

Between Daedalus and Ariadne: Moving from Space to Place, with the Body, in Architectural Education

SESSION IV

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CONTENT / THE ASSIGNMENT

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Who makes the architecture first, Ariadne with her thread defining a place, or Daedalus making the labyrinthine space? What makes the educational process, not the bright new shiny buildings (space), but the bodies of students, travelling on their overlapping educational journeys (place)? So Samsonite suitcases at the ready. This paper will explore the hidden, implicit relationship between space and place in architectural education, not in the physical (architectural school) but as the locating of process in architectural research. Tim Ingold, the anthropologist rallies against the term, space, 'as the most empty, the most detached from the realities of life and experience' in his essay, *Place, Movement and Knowledge*' (Ingold, 2011). He also states that 'there is something wrong with the notion that places exist in space'. He identifies spaces as having a different line, an outward boundary, while place is delineated by movement, activity, inhabitation. Ingold does acknowledge, partially, the geographer's requirement for the term, space, as they explore, determine and measure, but he expects a return to 'place' or 'raum', with an added dimension, an embodied meaning following a measuring and inhabiting of the space. The balance between the workshop world of Daedalus and Ariadne's wayfinding is delicate. This paper will examine and expand on three recent architecture research projects: firstly, a spatial mapping using sensors with Zaha Hadid Architects; secondly, an environmental and spatial audit of the places of drowning across the South West of the UK for the RNLI; and thirdly, an installation project in the British Pavilion in Venice. The journey of the body in all three will be examined, and the place-space Ariadne-Daedalus debate viewed in different ways.

With the ZHA project, the office laboratory was the context for examining the original creative line of a choreographic performance. A series of spatial sensors were placed in a gallery to record bodies movements. This information was collapsed into a data flow, and then re-interpreted from information to a representational 'space'. This research work was 'applied' in a creative educational environment and had educational value, yet the digital flow that emerged was only partial, and to some extent it was 'unreal', Daedalus dominated.

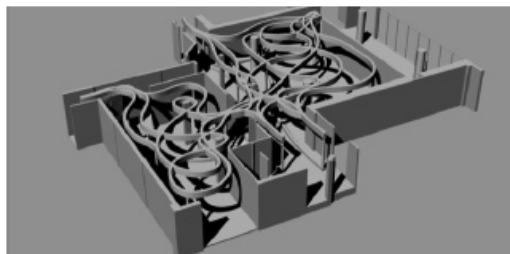
In the second study the reality of studying, and travelling to, the places of drowning for the RNLI research project gave the context and the body relating to the event a particular, very real and dramatic context. The study examined, final journeys of the body within mental, social and environmental ecologies. These three combining with devastating consequences. The physical mapping and representational display gave a vehicle for further conversation, debate and discussion in the

preparation for the next stage of the project, 'Designing Out of Drowning'. In this research Ariadne took the lead.

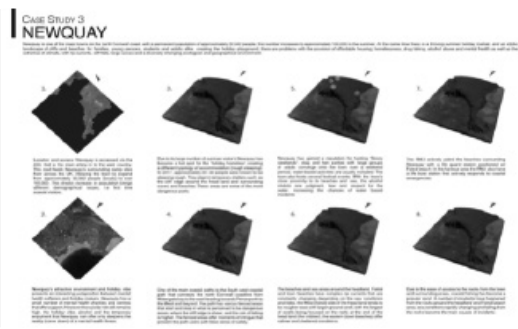
The third research project reflects a more experiential nature, with a multi-layered journey; Shelley poetry, a rich metaphor of drawing, making, and travelling. It was a contextual and educational journey where Daedalus and Ariadne combined to create a temporary installation in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, based around a theme of mutability and changing identity. From where had people come? How did they see themselves? To where were they travelling? It questioned the quasi-national, the personal, using an installed, designed and pre-fabricated framed, journey, 'line' in the British Pavilion. The inhabited frame, with its choreographed journey and erection was a fully embodied experience for the students, before an overlay of thousands of visitors, drawing and reflecting. In this project the place of research design and architectural education combined, and the intensity and experience of the activity and location were fully formed and expressed. It is a place where the space of architectural education has taken on the event and this has been cyclically reflected and inhabited. To take Ingold's metaphor for the journeying 'place':

'We can't go over it,
We can't go under it,
Oh no!
We've got to go through it'

These three research projects emphasize and examine the bodies journey, the space of architectural educational and research is nothing without becoming, moving from space to place. Across these projects a series of methodologies reinforced 'place', via the choreographic, and somatic practice, with the architectural and its use of ecological, psycho-geographic and physical models. The approaches moved between that of fabricating an architectural line (Daedalus) to that of engaging with the choreographic (Ariadne).



AUB Gallery with ZHA Sensor Spatial Mapping



RNLI Environmental Audit – Newquay Models and Mapping



British Pavilion Venice, AUB Mutability Workshop & Installation