the word. As mentioned earlier, this is not to deny the overwhelming external factors being exerted on the academy, but to ask valid questions about how it responds. Does it simply acquiesce and accept what its given, or are there hybrid strategies that represent a way out? Could we somehow have our cake and eat it? A Feral Studio - the name under which I and various collaborators take part in projects like Test Unit - emerged within the academy, when I worked at the Glasgow School of Art - but now sits outside of it. It was a way of trying to ask some of these questions through an active process of doing and making things, inviting in as many guests and external voices as possible. It has had a foot in both camps, and

maybe the answers to these questions lie somewhere in this role of 'double-agent' — a way of entertaining both these paradoxes. Within this relationship it is interesting to think about what each thing could learn from or bring to the other. It would be easy to suggest that if there was a way of behaving parasitically, the extra-curricular could feed off the resources of the larger asset-rich host institution, and the host could benefit from some of the new thinking and liberated methods of the looser and more rangy interloper. But that would be over simplistic. The academy is full of radical thinkers and critical questions, and the extra-academy outfits have other resources of other types, perhaps way more than they often imagine. Either way, whether within or outside the academy, what is certain is that we need 'generous structures'[31] - that 'warm room' which supports and facilitates activity but doesn't dominate what might happen there - a school as a simple space - a scaffold within which we can realise learning primarily as environment rather than programme or building.

31. Choi, B., Wieder, A., & Armstrong, Z. (Eds.). (2011). Generous structures. Utrecht: Casco.

TEMPORARY

**A Provocation
B Reflection by
Phin Harper**

9.TEMPORARY

PROVOCATION

The use of the temporary intervention as a method for urban renewal and also as an outlet for emerging art, architecture and design practitioners to create work and develop their practice has become increasingly prevalent over the last ten years. Terms such as Stalled Space and Meanwhile Use have begun to institutionalise and commodify what was perhaps an interventionist and organic process into one that is used by large stakeholders to 'hold' a site until larger scale investment or larger infrastructural change can be applied. How does the temporary meaningfully act as a catalyst for permanent re-imaginings of place and shifts in individual, collective and institutional behaviour? Does it have value as architecture?

REFLECTION
Pop up / Phin Harper

"Before the millennium there was nothing, genuinely nothing for young architects." Catherine Slessor, the formidable former editor of Architectural Review declares "Back then there were all the awards for old farts: the RIBA Gold Medal, the Pritzker, the AIA Medal. You had to lumber on into your 60s or 70s before someone would tip you the wink. Young architects were seen as not having the experience or the critical mass to stake their claim to anything."

Once, architects could be comfortably into middle age, sporting wrinkles, offspring, and mortgages, yet still be described as "emerging." Architecture was accepted as a game for old hands over young guns. Unusual – amid a wider culture that has for decades venerated and preyed upon fleeting, ephemeral nubility – was architecture's lauding of age and experience. While lithe rising stars of music and fashion filled their evenings with wild parties, the new kids on the block of architecture would more likely read bedtime stories to their children and schedule prostate examinations.

"We created the Awards for Emerging Architecture in 1999 specifically for young architects," enthuses Slessor. "It struck a chord. In our first year we had 900 entries." Over the years, the awards acknowledged numerous then little-known designers, among them Bjarke Ingles, Thomas Heatherwick and Sou Fujimoto, now global stars. "Change happens from the bottom up" says Slessor, "the perspective of someone in their late 20s is going to be different from someone in their late 50s."

Something indeed changed. Since the turn of the millennium, the faces of emerging architecture have become dramatically younger as more and more awards have followed. Nearly every architectural institution globally now has some program directly targeting young designers for early recognition. Mixing the virginal myth of untainted youth with the appeal of

the authorial architect, we have spawned a new and voracious commodity: the young architect.

But there's a catch. Celebrated but exploited, young architecture is cheered on by the same forces which take advance of it. It's a brand that can grant some measure of seductive profile (and even win you the Turner Prize), but always alongside an implicit expectation of diminished pay in a marketplace hostile to the young.

The 2008 financial crash led to a deep slump in the built environment, pushing a wave of new practices to find work amid the downturn in temporary projects and arts initiatives. A generation of firms, including Studio Weave, We Made That, AOC, Practice Architecture, Baxendale, Assemble and others threw themselves into pop-up projects that found voice in a provisional aesthetic of temporariness.

The roots of the pop-up pandemic were partly political. The 2010 coalition government led an aggressive agenda of cuts. With little money to go around, small temporary projects, often self-initiated, became one of few ways young firms could find commissions. Yet in parallel, provisionality became a fetishised aesthetic in its own right. "Studio Weave was supposed to be on the BBC Culture Show with Assemble and Practice," recollects co-founder Maria Smith. "They shot the interview but then cut us. The producer explained that we were cut because our work 'looked too professional.' We didn't look like 'kids chancing it,' which was the story they wanted to tell. That provisional DIY aesthetic was the style of that period." The zeitgeist of austerity Britain, it seemed, liked the idea of young architects with work, so long as their hands were dirty.

The conflation of pop-up and youth is doubly frustrating. On the one hand practices yearning to have a crack at substantial permanent buildings are pigeon holded – doomed to a life of wielding Makita drills and two-by-four. On the other, the whole discipline of temporary projects is devalued but its association with inexperience. Pop-up could and should occupy a major role in urban development, planning and public architectural discourse rather than its fringe, frivolous position.

As an industry we desperately need to learn to prototype. No designer can simply squeeze an immaculate scheme into world like a magic goose popping out golden eggs. Great work takes time, numerous iterations and crucially failures.

Around 1.7 million hours of research and development go into launching a new model of Japanese car. With production runs of a million, the R&D cost is just $425 per vehicle but every customer benefits from the full 1.7 million hour design phase. A one-off office tower on the other hand can cost hundreds of millions of dollars, but with architects' fees at around 5%, enjoy just a few thousand design hours. This is the fundamental failure at the heart of the architectural method – we don't understand R&D.

Dyson made 5127 failed versions of their vacuum cleaner before the design was complete. Every single industry has some form of quick, effective prototype. Filmmakers shoot rushes, tailors make twarles, writers produce drafts. Architects? We make toy versions of our buildings literally hundreds of times smaller than the real thing using completely different materials and fill them with tiny plastic people from model railways sets. It is a flimsy shadow of a thorough ideas development process. Pop-up isn't perfect but suggests the routes to an alternative. Quick, cheap and lightweight – but with meaningful, tactile impact.

Permanent buildings are not a playground, especially not when you put plumbing, electronics and hundreds of families into them. But architectural creativity cannot happen in a vacuum. The antiquated notion of the lone genius who is struck by brilliance while sitting in the bath is nonsense. We need to try bad ideas out, sift the awful ideas from the diabolical ones. We need to know the value of failure.

Test Unit is a pop-up school. It is implicitly youthful and explicitly temporary. Yet it's presence in the landscape of architectural culture is bold and bright. Its studios are varied

and experimental. Its vitality is refreshing. Most importantly it is independent, having emerged from a loose network of collaborators rather than stuffy institution. Test Unit gives us a glimpse of what the industry might be like if the old guard stepped aside and allowed young architecture more space, both intellectually and urbanistically.

At least year's general election, the highest turnout for twenty years was driven by an unprecedented showing of young, normally apathetic voters. It seems clear that the young are waking up to a political conscience and are flexing their muscles. If architecture is the built manifestation of society's values, young architecture stands at the cusp of an opportunity to carry the standard of an as yet undefined new era – not by begging for scraps of work and fame from the high table of the old architectural priesthood, but by thrusting itself headlong into the melee of political change from which new architecture will be born.

EPILOGUE

10.EPI LOGU

EPILOGUE
Legacy, learning and impact

Test Unit sits within the context of a growing number of summer schools, many with a focus on live build as the key participatory tool. Programmes such as Hello Wood and Studio in the Woods all focus on a particular material culture, aiming to nurture an appreciation of the material and its architectural qualities, through a hands-on learning method. A social or multi-disciplinary agenda is less explicit with these schools. In contrast Test Unit's core aim of rethinking the way we develop our cities and public space through a considered programme of social engagement alongside design conception and testing is truly unique.

The two previous iterations of Test Unit saw a fundamental shift away from a focus on testing live methods of enquiry and response to examining the specific needs of a particular site. With the emphasis and direction of Test Unit now intrinsically connected to the needs of Civic House and the Phoenix Nursery site there's a potential danger that it becomes less agile and too formally attached to a singular and particular place where the intended outcomes become too narrow or defined. The most successful Test Unit briefs and projects are the ones where the nature and form of the outcome are not predetermined. The briefs that set up a particular method of enquiry, a theme to explore and a condition to address seem to create the more interesting outcomes and richer learning experience. The unpredictability of the outcomes of each group is a strength in terms of enacting a process of enquiry but makes it difficult to plan for what happens next. The opportunity for the facilitators to continue the development or analysis of their work beyond the single week of Test Unit would be one way of building in a legacy that is related to both method and place. In this scenario the facilitators would be required to critically analyse the outcomes of the week and utilise the evidence and outputs created to develop and describe

a permanent response.

A physical legacy of permanent intervention has always been fragile and proven difficult to achieve over the first two editions of Test Unit although having 'ownership' over Civic House and the Phoenix Nursery site now provides greater opportunity for permanent physical change. None of the things that we built during the first year's programme remain on the Bairds Brae site and little remains from second year either. This is not to say that Test Unit has been wasteful or profligate in terms of material or flippant in relation to ideas generated and the output of our participants. After the first year's event the material that we used was then re-used on other community projects in the city, the Pollokshields Playhouse project being one recipient and a more local project The Glasgrow Garden in Possil being another. For the latter project we relocated the Test Unit Hub structure that we had built and used it to create a permanent social and workspace for the community garden. All the other material in both previous editions of Test Unit has been recycled or stored for future use.

This brings us to a consideration of what kind of legacy is important year on year. Is it evidence of some form of permanent and tangible change in the condition of a place? Or is it the development and dissemination of new ideas that benefits the participants in terms of their learning and development of practice? Is Test Unit best suited to exploring alternative modes of practice within the fields of regeneration and education or attempting to test and propose specific solutions to a specific site? The material produced and gathered within this publication suggests its usefulness is most potent and effective as a means of developing and articulating alternative approaches and teaching these approaches to our participants.

Test Unit has thus far been most successful at bringing together a diverse range of actors, stakeholders, practitioners and learners who might not otherwise have engaged with each other. The agendas of all the collaborators are not always aligned but

that makes for a genuinely critical and diverse collaboration. This rich mix of stakeholders, supporters and interested parties is aimed at connecting the idea of 'bottom up' to 'top down'. It creates an opportunity for practice and method that's considered alternative and marginal to be recognised by and inform the thinking of the public and private sector.

The biggest impact that Test Unit perhaps has, is on its participants. A combination of action and access to an events programme that introduces participants to contemporary theory and best practice empowers, energises and inspires. An opportunity to be continually active for a week, for one's agency to be encouraged rather than denied and the chance to produce a tangible outcome appears to be quite a novel experience. Test Unit provides a safe, supportive and creative space for risks to be taken and new experiences to be had. This role of supporting the future growth of our participants' work and practice is where the most meaningful and certain legacy of Test Unit will be found.

TEST UNIT PROJECT DIRECTORY

11. DIRECTRY

Test Unit 2017

Like many cities, Glasgow has a wealth of vacant buildings and sites following industrial decline. As demand for space changes, we need to explore processes that are less capital intensive and quicker to respond to people and change. Test Unit 2017 was designed to explore issues of post-industrialisation through a process of live action and intervention at Civic House and it's adjacent site, Phoenix Nursery.

Civic House was acquired by Agile City to create a new learning space for progressive forms of city development and act as a hub for the Glasgow Canal area. Test Unit 2017 came at a unique point to shape it's future and begin the process of introducing it as a public space and resource. For Test Unit 2017 we aim to use this building and adjacent site as a live project. Test Unit will mark the beginning of the building's use as a public space and be a unique opportunity for participants to shape its future. The Test Unit 2017 theme of 'Occupying the Post-Industrial City' and corresponding units

have been designed so they can inform the development of this building and site, while ensuring there is relevance and learning outcomes that can be applied beyond this specific context.

Jason Bruges Studio, A Feral Studio, BAXENDALE, Valentina Karga, Assemble & TAKTAL all facilitated units responding to issues of lighting, occupation, communication, alternative economies and urban tourism.

The Test Unit 2017 public programme featured talks, demos and workshops from: dpr-barcalona, London Legacy Development Corporation, NDSM, National Theatre of Scotland, Le Grand Voisins, Assemble, RISOTTO, Recoat, Akiko Kobayashi, Glasgow Tool Library.

**URBAN BOTHY
Facilitator – Lee Ivett
(Baxendale Studio)**

Project Brief

As exploration of our industrial urban landscape becomes ever more popular what are the possibilities for small, unique and affordable modes of temporal occupation within our cities? Particularly those parts not usually considered amenable to traditional forms of tourism.

Outcomes

The urban bothy brought together a diverse range of participants representing community arts, local activism, landscape architecture, art, graphic design and architecture to conceive, develop and deliver a small place of reflection that could facilitate an overnight stay. The form, concept and purpose was not predetermined but evolved

concurrently as the group commenced work. There was minimal formal discussion and drawing; instead a continual process of ideas, testing, making and negotiation. The original brief to consider alternative forms of micro-tourism was evolved by the group into an intention that our structure should be used to educate the occupant on the history and impact of the adjacent M8 motorway, to act as a sensory register and to ultimately reconsider the motorway as a place worthy of worship. As architecture the urban bothy creates a small civic presence that acts as a landmark, a point or orientation and an invitation.

Participants

Rory King, Nils Aksnes, Zeba Aziz, Rachel Millar, Molly Gordon, Louise Nolan, Paul Ede, Freya Bruce, Aleksandra Czekaj, Issy Arnold

FACADES
Facilitator – Neil McGuire (A Feral Studio)

Project Brief
How do we read the city? What strategies can we use to design a communicative building? Using Civic House as a starting point, this unit will look at the façade and design interventions around the building to examine surface, layers, 2D & 3D, architecture as communication, inside and outside (and the space in-between).

Outcomes
After scoping the Phoenix Nursery site from a number of perspectives - micro, macro, historical - our first move involved removing parts of the perimeter fence. This simple direct action immediately made the space accessible from a number of directions and offered routes and pathways through the site. Working at a range of scales, a false-perspective sign is designed to catch the attention of passers-by and encourage them to examine the site from a range of angles. At the front and rear of the site the sign (typographic shapes which are simple and modular - based on the educational toys of the nursery that once stood on the site), is integrated into the patchwork of surrounding fences. A new elevated platform at the north-east corner of the site suggests multiple uses; a threshold, entry point, vantage point and possible performance area, referring back to Phoenix park and its bandstand which was once situated where the nearby M8 motorway now runs.

Participants
Kat Loudon, Andrew Beltran, Fiona Hunter, Sean Ardor, Oscar Park, Alessandro Marini, Fraser Yardley, David Grant

SPATIAL OCCUPATION
Facilitator – Amica Dall (Assemble), Rob Morrison (Taktal)

Project Brief
Using Civic House as a live case study we will explore themes of modular workspace, prefabrication, open source platforms, the commons, incremental development and financial models to realise these ideas.

Outcomes
Over five days of collective interrogation, and some individual common sense, it is understood that the commons are...

...a communally shared resource, how a group manage a resource collectively, a shared resource that can satisfy independent needs, no accident, the shared resource available to the collective determined by individual action, an agreement or a system that caters for common needs, a self-enforced system of resource sharing that results in benefit for all.

Common Block is a communal fire cooking kit. It connects people who live and work around Speirs Locks through collective construction and sharing food in public space. Many of the local businesses in this area can be linked through four strands – food, DIY, culture and outdoor activities. Common Block aims to connect these through principles of cooperation, exchange and management of a common resource. All events are free and open to all.

Participants
Grace Winteringham, Vlad Bodogan, Rebecca Sainsot-Reybolds, Lotte Kravitz, Alice Grant, Murray Morrant, Julian Vassallo, Matthieu Robin

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIES
Facilitator –
Valentina Karga

Project Brief
As Post-industrial society's continue to struggle with issues of resource scarcity, how can values of sharing and collaboration translate into alternative forms of economy? Our exploration will address this question in an attempt to build stronger and more resilient communities.

Outcomes
The Institute for Spontaneous Generation has been developed over the course of Test Unit to explore ways of building collaborative economies which question our current notion of wealth and value. Our name was taken from the ancient scientific theory that life (i.e. maggots) can spontaneously generate from sterile environments and non-living matter - we drew parallels between this and quantitive easing and money itself. Our institutes activities are split across three projects:

The Grub Economy – Our creative currency aims to bring people together for a spontaneous event. To create new bonds through communal activity.

Spontaneous Record – Through various forms of investment, whether financial, skill or time based, we developed a stakeholder owned publication that aims to increase dialogue with the local community. Civic House used to be Civic Press; a left-wing printing press. We are building on this sites history by proposing a new community owned publication.

The Paper Factory – We have recycled local paper waste to create new paper. By seeing waste as an asset instead of a burden we can consider innovative ways to build sustainable products that can then be used to kickstart new projects.

Participants
Lizzie Abernethy, Lewis Prosser, Brian Morgan, William McRoberts, Esme Armour, Naomi Rubbra, Anna Wachsmuth, Helen King, Chris Strachan

RESPONSIVE LIGHTING
Facilitator – Ellie Lakin (Jason Bruges Studio)

Project Brief
Using both internal and external spaces we will aim to animate the site and intrigue the public by exploring innovative light based methods, creating site specific, responsive and interactive environments.

Outcomes
Civic House is passed by many; cyclists, walkers, local residents, workers and dog walkers. The constant presence of the motorway, which dominates the soundscape, and the tranquil flow of water from the canal up the hill, make this a place of transit and an interesting area to reimagine. The concept of play, surprise and discovery was at the centre of our approach. Could we create a platform for Civic House to speak to the city? An architectural oracle? Ask a question and the windows will get back to you: No, yeas, maybe? Could we create a game to highlight the dialogue between the city and the building. Our test intervention uses sensors to track the movements of the passer-by and then change the colour and location of illumination within the 1st storey windows of civic house. Different sensors trigger different colours allowing the passer-by to use there own movement to determine the nature of the façade.

Participants
William Aikman, Heather Claridge, Ioana Lupascu, Kyle Mcaslan, Eve Mccann, Daniele Sambo, Roy Shearer, Ruudu Ulas, Vincent Rebers

Test Unit 2016

Test Unit 2016 delivered a week-long intensive art, design and architecture summer school and events programme, that saw 25 cross-disciplinary participants come together and over the course of a week transform a vacant and derelict site in north Glasgow into a public space. For Test Unit 2016 we took a site in Bairds Brae in North Glasgow, an area going through significant change.

Our aims were threefold:
—To prototype ideas in public space to inform urban development.
—Build capacity for participants to initiate future grass-roots projects.
—Place culture, people and education at the heart of an area going through significant change.

Participants divided into 4 groups, each group tackling a different aspect of the site and the city. From Monday afternoon to Friday evening each group worked independently to develop their ideas and projects to be showcased to the public on Saturday. A series of temporary physical, social, cultural and environmental interventions that prototyped future possibilities for a derelict site in Glasgow

In parallel to the week-long intensive summer school we had an evening events programme that questioned how our cities are designed and developed. ZUS (Rotterdam), Pecha Kucha, Turncoats Debate.

On the first day of the programme all participants collaborated together to establish a presence on the site by constructing an outdoor workshop, studio and social space for each of the groups to use on the site. The Test Unit hub was designed and pre-fabricated into components made out of standard timber and OSB sheet by Lee Ivett [Baxendale] before the summer school commenced. This communal 'barn raising' activity was used as a means of getting participants familiar with each other, the site, essential skills and setting the ambition and tone for the week ahead.

Following the summer school and documentation of the project, the materials and infrastructure have been reused to create a community growing space and outdoor play environment within Hawthorn Housing Co-operative; a social housing estate in the Possilpark area of Glasgow.

OCCUPATION
Facilitator – Lee Ivett (Baxendale Studio)

Project Brief

Bairds Brae creates a unique opportunity to revisit some of the fundamental contextual principles of human settlement as a means of creating community and ultimately public space. Our group will examine these conditions and design, develop and prototype an intervention that could support human occupation of the site at the scale of the individual whilst also creating an embedded public/civic role for the occupant on the site.

Outcomes

The project developed was titled 'Nettle Inn' - responding to the old 'Basin House Tavern' that used to occupy the site in the 1800s, which also contained a brewery and acted as social hub for people working on the canal on this key intersection site. The concept of the groups design was a 'micro-inn' - incorporating all the components of a tavern: service 'bar' protruding through the wall to engage passers-by on the canal path, preparation area for food and drinks (using foraged plants from the site) and a sleeping area above with views over the canal.

Participants

Lauren Coleman, Anna Rhodes, Yongwoo Lee, Rhea Martin, Emily Fribbance, Verity Hocking, Juliette Jego.

CONTEXT
Facilitator – Kate Darby
(Kate Darby Architects/
Studio in the Woods)

Project Brief
Regeneration often results in total erasure. Baird's Brae is a site that has undergone an amazing transformation from dense urban block to 're-wilded' woodland with barely a visible trace of its historic buildings. What is special and particular within this site and how can architecture simultaneously make this legible whilst enabling an entirely new occupation of this place? We will explore this question by 'constructing' our analysis to transform an aspect of the site into a spatial experience.

Outcome
The original corner entrance of the 'Old Basin Tavern' used to be a prominent building on this key canal gateway site. The concept of 'Ghost Wall' was to recreate the presence of this prominent corner, while adhering to the archaeological restrictions - without making any permanent fixings into the existing stone structure or digging into the ground. This structure then allowed members of the public to walk through the 'ghost' of the wall by creating a laddered pathway, and visual presence from the canal towpath and new entrance that invited people onto the site again.

Participants
Andrew Forbes, James Farlam, Mohammed Abualrob, William McRoberts, Gemma Holyoak, Janis Marsh

ALTERNATE REALITY
Facilitator – Neil McGuire
(A Feral Studio)

Project Brief
Could the site be reimagined as a place where people can find these alternate realities? On Bairds Brae there formerly stood a large cinema - a place where people would come and be transported,

through film, to numerous other parallel worlds. Traces of this cinema are now almost completely erased and overgrown. Could the site be reimagined as a place where people can find these alternate realities? Could the site be reimagined as connector to a 'parallel world'?

Can we create an intervention that encourages those that encounter it to think about and experience things in different ways?

Outcomes
As with any urban environment, there are layers of history about Bairds Brae, which may (or may not) help inform alternative futures. The group aimed to help people construct their own future of the site through providing a series of prompts or suggestive artefacts. These artefacts took the form of a series of postcards, signage, a memorial bench dedicated to the visit of Muhammed Ali to Oakbank Hospital that used to stand opposite the site, and a large billboard. Like the cinema screen that used to be on the site, billboards often communicate alternative worlds. The images chosen refer to Muhammad Ali's visit to the area and a still from the film 'Glasgow 1980' – a propaganda film made in 1970 that portrayed the optimistic future of Glasgow once the M8 had been fully installed - a hypocrisy that destroyed communities and severed the north of Glasgow from the city centre.

Participants
Abigale Neate-Wilson, Malcolm Murdoch, Veronika Kruspanova, Lily Asch, Irina Glinski, Neill Patton

CONNECTION
Facilitator –
Rebecca Davies

Project Brief
We will explore the concerns around connectivity in the area and how to mobilise action to communicate this abandoned and derelicts sites potential as a social space. A space to be reclaimed during Test Unit and an opportunity to demonstrate its importance and value in (re) kindling and (re) discovering the social bonds that once were made on the site when it was a pub, a social club and bingo hall.

Outcomes
The concept was the 'Bairds Brae Beacon' - an installation to connect with local community through the act of making and bringing people together. The form was inspired by combining the idea of a zoetrope (referencing the old cinema on site), a communal table for people to gather and a performance space. The zoetrope is turned by inserting wooden 'keys' into the poles that were distributed to local community groups with an invitation to join the opening party and participate in a workshop to create images for each of the 4 screens on the beacon structure.

Participants
Alex Misick, Alistair Wylie, Angus Stanley, Fredrik Frendin, Jennifer Argo, Laura McLeod, Zelier Boblier

12.CO
TRIB
TORS

Heather Claridge

Heather is an Urban Planner, Designer and Geographer with over 10 years professional experience. She has worked for Glasgow City Council since 2008 and within this time has lead on a wide range of regeneration and sustainability activities, including urban policy development and public space delivery. From 2011, she co-developed the internationally recognised Stalled Spaces programme and in 2014 supported Architecture & Design Scotland to deliver the project nationally. Since 2015, Heather has built creative partnerships within Glasgow's Canal Corridor to deliver initiatives such as the Land Art Generator Initiative. She has a particular interest in temporary urbanism and its role in long-term urban resilience, developed through research for her Urban Design MSc thesis at the University of Strathclyde in 2017. Heather's alternative approach to urban planning was recognised by the Royal Town Planning Institute in 2018 when she was awarded UK Young Planner of the Year.

Amica Dall

Amica is a founding member of Assemble, a collective whose work focuses on the social and material processes through which cities are made, producing architecture, art, urban design and research.

Amica has acted as a tutor, critic and examiner at Bartlett School of Architecture, Royal College of Art, Cambridge University, University of Gothenburg, Royal Danish Academy of Art and HEAD Genève, and has lectured on the political economy of architecture and the social role of design at ENSA Paris-Belleville, Yale School of Architecture, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, ETH Zurich, EPFL Lausanne, TU Berlin and Y-GSA Yokohama, among others. She is a trustee of Theatrum Mundi, an independent research foundation initiated in LSE Cities and was a juror for the 2016 RIBA President's Medal for Research. She is currently co-producing a documentary for BBC Radio 4. Assemble were awarded the 2015 Turner Prize and were part of the curators' selection at Biennale di Architettura di Venezia in 2016 and 2018.

Kate Darby

Kate Darby is an RIBA chartered architect and principal of Kate Darby Architects, based in Herefordshire. She studied architecture at the nBartlett and the Architectural Association. She has combined practice with teaching since 1997. She is currently leader of Unit XV, a 5 th year design studio at WSA, Cardiff University which looks at the connection between materials and place through the lens of making. She was a design tutor for Design and Make at the AA in Hooke Park.

She is a founding member of the annual Workshop, Studio in the Woods and is a collaborator in the design practice Invisible Studio. In 2017 Kate Darby and David Connor won the AJ Small Project Award for their project, Croft Lodge Studio. This project also won a RIBA West Midlands Award and was a nominee in the Beazley Design of the Year 2017 Awards, hosted by the Design Museum.

Ambrose Gillick

Ambrose is a designer, lecturer and researcher and a director at Baxendale. He has a doctorate from the University of Manchester and has helped write books, make exhibitions, put on conferences and curated shows on modern cities, houses, churches and all sorts of fancy in the UK and Europe.

Phineas Harper

Phineas is a critic and designer based in London. He is Deputy Director of the think tank, the Architecture Foundation and Chief Curator of the 2019 Oslo Architecture Triennale with Interrobang and Cecilie Sachs Olsen. He writes a regular opinion column for design magazine, Dezeen.

Lee Ivett

Lee Ivett is an architect with experience of developing transformational long-term projects with third sector

organizations. His mode of practice is intensely generative, developing low-budget socially-focused projects from scratch largely for marginalized communities within Scotland and beyond as a means of identifying ideas and developing local agency and capacity. Lee has been recognized internationally for the impact and quality of his work and was selected for inclusion in New Architects 3 - the definitive survey of the best British architects to have set up practice since 2005.

As well as being a founding director of Baxendale Studio, Lee is also a studio tutor and lecturer at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, a director and co-producer of the Architecture Fringe, a co-producer of the annual Test Unit summer school and a board member of Baltic Street Adventure Playground.

Lee was the Unit facilitator for the Test Unit 2016 group Occupation and the Test Unit 2017 group Urban Bothy

Neil McGuire

Neil is a designer and design tutor who works on a range of projects and activities including graphic design commissions, artworks, event production, curation, learning and teaching, talks and self-initiated projects. He graduated from Communication Design at Glasgow School of Art in 2003 and has since worked in a freelance capacity under the

name *After the News* for a large range of clients in the cultural and public sector including Tramway, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Architecture and Design Scotland, Creative Edinburgh, National Theatre of Scotland, the Lighthouse, as well as various individual artists and designers. *ATN* is actively engaged in arts and culture, through positions on the board of initiatives such as Make Works and New Glasgow Society as well as projects including Test Unit, Livescore and Then/ Now. For over ten years Neil has undertaken part-time teaching at Glasgow School of Art and Strathclyde University, initiating and running new curricular and extra-curricular projects.

Jess Meyer/ Zetteler

Jess is a creative systems expert with a background in fine art, print and bookbinding. Having studied fine art in Falmouth, she set about surrounding herself with paper at every opportunity, working at a succession of galleries and print studios before succumbing to the inevitable and committing her life to making people get stuff done. After three years at event-tech company Noodle Live, where she was operations director, Jess went on to provide freelance project-management services for the likes of Viewport Studio, Ma-tt- er, Open As Usual, Camille Walala, Patternity and Aerende. She first came to Zetteler in 2015 with the temporary brief of sorting out our project-management systems. She did such a good job that, two years later, she became co-director of the company.

Rob Morrison

Rob studied architecture at The Glasgow School of Art and has since delivered events in Edinburgh, Glasgow, London and Tokyo. He oversaw the running of the 800-capacity venue The Art School before co-founding and chairing The Glue Factory CIC. He was invited to work with The Whisky Bond when it opened in 2012 to connect the building with a creative audience. He co-founded TAKTAL in 2014 and subsequently Agile City CIC in 2016.

Helen Teeling

Helen worked with the Location Collective in London and developed a portfolio of spaces for feature film productions, photographers and international events. She then worked with Scotland's national arts funding body, Creative Scotland, where she worked throughout the cultural and creative industries. Since 2014 Helen has been involved in the ongoing development of TAKTAL and in establishing Agile City CIC in 2016.

UNIT

How does contemporary design education engage with the post-industrial city? How is it encountered, understood, analysed and responded to? It is, after all, our ecosystem. And yet its form, content and meaning remains largely obscured by theory and practice fit for another age. Few are looking at what is there to be seen. And even less are figuring out what to do.

This book describes Test Unit, an independent summer school in Glasgow that contests this absence. Through embedded processes of design and making, Test Unit suggests a way forward. It challenges existing structures and curriculum of formal education models and established processes of urban renewal, offering insights and ideas for new ways of seeing and being in the city