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Editors

Dimitra Dantsiou
Elizabeth Wagemann

Editorial Committee

Athanasios Athanasopoulos
Hui Ben
Mark E. Breeze
Mary Freedman
Aaron Gillich

Graphic Design

Elizabeth Wagemann

Cover

Tomo
tomosecurities.com

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Department of Architecture
1-5 Scroope Terrace
Cambridge CB2 1PX
United Kingdom

scroope@aha.cam.ac.uk

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CONTRIBUTORS

Fenina Acance is a Master of Architecture graduate from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Aya Alphs is a BA (New York University), and MA (University of York). Aya is currently a PhD student at the University of Cambridge.

Nick Baker originally studied physics but has spent most of his professional life working in architecture and building. His interests include energy modelling, daylight design, natural ventilation and thermal comfort, as well as the broader field of sustainable design. He was a lecturer at the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge. He is now retired but is still involved as a visiting lecturer and external examiner at several other universities.

Edward Barsley studied Environmental Design in Architecture at the University of Cambridge where he received a distinction for his research into strategies for resilience to flooding in coastal settlements. During his career he has lived and worked in China, Denmark, India and in both Cornwall and London in the United Kingdom. He is currently PhD Candidate in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge.

Hanna Baumann is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Urban Conflicts Research at the Architecture Department, University of Cambridge. She has a background in history, art history, and photography, and is interested in mobility - or lack thereof - in cities experiencing conflict and crisis.

Barnaby Bennett is a PhD Candidate at University of Technology, Sydney. He is living in Christchurch, New Zealand, and exploring the emergence of temporary and transitional architecture in the earthquake-damaged city. He has a BArch and BA, and is the director of a cooperative publishing company, Freerange Press.

Dimitra Dantsiou is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge. Her research is focused on thermal comfort and energy use practices in buildings. Dimitra graduated from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, is a licensed Architect in Greece and holds an MPhil in Environmental Design in Architecture from the University of Cambridge.

Prof. Simin Davoudi is Associate Director of the Institute for Sustainability at Newcastle University. She is past President of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, member of expert panels for the UK Government and several national and international research assessment panels.

Mary Freedman began exploring the processes that drive the form and use of our built environments as a nomadic

self-taught artist. Holding a BArch she recently completed an MPhil investigating the roles of cultural activity and digital technology in spatial dialogues between informal and formal areas of Rio de Janeiro.

Dr. Ariel García is a BA in Geography (University of Buenos Aires), MA in Agrarian Social Studies (FLACSO, Buenos Aires), and PhD in Geography (University of Buenos Aires). Ariel is currently a lecturer in Social Economy and a Research Associate at the Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales -CONICET/CEUR, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Mehrnaz Ghojeh has worked in both China and Iran funded by the Andre Fu Award and the Graduate Awards and Research Studentships (GARS). She has collaborated with specialists from Tehran Municipality, Cambridge Architectural Research (CAR), and International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES). She has also worked at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and taught and been a guest critic at a range of institutions.

Aaron Gillich is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge. Aaron has a BEng in Aerospace Engineering and an MSc in Astronomy and Physics. He has worked as a thermal modelling specialist and sustainability Engineer in London.

Daniel Godoy-Shimizu is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge. His research focuses on modelling the energy performance of buildings. Prior to the PhD, he worked for an engineering consultancy, and was involved in building projects in the UK and abroad. He has an MEng from Imperial College, London.

Dr. Felipe Hernández is an Architect and University Lecturer in the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge. He is Director of the MPhil in Architecture and Urban Studies as well as Fellow Architect and Director of Studies at King's College Cambridge. Felipe is Chair of Cities South of Cancer, an interdisciplinary Research Group working in Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, Indonesia and Mexico. He is the author of *Bhabha for Architects* (Routledge 2010) and *Beyond Modernist Masters: Contemporary Architecture in Latin America* (Birkhauser 2009).

Thomas Lindsay has worked at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and with members of the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Natural History Museum. He has published papers in collaboration with world health experts funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Explorations Grant. He has also worked at the RIBA and Agence Ouvray (Hong Kong).

Adriana Massidda is an Architect (University of Buenos Aires) and MPhil in Architecture (University of Cambridge). After some years of architectural practice, Adriana started her current research focused on the history of urban informality in Buenos Aires. Adriana is currently a PhD student at the University of Cambridge.

Dimos Moysiadis graduated from the School of Architecture at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. He then did his MSc in Adaptive Architecture and Computation as a scholar in Bartlett School of Graduate Studies in London. He runs his own architecture firm based in Athens working on projects of various scales.

OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture). OMA New York was established in 2001 and has since overseen the successful completion of several buildings – including Milstein Hall at Cornell University, Seattle Central Library, the Prada Epicenter in Los Angeles and New York and the IIT Campus Center in Chicago. Under the direction of Partner Shohei Shigematsu, the New York office is currently overseeing a number of cultural projects, including a private foundation in the Philippines, a new performance space for Marina Abramovic, and a studio renovation in New York for artist Cai Guo Qiang.

Konstantinos Panopoulos is an Architect with a degree from the School of Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He is doing an MSc in Energy Systems at the International Hellenic University in Thessaloniki, Greece, due to end in 2014. He specialises in 3D visualisations for design and architecture, which is handled through www.thezinklab.com.

Samantha Phillips read History of Art and for the last ten years has worked as a freelance writer and editor. Two years ago she began researching The Cambridge Contemporary Art Trust, which was established in 1946 by Bill Howell.

Dr. Stephen Platt BA MSC PhD is a Social Scientist with higher degrees in engineering and architecture. His research experience is in urban planning, community engagement, housing, energy use and disaster reconstruction and recovery. He has been a director of Cambridge Architectural Research (CAR) since 1990 and its Chairman since 2001.

Dr. Wendy Pullan is Head of Research and Director of the Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Centre for Urban Conflicts Research. Her recent publications include: *Locating Urban Conflicts* (2013) and *The Struggle for Jerusalem's Holy Places* (2013).

Jason Rebillot is an Architect working at the intersection of political economy, political ecology and urban transformation. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at both Northeastern University and the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Graham Riach studied at the University of Glasgow before starting a PhD at Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 2011 on the contemporary South African short story. He works as a translator of French and Japanese, and composes music for films.

Dr. Ross T. Smith is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris la Villette, in Paris France. He received a PhD from the University of Melbourne, Australia, where he also taught Master of Architecture Design Studios.

Dr. Emily So is a chartered Civil Engineer and a Lecturer at the Department of Architecture. She worked at Arup as a senior Geotechnical Engineer and at the U.S. Geological Survey as a Mendenhall Fellow. She has been involved in interdisciplinary and international collaboration with the UK Earthquake Field Investigation Team (EEFIT) and the Global Earthquake Model (GEM). Dr. So is a Director of Studies in Architecture at Magdalene and Downing Colleges, a Fellow and Admissions Tutor at Magdalene College, and a Director of Cambridge Architectural Research (CAR).

Dr. Max Sternberg is University Lecturer in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cambridge and Deputy Director of the Centre for Urban Conflicts Research. He is author of *Cistercian Architecture and Medieval Society* (2013) and co-editor of *Phenomenologies of the City* (forthcoming).

Dr. Renata Tyszczyk is Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Sheffield. Her research explores global environmental change and provisionality in architectural thinking and practice. She is a British Academy Mid-Career Fellow and also a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge (2013-2014).

Afra van't Land grew up in West and East Africa to Dutch parents. Having studied at University College London and the University of Cambridge, she now lives and practices architecture in London, where she is working towards her professional qualification as registered Architect.

EDITORIAL

Crisis? Yawn. Financial Crisis, Austerity Crisis, Social Crisis, Cultural Crisis, Political Crisis, Educational Crisis, Environmental Crisis, Medical Crisis, Economic Crisis, Personal Crisis – are there any more crises to be had in our society of rolling crises? What does ‘crisis’ even mean in such a constantly compounding state of crises?

This 23rd issue of Scroope attempts to think notions of crisis productively, both in itself, and as modes to think architectural possibility afresh. Rather than attempting to ignore the effects of crisis through burying our communal head in the sand and ploughing on regardless, and numbing the affects of crises through Prozac (or its generic equivalent), this issue attempts to embrace these effects and affects as tools to re-evaluate, recalibrate, and reconsider what architecture can do and can be.

The issue is subtly curated to highlight a wide variety of specific responses to different ideas, types, and realities of crisis – past, present, and future – within a broad architectural framework. Although not explicitly thematically categorised, it is hoped that readers will find direct and indirect connections between the sequence of articles on focussed topics; architectural projects that are responsive to specific crises are interwoven amongst other more academic pieces. Through these nuggets of thinking and examples of practical responses to varying conceptions of crisis, we hope to give you some architectural fodder for thinking crisis anew.

We begin with Graham Riach thinking through the etymology of the word ‘crisis’ as a method to open up the deeper nuances latent within it. Jason Rebillot then discusses the recent emergence of degrowth theory and the potentials it provides for design and planning, in response to the crises brought on by the capitalist model of continuous growth. Responding to the direct effects of Hurricane Sandy, OMA explicate how they integrated principles of optimal resiliency, smart communication, and high density in their urban design proposal for the Hoboken waterfront in New Jersey. Felipe Hernández then explores how architectural intervention can sometimes exacerbate a crisis in its attempts to resolve it, focusing on examples from Cali in Colombia. In contrast, Afra van’t Land’s discusses how an incremental approach of ‘urban acupuncture’ in Mathare, Nairobi offers a different mode of infrastructure service provision, community engagement, and provision of sustainable civic space.

Transitioning to a bigger conceptual scale, Renata Tyszczyk discusses the architecture of the ‘anthropocene’ and its wider crisis of agency. Ross T. Smith then explores some of the complexities of transitional displacement through an evocative series of images. Returning to specific practicalities, Emily So and Stephen Platt discuss how the vulnerability of urban populations to earthquakes has increased the scale of catastrophes, and how the resultant socio-economic consequences can be mitigated. Thomas

Lindsay and Mehrnaz Ghojeh follow this with a broader discussion of risk culture, highlighting through a series of case-studies notions of research, design, and design-based research in dealing with crises and emergencies in the built environment. Following Simin Davoudi's deconstruction of 'resilience', Nick Baker discusses the technical and behavioural aspects of sustainability in the built environment. Edward Barsley then explicates his architectural proposal for a flood resilient coastal settlement in Par Docks, Cornwall, as a projective example of designing positively for expected severe events of nature.

Wendy Pullan and Max Sternberg emphasise the importance of the social sciences in understanding the roles of architecture in negotiating conflict, using the example of the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem. Hanna Baumann then reveals glimpses of hope and a past normality in her photographic essay of the petrol stations of Gaza. Defining crisis as a temporal uncertainty that threatens the existing order of things and forces the emergence of new assemblages, Barnaby Bennett then highlights the critical role of architecture through the example of post-earthquake Christchurch, New Zealand. Returning to a specific architectural response, Dimitra Dantsiou, Dimos Moysiadis, and Konstantinos Panopoulos propose a sustainable, viable, and affordable housing prototype as an answer to the current social housing needs in Greece. Aaron Gillich follows this with a discussion about the simmering crisis of domestic energy use and why policies fail to transform retrofit markets, arguing for a newer generation of less isolated market transformation programs. Mary Freedman then discusses alternative modes of project funding with the new and intriguing crisis-inspired funding operation that is Spacehive. After a momentary pause to consider Ariel García's personal cathartic crisis of graduate research, our journal ends with some stories from the Department: a Henry Moore sculpture residing in Scroope Terrace; a snapshot of recent activities held by ArcSoc (the University of Cambridge Student Architecture Society); and the film-focused event, Architectural Projections.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to all the contributors to Scroope 23 for their generous and thoughtful submissions, as well as their continued patience with our perhaps less traditional editorial process. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the University of Cambridge Department of Architecture for providing the anchor funding for Scroope. Finally, we would also like to thank deeply the staff, students, and all our various colleagues at the Department of Architecture for their assistance, support, patience, and inspiration as we bore this issue.

This special issue of Scroope sees opportunity in crisis. Through an experience of crisis we see a productive mode of re-evaluation and focused action. We hope you enjoy this issue of The Cambridge Architecture Journal, and find many opportunities in all crises which may befall you.

Nick Baker
Edward Barsley
Hanna Baumann
Barnaby Bennett
Simin Davoudi
Dimitra Dantsiou
Mary Freedman
Ariel Garcia
Mehrnaz Ghogh
Aaron Gillich
Felipe Hernandez
Thomas Lindsay
Dimos Moysiadis
Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)
Konstantinos Panopoulos
Sam Phillips
Stephen Platt
Wendy Pullan
Jason Rebillot
Graham Riach
Max Sternberg
Ross T. Smith
Emily So
Renata Tysczuk
Afra van't Land

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