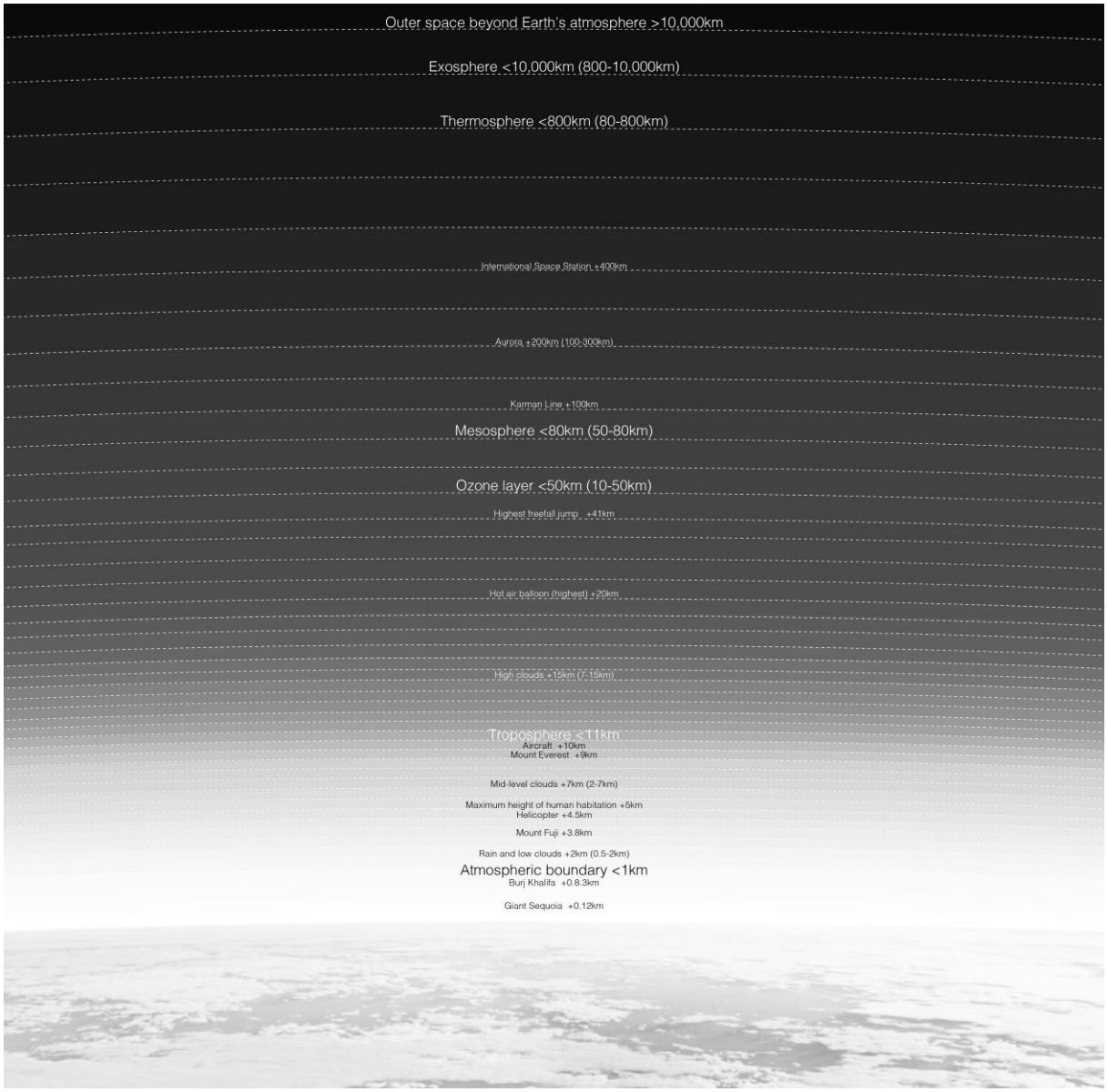


Design Beyond Boundaries : Image by Lily Zhang and Wataru Shinji

DESIGN BEYOND BOUNDARIES

EDGES

INSTRUCTOR
ZHANG, Lily lilyzhang@cuhk.edu.hk

ARCHITECTURE AS AGENCY

The meaning of "architecture" originated as a shelter to protect humankind against the elements of nature. This definition largely holds true to the present day, such that many notions of quality and technology have been developed all for the purpose of housing a single living species on earth, the human being. Previously, nature reigned over a majority of Earth's land, while the human domain was a purportedly clear demarcated space. Yet now, in today's era of the Anthropocene, the balance of area between human living and nature has changed drastically, to the point where we may begin to question whether architecture remains as solely shelter, or if the **boundary** separating human and natural realms has been altered, blurred, or even distorted.

What defines a sense of place when poised in a moment of transformation? In particular, when a "place" as a large, seemingly singular entity such as our shared home of Earth lies beyond our realm of scalar comprehension and occupies a precarious state, how can we grasp its identity? How do we register a place's temporal existence from past, present, and future? What is the role and agency for architects to operate in and respond to a place, a contested site, as a productive platform for design?

Motivated by planetary urgency, this studio seeks new and expanded collective holistic understandings of design, to challenge any singular definition in favor of embracing complex multivalent design narratives, values, and outcomes. Above all, architects must take a position amid the current discourse while recognizing that every aspect of any design project, from initial analysis to formulating a productive response, from a site photograph to a speculative drawing, articulates a certain stance, an overt conviction or an underlying inclination that manifests over time. By critically interrogating the tension between natural and human forces in this studio, we aim to carefully study and rethink what the idea of architecture can actually encompass, to explore its inherent connections with its surroundings, and to expand the possibilities of design by cultivating context together with architecture.

EDGES

What is the agency of designers when the entire planet is on the **edge** of destruction?

Today, Earth is on the **brink of collapse**, and all life, both human and more than human, exists in a moment of **precipice** towards a future of uncertainty. By creating spaces for countless lives, practitioners must consider that every endeavor in the design process has an impact that resonates both locally and globally. In reaction to the urgency of climate crises, designers must reinvent what constitutes architectural space, practice, and methodology to incite new insights and actions, at once regional and planetary.

Towards **healing our fragmented home**, environmental design encompassing both architecture and landscape must strive for reworlding the architectural discipline situated among the processes and agents of the earth itself with environmental reciprocity, through innovative design and material practices that merge creative, critical, cultural, and ecological consciousness. Departing from anthropocentric extractive conventions, practitioners must continually adapt their design methods and processes in reaction to the changing field of architecture and in reciprocity with our shared inhabited world. **This studio investigates and aims to contribute positive human creative agency, through designing with nature to heal and revive areas around the world destroyed by previous extractive, destructive human activity and environmental degradation.**

PROJECT CRITERIA

All projects developed throughout the year, both collective and individual, must respond to the following criteria:

Agency and Relevance
The proposal must engage with real issues (social, ecological, or territorial) and respond critically to the conceptual lens of the assigned cluster.

Multiscalar and Contextual Design
The project must operate across multiple scales and respond meaningfully to its socio-spatial, environmental, and cultural context.

Programmatic and Spatial Richness
The project must integrate diverse uses, users, and spatial conditions, avoiding reductive or mono-functional approaches.

Design Resolution and Coherence
The project must be well-developed in form, material, and construction logic, and demonstrate architectural depth through clear drawings, physical or digital models, and a coherent narrative.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Cultivating Context

What potential lies beneath our feet, within the earth we walk upon, in the spaces and buildings we inhabit everyday, even in the sky above us, in the water and land beyond where we stand?

What defines a sense of place, a true connection to site?

If we distinguish between natural and human realms on earth, we realize that many of us living in cities have likely never truly experienced the society of nature. Today many people born and raised in cities such as Hong Kong perceive human-made nature such as gardens, parks, and public spaces as natural environments. We are born inside concrete floors, walls, and ceilings, walk on paved surfaces, travel in steel vehicles, and finally leave this earth in a concrete box. The environment we live in is artificial in almost every way, with all these spaces created by carving away parts of nature. It seems as if there is a real physical planetary **border** between natural and human-made environments, a **dividing line** shifting in either direction as one strengthens at the expense of the other.

In fact, what we must address is that **there is no such thing as a boundary on this planet.** There is no distinction, not "one" and the "other" in the environment. The more we grow and evolve, the closer we are to extinction. We need to examine our current environment more closely and carefully, to determine the path we may take going forward and check the condition and extent of our footprint before we proceed. Perhaps if we stop to reflect, it may be the moment to consider how weary the earth's surface is, and question its capacity to sustain our collective society of both nature and humans. **Amid the urgency of climate change in today's anthropocentric society, designers have an ethical responsibility to take action and contribute to more-than-human living spaces and trans-species comfort.**

In this ever-changing world, how can we expand beyond merely changing and extracting from the environment, and instead consider what we may actually create anew to revive our destroyed planetary home?

How do we understand and design for a sense of place in the Anthropocene with sustainability and site sensitivity attuned to local ecology, culture, community, history, heritage, and material intelligence?

What is our role as designers to create architecture and landscape to heal areas destroyed by anthropocentric activity and merge human and more-than-human realms in harmony?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

Designing Environment

In this studio, we will design in harmony with nature to breathe new life to places degraded by human activity by creating scenery through designing the natural environment itself, and expand the prospects of design.

The limits of human design are defined solely by our values. Who would design an exceedingly cold or hot building? Who would wish to live in a house without a roof? Architecture and design have evolved precisely to create environments that are conducive to human comfort and well-being. But what about landscape design? It too is likely focused on how to create safe and pleasant outdoor spaces. In this studio, we strive to embark on the challenge of designing not just architecture or landscape, but the broader environment that surrounds us.

How many species of plants exist, or have existed in particular regions?

What variety of organisms inhabit our shared environment?

What plant and animal combinations will not only thrive together but also foster a comfortable living environment for all life including us humans?

What lies beneath the earth’s surface?

In line with the studio project phases outlined below, students will select their sites and environmental design focus based on research and in-person site visits to formulate their unique design projects in response to the scale and particularities of the selected sites, which may range from urban to rural and beyond. With the utmost site specificity and sensitivity, students will create architecture and landscape projects aligned with the nature, culture, community, and ecosystem of their selected sites.

Taking these considerations into account, we aim to design a beautiful and comfortable environment, one that evokes a natural environment. Just as certain colors complement one another, or specific plant species at certain heights harmonize, we engage with a multitude of species of life forms to design new vast, expansive environments.

Creating Scenery

Scenery (風景) is an abstract notion. Just as different people vary in appearance, the word “scenery” evokes a multitude of distinct images. At times it may be difficult to convey this concept even if we translate it textually and explain with words. Yet when we try to illustrate with a drawing, a picture, a form of the visual, we call it a vague and large image without boundary, such as a mountain range of rolling peaks, the horizon that divides the sea and sky, or the particular cityscape of Hong Kong with its density of tall buildings.

In this studio, we will approach design with a broadened, alternative perspective, enriching the process of design by opening it up to the knowledge and influence of fields outside of architecture. By drawing upon sources from other expertise, we can envision a mode of design beyond typical practice or studies to engage an expanded concept of architecture. Specifically, students are encouraged to focus their attention to various sites and conditions around Hong Kong and abroad during studio travel, with in-person field study through site visits as the essential primary basis of their design thinking. This physical, visceral, experiential study of a place combines with both research and an analytical lens to inform a coherent architectural response. Through the exploration of different places, conditions, and design processes around the world, students can work to continually contextualize their own site approach within the specificities of Hong Kong’s locale, while also comparatively expanding their own global frame of reference for understanding the importance of place in defining scenery.

PART ONE_COLLECTIVE

Final Collective Exhibition

To expand the conversation of designing the natural environment beyond boundaries, we will create a collective exhibition of our research, site visits, and design studies. This exhibition will be in dialogue with other studios and designers in the world, to engage in the broader discourse of design agency amid planetary environmental destruction.

Phases and Deliverables

1. Research: Types of Architecture

In this world, there are many kinds of languages. Some areas speak similar languages, while other areas use languages and characters that are not similar to those of neighboring countries. In this sense, language and architecture may be two aspects of human culture that have somewhat similar characteristics. The skyscrapers that can now be seen in cities all over the world did not have a uniform scale in the past, but rather a city shape that spread horizontally depending on the shape of the land.

Like the language, any city's particular quality has evolved into the unique character of each place, eventually becoming a cultural heritage and symbol.

While architects must always design within a specific site, often we believe that we do not have enough knowledge about the planet we live on when we study and design architecture. As such, we will first closely study the scenery and the site, as the foundation for designing architecture.

2. Site Design: The Natural World and the Human World

There are two environments on earth today, especially on land. One is the populated society we have created. The other is a natural society that has persisted since long before the existence of human beings. Originally, humans made a place for themselves in the large society of nature and lived without boundaries, just like other animals. However, over time humans have created small borders that isolate us from the larger society. In this sense, the architecture we study may have been the first human invention to separate these two societies. With the aim of interrogating this boundary, we will begin the architectural project through a close study of site, and even embark on its remaking as a design endeavor. While our trajectory begins with and is grounded in research, we will not leave research behind, but instead continue to cyclically revisit research as part of the design process.

3. Architectural Design: Architecture and Time

When architects design a building, they often do not take into account its lifespan. For instance, the durability of a material is reflected in the lifespan of a house, such as fifty years for a wooden house or one hundred years for a concrete house. However, if we look at buildings in Europe, we will find that even in the same residential area, five hundred year old structures have a longer lifespan than modern buildings. This is partly due to the local environment, yet there are also wooden temples in Japan that were built over one thousand years ago. In this sense, designers are creating without taking time into consideration. On the other hand, if the lifespan is examined, it would require meticulous calculation, especially in modern architecture which could collapse within a single generation.
For humans, creating space means isolating from nature and preserving certain qualities in a fixed state, built on the premise that it will not change. The lifespan of the preserved space depends largely on the materials and methods used to create it. On the contrary, the creations of nature keep changing every minute and every second, yet simultaneously in the long run, they seem to appear completely

unchanging. In this sense, natural society and human society do not share the same time scale at all. Perhaps this misalignment produces a major distortion between these two societies. With an acute awareness of this typical disjunct, we will approach the design of architecture through a temporal sense attuned to the inherent materials and processes of building coupled with its connection to site.

4. Designing Architecture as Scenery

Scenery has no boundary, and does not create fixed space. Our aim is to explore how architecture may embody these properties as well. What is architecture without boundaries? What is architecture without steadfastly preserving the quality of space? Can architecture maintain its present form?
Through the cumulative design process of the studio, we will expand our outlook to think about architecture from a freer perspective to engage the aspects of becoming scenery.

PART ONE_PROJECT PROPOSAL

At the end of the first semester and contextual the presentation of the COLLECTIVE work students will present a proposal for the development of their individual or group project for the second part of the studio. This proposal should outline how the project responds to the overarching theme of the MArch — Architecture as Agency — and to the specific conceptual lens of the studio cluster. The aim of this to demonstrate a clear and thoughtful direction that can be further developed in the next phase of the studio.

Deliverables
Students will submit a booklet to illustrate their project proposal. Using a shared Project Book format common to all studios, the layout will be organised into four sections: Project Site, Research Questions, Project Description, Design Concept. The booklet will gather the main outcomes of the conceptual stage, including drawings, model photographs, illustrations and preliminary programme, to clearly convey the core ideas of the project. An InDesign template will be provided to ensure clarity and consistency among the students.

PART TWO_PROJECT

Each student will develop a project that explores architecture as a form of agency within the framework of their assigned cluster — a tool for engaging with and responding to contemporary social and spatial challenges. With guidance from the tutor, students are encouraged to formulate their own brief and select a site aligned with their thematic direction. In this studio, students will have the option to choose sites based on research and site visits to best align with their project vision. Students will select sites from in- person site visits and analysis for essential design research and reciprocity with a sense of place, from studio field trips detailed below or other visits with guidance from the tutor. Students will work across multiple scales, typically ranging from 1:1000 to 1:100 or 1:50, depending on the size and complexity of the proposal. Students will formulate their unique design projects in response to the particularities of the selected sites. In essence, students will complement this syllabus by establishing their own brief, values, program, scale, and proposition for new understandings of designing environment.

The studio asks students to approach design with a broadened, alternative perspective, enriching the process of design by opening it up to the knowledge and influence of fields outside of architecture. By drawing upon sources from other expertise, students can envision a mode of design beyond typical practice or studies to engage an expanded concept of architecture. Specifically, students are encouraged to focus their attention to various sites and conditions that have been destroyed by human activity, with in-person field study through site visits as the essential primary basis of their design thinking. This physical, visceral, experiential study of a place combines with both research and an analytical lens to inform a coherent architectural response.

Physical models, drawings, images, photographs, films, sound recordings, renders, collages, even paintings are subject as deliverables. Scale will be determined based on individual sites and projects. Like the references listed below, projects will merge architecture and landscape design responses to site specificities, with technical resolution, detail, and complexity at the scale of the site. Above all, students will always need to keep in mind how the medium, format, representation, and presentation supports the design idea. Therefore, it is not required that all students make realistic renders, for example, but instead to always question the rationale behind presenting in one particular format. As the subject of our focus is designing a human-made construction in the physical world, all students will make physical models for design studies, midterm reviews, and final presentations.

Deliverables

Drawings
Site plan (1:1000 / 1:500)
Floor plans (target scale 1:100 or 1:50, depending on project scale)
Sections (at least two) to illustrate key spatial and contextual relationships
Axonometric or exploded axonometric to communicate structural, programmatic, or conceptual logic

Models
Site plan model at an appropriate site scale (1:1000 or 1:500)
Building models ranging from 1:200 to 1:50
Detail model or fragment at 1:50 or 1:20 to explore material/tectonic resolution

Illustrations and Representation
Concept diagrams and narratives
Material/atmospheric explorations
Photographic collages, sketches, or other visual material to support conceptual development

Narrative and Critical reflection
Project statement (max 500 words) articulating the design intent, agency, and connection to the studio theme and cluster. The integration with insights from the first semester's collective work is strongly encouraged.

Final Presentation
Students will give an oral presentation and present their projects using drawings, models, and all required materials in various formats. The Final Review will take place over three days and will be a moment to celebrate and showcase the work developed throughout the semester. As per tradition, a group of international and local experts, invited by each studio tutor, will join the review to provide feedback and share their perspectives.

Project Book
Students will present their final work through a shared Project Book format, common to all studios. The book will be organised into six sections: Project Summary, Research Questions, Project Description, Programme & Technology, Process, and Appendix. It will gather the main outputs of the studio, including detailed drawings, model photographs, and a comprehensive technology report with construction details. An InDesign template will be provided to ensure clarity and consistency, supporting potential use in exhibitions and publications.

IMPACT

Singularity of Place

All scenery has its own character. Every square meter of the Earth is unique, with its own specific conditions. In a sense, this individuality is an indistinct way of expressing nature, varying greatly from place to place on earth and dependent upon the culture and way of life in each region. Ultimately, the relational aspect of any place and its inhabitants promote the constellation of a wide set of interdependencies: flora, fauna, ecology, climate, community, history, culture, and economy together form a network of responsive entities. For instance, to a person born and raised in the Sahara Desert, its sandy dunes would be a familiar setting, while for someone living on an island in the Pacific Ocean, the great blue sea forms the surroundings. For those growing up in large cities such as Hong Kong, Tokyo, and New York, their scenery would be the populated city itself. Amid the multitude of settings across the world, whether remotely located in nature or densely inhabited, we inherently become accustomed to environments where we find comfort and value. In this sense, many kinds of scenery exist across the broad expanse of our planetary home, such that any site prompts its own specific design response to create new environments and its own unique scenery.

Scenery and Time

There is no distinction between natural and artificial in scenery. All that exists are the elements of that place, and time. Over the course of many decades, the skyscrapers that line Hong Kong Island have become part of the city scenery, so that the metropolitan skyline embodies the image of Hong Kong for both residents and visitors. That which is rooted to its place and continually persists for a long time is what we call scenery with a sense of familiarity and affection. So, is it possible to design entirely new scenery beyond boundaries? We will seek to answer this question through this studio.

METHODS

The methods adopted in this studio are intended to support students in developing a strong conceptual foundation and translating it into clear, context-specific, and socially engaged design proposals. The studio will combine analytical research, design experimentation, and collective discussion. Students will be encouraged to explore both conventional and non-conventional methods of enquiry and representation, including:

1. Physical models, drawings, images, photographs, films, sound recordings, collages, paintings, sketches, site specimen, process documentation, site visit atlas, with all material curated as in a final exhibition
2. Site documentation: drawings, models, photographs, films, sound recordings, sketches
3. Initial design study: drawings, models, model photographs, images, perspectives, sketches
4. Design development: drawings, models, model photographs, images, perspectives
5. Final design + technical development: drawings, details, building process and systems, models, model photographs, images, perspectives, films
6. Printed and digital documentation of all year's work

REQUIRED READINGS

1. "Designing the Flow of Time," Lily Zhang and Wataru Shinji, *Yuan Lin*, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects Journal, Feature Article
2. *Freeing Architecture*, Junya Ishigami, ed. Lily Zhang
3. *Insular Insight: Where Art and Architecture Conspire with Nature*, ed. Lars Müller and Akiko Miki
4. *Lo—TEK. Design by Radical Indigenism*, Julia Watson

5. *Earth in Human Hands*, David Grinspoon
6. *Timefulness: How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save the World*, Marcia Bjornerud
7. *Reading the Rocks: The Autobiography of the Earth*, Marcia Bjornerud
8. *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest*, Suzanne Simard
9. *The Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben
10. *A Doctor Builds an Irrigation Canal*, Tetsu Nakamura
11. *From My Land to the Planet*, Sebastião Salgado
12. *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*, ed. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson
13. *Sense of Wonder*, Rachel Carson

OTHER REFERENCES

Regional:
Forest for All
Designer: Lily Zhang and Wataru Shinji
Site: Tao Fong Shan, Shatin, Hong Kong
www.forestforall.world

International:
Khao Yai Art Forest
Contributing Designers: Fujiko Nakaya, Ubatsat, Richard Long, Francesco Arena, Elmgreen & Dragset, et al.
Site: Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

Setouchi Islands: Inujima, Teshima, Naoshima, Shodoshima, et al.
Contributing Designers: Kazuyo Sejima, Ryue Nishizawa, Tadao Ando, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Fukutake Foundation, et al.
Site: Seto Inland Sea, Japan

Instituto Terra
Designer: Lélia Wanick Salgado and Sebastião Salgado
Site: Aimorés, Brazil

Storm King Art Center
Contributing Designers: Maya Lin, Isamu Noguchi, Andy Goldsworthy, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, Lee Ufan, Sarah Sze, Louise Bourgeois, et al.
Site: New Windsor, New York, United States

Jinyun Quarries
Designer: DnA_Design and Architecture
Site: Jinyun, Zhejiang, China

What is Missing? : Memorial
Designer: Maya Lin
www.whatismissing.org

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Studio Related

1. Ability to research, understand, and design for a sense of place with sustainability and site sensitivity attuned to local ecology, culture, community, history, heritage, and material intelligence
2. Ability to create projects that merge architecture and landscape design responses to site specificities, with technical resolution, detail, and complexity at the scale of the site
3. Ability to critically interrogate the tension between human and non-human forces, agents, and mechanisms of a place to inform a site specific design project
4. Ability to design for both human and more-than-human life for trans-species comfort
5. Ability to create and articulate coherent research, design, and representation in drawings, images, models, and verbal/textual presentations to defend the design concept
6. Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
7. Ability to generate complex design proposals showing understanding of current architectural issues, originality in the application of subject knowledge and, where appropriate, to test new hypotheses and speculations.
8. Ability to evaluate and apply a comprehensive range of visual, oral and written media to test, analyse, critically appraise and explain design proposals.

B. MArch Programme Related

Design & Process

1. Develop architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
2. Generate complex and original design proposals that demonstrate awareness of current architectural issues and the ability to test new hypotheses and ideas.
3. Formulate a project brief and programme based on site analysis, user needs, and contextual research.
4. Respond to natural and built site characteristics in the development of a coherent and integrated design.

Communication & Representation

5. Communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing, on architectural topics.
6. Engage in dialogue with non-architects, demonstrating the ability to listen, explain, and incorporate external perspectives into design.
7. Use a broad range of media (visual, written, oral, digital) to test, analyse, and present design ideas and processes.
8. Apply appropriate representational tools (e.g. drawings, diagrams, models, digital media) to convey design development across all project phases.

Context & Responsiveness

9. Demonstrate understanding of sustainable development principles and the architect’s role in promoting social, environmental, and economic responsibility.
10. Relate architectural design to human needs and scale, including the spatial relationship between people, buildings, and the built environment.

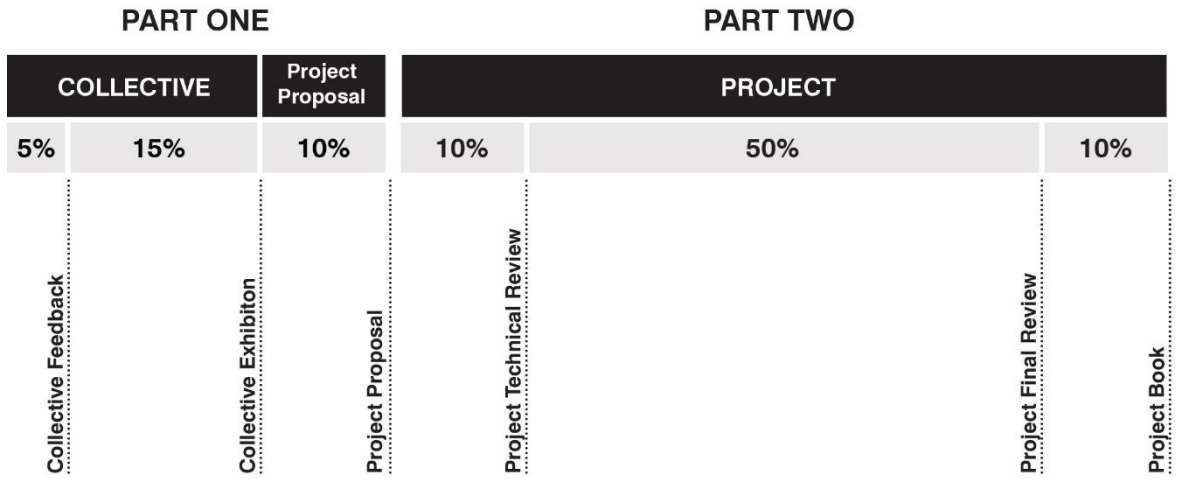
Knowledge & Integration

11. Apply knowledge of architectural history and theory, as well as related arts, technologies, and human sciences, to inform design decisions.
12. Collaborate effectively within team-based design processes, showing initiative, adaptability, and shared authorship.

13. Understand structural principles and systems, including gravity and lateral force resistance, and apply them appropriately within architectural projects.

ASSESSMENT SCHEME

The following diagram describes the structure and the assessment criteria for the year.



TIMELINE

Part One (30%)
13, 16 October: Collective Feedback* (5%)
1-3 December: Collective Exhibition* (15%)
12 December: Project Proposal** (10%)

Part Two (70%)
26 February, 2, 5 March: Project Technical Review (10%)
4-6 May: Final Presentation (50%)
4-6 May: Project Book (10%)

*The final grade for this component will be identical for every student, highlighting teamwork, shared responsibility, and equal contribution to the project.
**Individual or in small groups (Up to three students).

Review Results
Feedback and review will be released to students promptly after completion, together with written comments reflecting their progress and performance

COURSE FORMAT

Individual and Group Work

1. Students may work in groups on various assignments and projects throughout the course calendar.
2. In the first part of the semester, students will develop a COLLECTIVE group project, which will be evaluated with a single, shared grade for the entire group. However, in cases of specific critical issues (such as illness, lack of participation due to personal problems) an individual assessment may be considered for the student(s) directly involved.
3. Final projects will generally consist of individual architectural design proposals. However, group work will also be allowed, with teams of up to three students permitted to develop a joint proposal. In such cases, students will be required to submit a written statement detailing each member's contribution, in order to clearly assess individual engagement within the group.

Teaching Days

1. The Design Studio will be taught on Monday and Thursday 13:30 to 18:00. Students must be in a studio during these teaching hours.
2. Students must attend School Lectures scheduled 12:30 – 13:30.
3. Field trips, lectures, and other learning activities may be scheduled outside of teaching days.

Studio Spaces

1. Each Studio will have their own space, accommodating a desk for each student.
2. Layouts will be issued at the start of the academic year.
3. The school has made studio space and use a priority. Students should maximise the use of their space by conducting design work in studio.
4. Working in the studio creates an opportunity for peer learning and collaboration – take advantage of this valuable resource.
5. Studio space should be respected – especially with consideration of food, drinking, material use, personal safety, disruption to others, and building safety regulations. Areas relating to fire escape should be always kept clear.

Cluster Dialogues

There will be four Dialogue Days organised across the clusters to share the work-in-progress of each studio and to foster critical reflection on the current and future directions of the design work.
These dialogues will be held within each cluster and will take the form of shared pin-ups, symposium-style discussions, and guest lectures by invited speakers.

PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW

The Project Technical Review is intended to support the integration of technical and environmental considerations into the design process. Students are required to prepare a presentation/report detailing their technological and structural strategy, with explicit attention to sustainable principles and their application within the project. In Term 2, consultations with external experts will be organised to strengthen students' knowledge of building systems and performance. These sessions may be scheduled by studio clusters or student groups, and students are expected to come prepared with preliminary research, drawings, and specific questions.

MODEL MAKING

Physical models are at the core of our design expression. To encourage a process of learning by making, we place strong emphasis on hands-on experimentation and material engagement. Laser cutting or 3dprinting should be not recommended especially during the early, conceptual phases of the design process, to prioritize more intuitive, open-ended, and tactile model-making approaches.

FIELD TRIP

The studio will visit local sites in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and the Greater Bay Area to experience and understand case study projects of designing environment beyond boundaries, including Forest for All in Tao Fong Shan, Hong Kong, designed by Lily Zhang and Wataru Shinji. During the trips, students will also be able to consider sites for their studio design projects.

The studio is partnering with the cultural institutions of Khao Yai Art Forest and Bangkok Kunsthalle. Students will also have the unique opportunity to visit Khao Yai Art Forest, a remarkable site located in Thailand that exemplifies transformation and renewal. Originally degraded land resulting from intensive agricultural activities, the area faced environmental decline and ecological challenges. Over time, visionary efforts by local artists, environmentalists, and community stakeholders have revitalized the space, turning it into a vibrant hub for art, culture, and ecological awareness. The site now features an innovative blend of natural landscapes and artistic installations, serving as a testament to sustainable development and creative resilience.

During the visit, students will explore how this site has been reimagined as a cultural destination that fosters environmental consciousness and artistic expression. The revival of Khao Yai Art Forest highlights the potential for integrating ecological restoration with cultural engagement, offering valuable insights into sustainable design practices. This experience aims to deepen students' understanding of landscape transformation, the role of art in environmental activism, and the importance of community-driven initiatives in shaping resilient urban and rural spaces.

In Thailand and beyond, students will have the opportunity to document their selected sites during the studio travel with photos, films, sound recording, hand drawings, and collected artifacts. This in-person documentation as the essential experiential and sensorial research for environmental design with site specificity for the final studio project.

Students are also highly encouraged to arrange visits for their selected sites of areas destroyed by previous human activity, with the intention to revive such areas through environmental design interventions for studio projects. Such visits are encouraged in groups, and could involve the entire studio based on student proposals and feasibility. Students may also consider sites around their home territories, to visit when returning home during school holidays, based on student proposals. **Above all, in-person field study through site visits as the essential primary basis of their design thinking. This physical, visceral, experiential study of a place combines with both research and an analytical lens to inform a coherent architectural response of designing beyond boundaries to achieve advanced design innovations with environmental sensitivity and site specificity.**

IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS

Expectations for Professional Conduct
The motto of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is "Through learning and temperance to virtue". This motto places equal emphasis on the intellectual and moral education of students. In addition to pursuing academic excellence, students of CUHK are expected to maintain and uphold the highest standard of integrity and honesty in their academic and personal lives, respect the rights of others and abide by the law. More information on Postgraduate studies can be found in the PG Student Handbook. https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/

Attendance
Class attendance is required in all courses. For an excused absence, the instructor must be notified and presented with documentation of illness or personal matter. Please note: **Three (3)** or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty
Attention is drawn to university policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students may be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines, and procedures. The Final Project will require students to submit and sign a written statement outlining details of any 3rd party assistance and acknowledgement of university policies on Academic Honesty to their studio instructor before their review.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on academic dishonesty. While "academic dishonesty" is the overall name, there are several sub-categories as follows:

i. Plagiarism
ii. Undeclared multiple submissions
iii. Employing or using services provided by a third party to undertake ones' submitted work, or providing services as a third party
iv. Distribution/ Sharing/ Copying of teaching materials without the consent of the course teachers to gain unfair academic advantage in the courses
v. Violating rules 15 or 16 of the University's Examination Rules (Annex 1) or rule 9 or 10 of the University's Online Examination Rules (Annex 2)
vi. Cheating in tests and examinations (including violation of rules 17 or 18 of the University's Examination Rules or rule 11, 12, 13, 14 or 16 of the University's Online Examination Rules)
vii. Impersonation fraud in tests and examinations (including violation of rule 19 of the University's Examination Rules or rule 15 of the University's Online Examination Rules)
viii. All other acts of academic dishonesty
ix. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University.

Third-Party Assistance
All intellectual work essential to the design project must be completed by the student and cannot, under any circumstance, be outsourced to a third party (including, but not limited to a company, consultant, alumni, and/or friend).
In the design studio context, students may utilise external resources, such as printing services for presentation materials, and/or laser cutting and 3D printing services for prototyping purposes. Use of such third-party services constitutes non-intellectual work done by others. It is only permitted with prior written consent from the studio tutor and acknowledgment of such work done by the third party.

Assistance from other students or friends for aspects of project production also constitutes non-intellectual work done by others; this is allowed only if declared and acknowledged in a written statement attached to any such work that has received assistance.

Under all circumstances, students must declare all work done by others by completing the school's designated form before assessment. This form must include a detailed explanation of the third party's identity (name and relationship to the student), when and how they were utilized, and the specific tasks they performed in the project. The completed form, signed by the student, must be endorsed by the tutor and presented during the final review. The school will collect and retain this form for record-keeping purposes.

Failure to follow this code of conduct may be considered a case of academic dishonesty, to be reviewed by a disciplinary board, and possible failure of the course.

Artificial Intelligence
This studio will adopt Approach 3 – "Use only with explicit acknowledgement."
Students may refer to Approach 3 – Use only with explicit acknowledgement from CUHK's "Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments – A Guide for Students."

Students are allowed to use AI tools for different tasks, always under the guidance of the tutor. Examples of tools include: ChatGPT (text-based support, prompt generation), Grammarly (grammar checking), and MidJourney (visual exploration). The use of such tools is permitted only on the condition that students provide explicit acknowledgement and proper citation of any input generated by AI tools.

Acknowledgement
"*I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/) to (specify the support, e.g. for text-based support and prompt generation, Grammarly for grammar checking, and MidJourney for visual exploration, etc.).*"

Student Work
Submission of studio documentation must be complete and correctly formatted. Missing or incomplete submission of the documentation folder will result in the grade for the course being withheld. This will prevent registration for the following term or delay graduation. In addition, a grade deduction of *one letter grade* will be made.

External Examination
Of paramount importance to the academic rigour and professional relevance of the architecture programme, the external examination process serves as a critical and impartial review mechanism. An invited panel of distinguished practitioners, academics, and industry experts convenes to rigorously evaluate the school's pedagogical ecosystem. This comprehensive audit scrutinises the fairness and consistency of the internal assessment process, benchmarks the standard and ambition of student work against national and international norms, and provides invaluable feedback on the intellectual and pedagogical direction of the curriculum itself.

As a cornerstone of this process and a mandatory graduating requirement, final-year students from both the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Architecture) and Master of Architecture programmes must present their final project and portfolio work in person. This formal defence before the external panel not only validates the authenticity and depth of their learning but also simulates a professional practice environment, demanding they articulate their design rationale, critical thinking, and technical resolution

to an authoritative audience, thereby preparing them for the collaborative and discursive nature of the architectural profession.

SCHEDULE

Important Dates

1_Studio Selection	01 SEP
2_COLLECTIVE Feedback	13, 16 OCT
3_COLLECTIVE Exhibition	1-2-3 DEC
4_PROJECT Proposal	12 DEC
5_PROJECT Technical Review	26 FEB, 2,5 MAR
6_PROJECT Final Presentation	4-5-6 MAY
7_PROJECT BOOK	4-5-6 MAY
8_EXTERNAL EXAMINATION	12-13-14-15 MAY

Term 1: 1 September 2025 (Monday) – 29 November 2025 (Saturday)

WEEK 01		
01.09	**ORIENTATION & STUDIO PRESENTATION**	**Studio Selection for Students**
04.09	**DAY_01 OF STUDIO**	**Studio Sections Announced**
WEEK 02		
08.09	**STUDIO**	Research : Types of Architecture
11.09	**STUDIO**	Research : Types of Architecture
WEEK 03		
15.09	**STUDIO**	Research : Types of Architecture
18.09	**STUDIO**	Research : Types of Architecture
WEEK 04		
22.09	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
25.09	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
WEEK 05		
29.09	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
02.10	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
WEEK 06		
06.10	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
09.10	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
WEEK 07		
13.10	**REVIEW**	COLLECTIVE Feedback
16.10	**REVIEW**	COLLECTIVE Feedback
WEEK 08		
20.10	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
23.10	**STUDIO**	Site Design : The Natural World and the Human World
WEEK 09		
27.10	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time
30.10	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time

WEEK 10		
03.11	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time
06.11	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time
WEEK 11		
10.11	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time
13.11	**STUDIO**	Architectural Design : Architecture and Time
WEEK 12		
17.11	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
20.11	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 13		
24.11	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
27.11	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 14		
01 – 03.12	**EXHIBITION**	COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION
WEEK 15		
12.12	**PROJECT PROPOSAL**	PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
WINTER HOLIDAY		
	STUDIO TRAVEL	Travel to Khao Yai Art Forest and Bangkok Kunsthalle (tbc)
	STUDIO TRAVEL	Travel to Khao Yai Art Forest and Bangkok Kunsthalle (tbc)

Term 2: 5 January 2026 (Monday) – 18 April 2026 (Saturday)

WEEK 19		
05.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
08.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 20		
12.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
15.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 21		
19.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
22.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 22		
26.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
29.01	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 23		
02.02	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
05.02	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 24		
09.02	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
12.02	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 25		
16.02	**Lunar New Year Vacation (16-22 Feb)**	No Class
19.02	**Lunar New Year Vacation (16-22 Feb)**	No Class
WEEK 26		
23.02	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
26.02	**REVIEW**	PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW
WEEK 27		
02.03	**REVIEW**	PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW
05.03	**REVIEW**	PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW

WEEK 28		
09.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
12.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 29		
16.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
19.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 30		
23.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
26.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 31		
30.03	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
02.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 32		
06.04	**Easter Holiday (3-6 Apr)**	No Class
09.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 33		
13.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
16.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 34		
20.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
23.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 35		
27.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
30.04	**STUDIO**	Designing Architecture as Scenery
WEEK 36		
04 – 06.05	**FINAL REVIEW + PROJECT BOOK**	PROJECT BOOK SUBMISSION
WEEK 37		
12 – 15.05	**EXTERNAL EXAMINATION**	

Grade	Descriptor	Criteria	Points
A	Excellent	Comprehensively excellent performance on all aspects of the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with distinction.	4
A-	Very Good	Generally outstanding performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with merit.	3.7
B+	Good	Substantial performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes satisfactorily.	3.3
B			3
B-			2.7
C+	Fair	Fair performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a passing standard.	2.3
C			2
C-			1.7
D+	Pass	Barely satisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a barely satisfactory standard.	1.3
D			1
F	Failure	Unsatisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Not achieving all learning outcomes.	0

Academic Honesty Statement

*Please print out and pin-up next to your works on your allocated panels

Relating to the 2025-26 Studio Review pin-up (MArch students)

Please tick one of the following:

☐ All the work and models presented at the Final Review were made by me personally

☐ All the work and models presented at the Final Review were made by me.
with the exception of the following:

Under all circumstances, students must declare all work done by others by completing this form before the review. Provide a detailed explanation of the third party's identity (name and relationship to the student), when and how they were utilized, and the specific tasks they performed in the project.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Tutor's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Written Feedback to Students

Term: _____ **Grade:** _____

Course Code: _____

Review: _____

Tutor: _____

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Feedback from Tutor:

Achievements:

Challenges: