

basket cases

a first year cross cultural studio programme

Jane Lawrence and Rachel Hurst

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The studio described here comprises the second semester of the first year interior design and architectural course at the University of South Australia. It builds upon the first semester pedagogy based on memory and off-campus teaching. The studio consists of three projects employing an alliance between typology and gastronomy as a means to design and initiates cross cultural teaching methodologies. This submission will focus on the second and pivotal project titled basket case.

The following is an edited version of the studio handout.



Introduction

This semester there are three projects that build cumulatively on each other. The criteria we will be addressing in these projects are:

- self, place, culture, memory;
- contexts;
- typologies of landscape, building, space structure and material (macro/micro frames of reference);
- function;
- space planning;
- materials and assembly (scaled representations & full scale making);
- and site specific analyses and off campus learning.

Project One—A Nut Case

One studio session

For this exercise we will be looking at typologies of landscape, buildings, and fragments.

Using a single food or drink container (eg carton, can, plastic bottle, bag) you are required to cut, fold, weave, layer etc., the material to contain a good handful of peanuts. You may use one other connecting non-adhesive material (eg. string, twine, split pins, staples, paper clips). No container is to be a health hazard. The work is to be completed in studio.

Submission week One

Project Two—Basket Case

Two parts: total six weeks

1. Each studio group will select and study a particular urban or rural environment. The first stage will be a site visit. Students will be expected to observe, record and analyse three frames of reference ie the broader landscape or streetscape, a particular building and the material and construction of part of that building. The studio supervisors will make clear the extent of each frame.

2. You will need to study methodologies and recordings of these analyses. Criteria to be explored include patterns of space, patterns of use, cultural heritage, hierarchies, precedents, assemblies, geometry, massing, symmetry and repetition.

Submission requirements:

The landscape—2 x A4 sheets to include site or neighbourhood plan, massing, repetitive to unique, circulation pattern, hierarchy and partis.

The building (staff to select)—2 x A4 sheets to include front elevation, section, structural analysis, circulation to use, hierarchy and natural light.

Photographic sample board—1 x A4 sheet to indicate proportional analysis of building materials and hierarchy.

Submission week four

3. Each student will make a basket case using the principle material(s) identified from fragment typologies for storing and carrying a place-appropriate picnic. The contents and nature of the basket must relate to the site (eg Tel Aviv: Basket [concrete, clay and schrapnel] Contents: felafels, watermelon juice and pita bread; Osaka: Basket [timber lacquer and rice paper], Contents: Sushi, wasabi and rice wine; Cairns: Basket [glass, rainforest timbers and shade cloth], Contents: beer, prawns and beer).

Part of the design must consider the process and ritual of this movable feast. You are required to address the following:

- What do you want to eat?;
- Where will you eat?;
- What do you eat with?;
- What order will you eat?;
- How will you set it out?; and
- What will you take away?

All of these in the finished design are to relate to the typologies understood from the first part.

Submission week seven in studio

Project Three—(sub1311)

Four weeks

For this final submission you must imagine that your building has burnt down, and in its place you will design an appropriate and modest commercial building. The type and scale of the business will be nominated by your tutor and each studio pod will define the detailed brief.

The structure of this project will be conducted in three parts:

Concept One

Schematic design proposal which must indicate the relationship to typographies of landscape in drawings and brief notations. Parameters for the project include:

- display and sales;
- invitation to enter and transition spaces;
- public and private;
- storage/preparation;
- service;
- ablutions;
- deliveries; and
- no more than two people working at any time.

Submission: week nine

Miniature pencil or felt tip pen sketches on A4 (landscape format) to include streetscape elevation, plan, plan to section, natural light, circulation to use and hierarchy (total six criteria).

Concept Two Distinctly different proposal.

Miniature pencil or felt tip pen sketches on A4 (landscape format) to include streetscape elevation, plan, plan to section, natural light, circulation to use, hierarchy, partis and structure (total eight criteria).

Concept Three Synthesis of the previous two projects

Submission requirements:

Rendered drawings 1:50: floor plan, section, interior perspective and elevations. Site plan approx. 1:200.

Model 1:50 indicating materiality, with adjoining buildings in white card.

Submission: week 11



Danielle Clarke

REVIEW AND OUTCOMES

From the initial one-day nut case project, which catapults the students into the programme, through to the final design of a contextually sensitive building, the potentially intimidating conventional studio and critique processes are disarmed by the exotic and unorthodox nature of the projects and their products. Students appear to gather confidence to enter into design discourse and engage in the studio environment with obvious enthusiasm. The physical sharing of the outcomes at the picnic is a tangible manifestation of cross-cultural curiosity, and enables students to discuss the origins of their work convivially.

The programme has been developed in recognition of aspects of cross-cultural teaching and the University's goals of internationalisation and equity. In responding to this and eager to continue the momentum of cross-cultural understandings of self and place emerging from other projects, we trialed the tactic of separating a group of students from places outside the normative condition (i.e. urban Australia). The international student group is typically in the order of twenty percent of first year, with the majority from Asia. The range of countries and regions was however far reaching; from Sweden to Brunei, Macau to Fiji, and from Bulgaria to Bute and beyond.

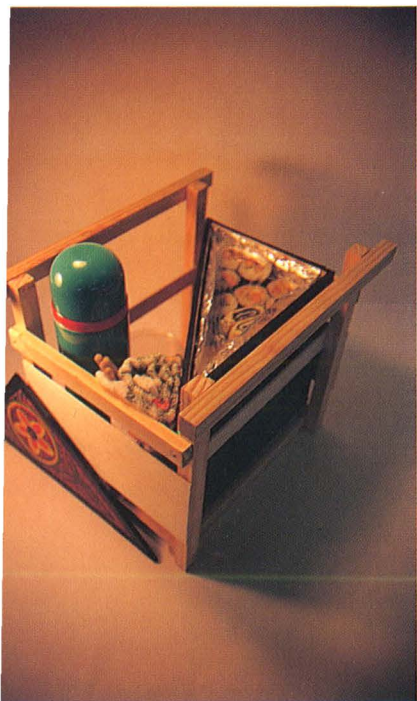
The response from this group was one of immediate engagement with the project intellectually and verbally. Overseas schemes showed a clearer understanding and perpetuation of type on macro and micro scales. Local schemes, on the other hand, tended to emphasise expressionist and eclectic attitudes to design. It could be postulated that distance enabled a willing acceptance of—perhaps a nostalgic yearning for—archetypal and stereotypical building forms and context. In communicating their schemes, it appeared international students possessed an innate awareness of cultural continuity, and in the act of translating refined their own (design) language.⁵

5. Anthony C. Antoniadis, 'The Exotic and Multicultural', in idem, *Poetics of Architecture: Theory of Design*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992, p. 140

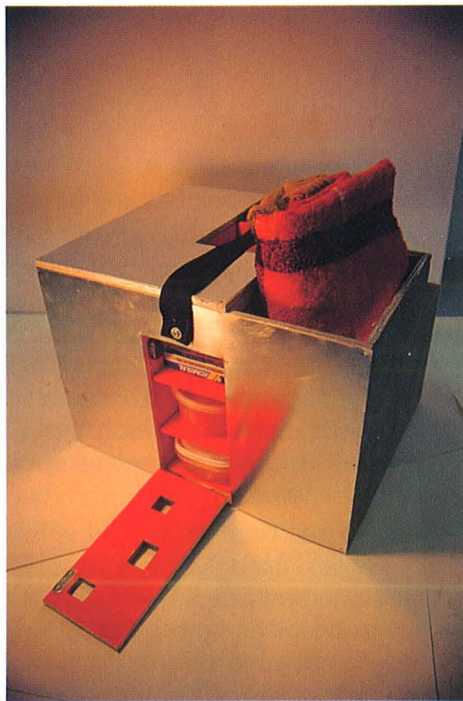
PROCESS

Number of staff:

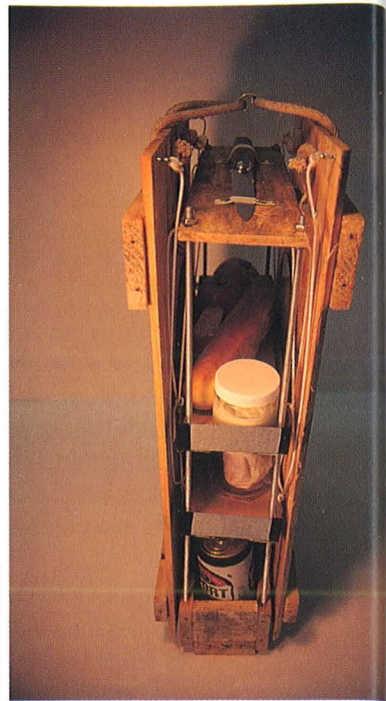
Jane Lawrence and Rachel Hurst co ordinate the collaborative level one studio which has enrolments of approx 170 students and are supported by five practicing architects and interior designers. The aim is to achieve a balance of gender and discipline for tutors in the composition of the studio groups.



Euthemia Lazarevich



Adam Brown



Duration of the programme:

13 weeks at six hours per week (One hour lecture; five hour studio)

Nut case—the initial studio session

Basket case—six weeks

Three weeks for studies of type and three weeks for the design and fabrication of the basket cases.

Sub1311—four weeks.

Nature of the assessment

Project work comprised 100% of assessment. Percentages for each project were as follows:

Nut case 5%

Basket case 35%

Sub1311 60%

Student work was assessed at the conclusion of each project according to school policy by two means:

Written Assessment

Projects are appraised in three categories on standard studio proforma assessment sheets addressing context and theory, technology, and composition.

Any additional or specific foci for assessment was given at the beginning of each project and included on the mark sheet, such as:

- response to brief;
- context and contribution to locality;
- spatial planning and dynamics; and
- exposition of basket case typologies in macro and micro eg. material, space, pattern.

Moderation

The Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design adopts a process of moderation at the end of each semester for both disciplines and at every level to ensure equality of marking. All design staff and two external modertors participate in the review process, which benchmarks the studio outcomes and standards.

References

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Jane Lawrence and Rachel Hurst have been teaching collaboratively for the past 15 years. They have developed, refined and implemented an innovative joint architecture and interior design studio teaching practice and are studio coordinators for Level One.