

Work Is A Four Letter Word

RC13 / Sam Jacob / Eddie Blake / Sam Jacob Studio

The financial crisis of 2008 may not have spelt the end of late capitalism, but it serves to demonstrate the rapid and fundamental changes that are taking place fired by technology and globalisation.



Or New Landscapes For A New Economy

Sam Jacob / Eddie Blake / Sam Jacob Studio

This years research project will revolve around the idea of work.

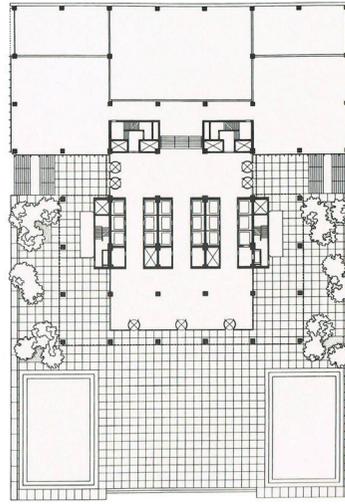
At a time when the technologies, structures and deep economics of 'work' are undergoing rapid change there is a clear urgency to speculate on the possibilities of what work might mean in the 21st century - and how architecture and design might help us imagine its future.

Just think: Traditional jobs for life have disappeared. New patterns of work with flatter hierarchies, portfolio careers and the rise of the precariat - a term that spans from the hipster fringes of the creative industries to zero hours contracts. With flexibility comes with uncertainty and deregulation. We will investigate and speculate on the new urban and spatial consequences of this 21st century condition.

Economic changes have a profound effect on the types of places and spaces that we work in. The traditional office is no longer fit for purpose. Workspace is having to evolve fast. We will help it evolve faster!



The Home Is As Much An
Invention Of The Industrial
Revolution As The Factory



A Short Picturebook of "Ideal" Workspaces
Bottom left: New Lanark, Scotland, 1786
Bottom Right: Great Work Room / Johnson Wax, Frank Lloyd Wright, USA, 1939
Centre Left: Willis Faber Dumas, Norman Foster, 1970
Centre Right: Apple HQ, Norman Foster, Now
Top Right: New Harmony, Robert Owen, 1825
Top Left: Segram Building, Mies van der Rohe, 1958



Research + Field Trip

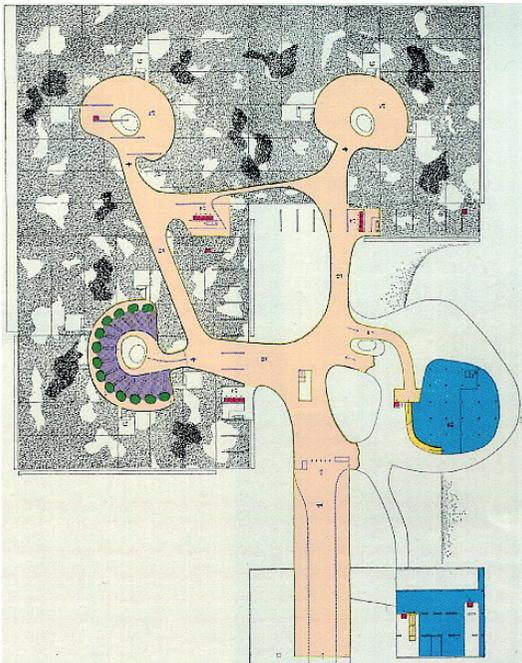
While we look to the near future, our research will be grounded in the history of workspaces. Our field trip will take us through a lineage of work spaces from reconstructions of Iron Age settlements, to monasteries and universities, from early forms of ideal settlements like New Lanark and Saltaire, to examples of philanthropic industrialism like Bournville to late 20th century examples such as call centres and business parks to the spaces of the new economy - Amazon distribution centres and co-working and maker spaces. We will use London too as a research resource. All of this will ground our speculations.



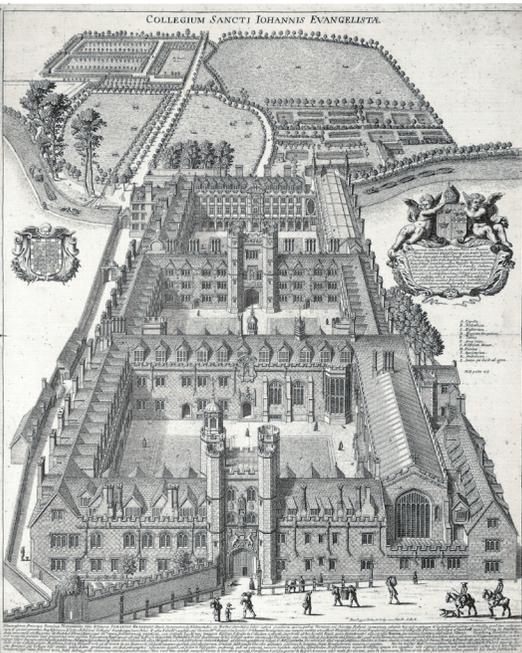
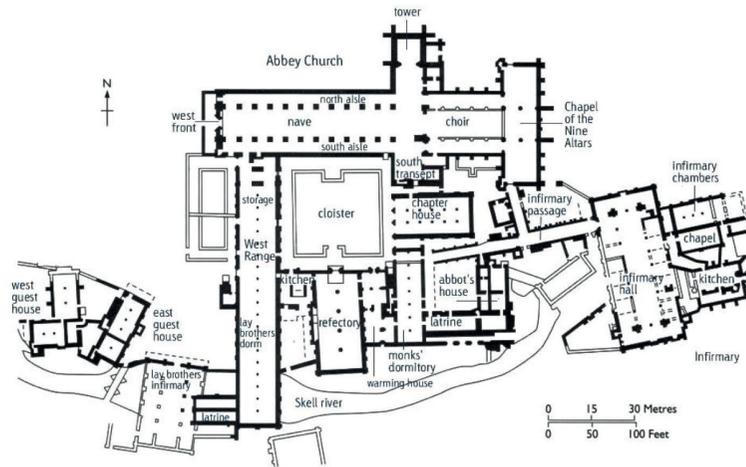
What might we learn from existing examples? The high tech baby-boomer fantasies such as the new Apple campus where smooth shiny perfect circles meet orchards as an inevitable fulfilment of the counter-cultures dreams of technology and nature. William Morris and his Art and Crafts attempts to resist the effects of capitalist-industrialist culture through reviving medieval craft. Or from Frank Lloyd Wright's Great Work Room designed for the Johnson Wax company that optimised the new bureaucratic space of the early 20th century?



Forms Of Labour
Create
Urban Forms



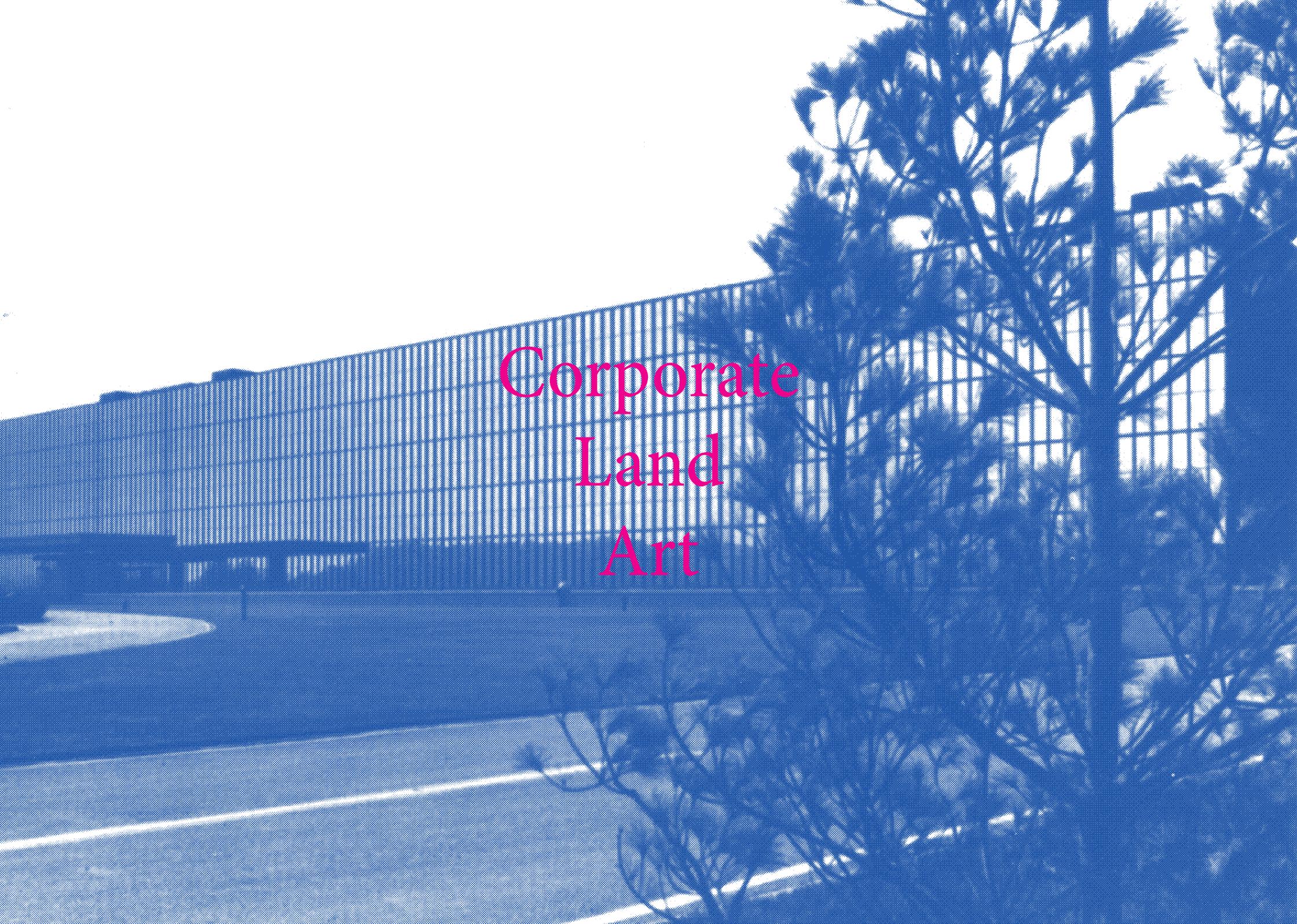
Workspace As Urbanism
 Top left: Centre for Electronic Calculation, Le Corbusier, 1962
 Bottom Left: St John's College, Cambridge, UK, 1511
 Below: Fountains Abbey, 1132



Urban Consequence

We will consider the wider consequences of work and its effect on the city: How workspaces have organised the city. Downtown, Industrial Estates, Business Parks are all urban configurations of work. So are London's East and West Ends. But so too are suburbs and dormitory towns.

In fact we might even understand the home as a product of workspace. Domesticity as much as factories were an invention of the industrial revolution. Now we find workspaces that approximate domestic styles, while homes themselves have invaded by work through constant communication. How might we develop new urban strategies that rethink the relationship between living and working?



Corporate
Land
Art

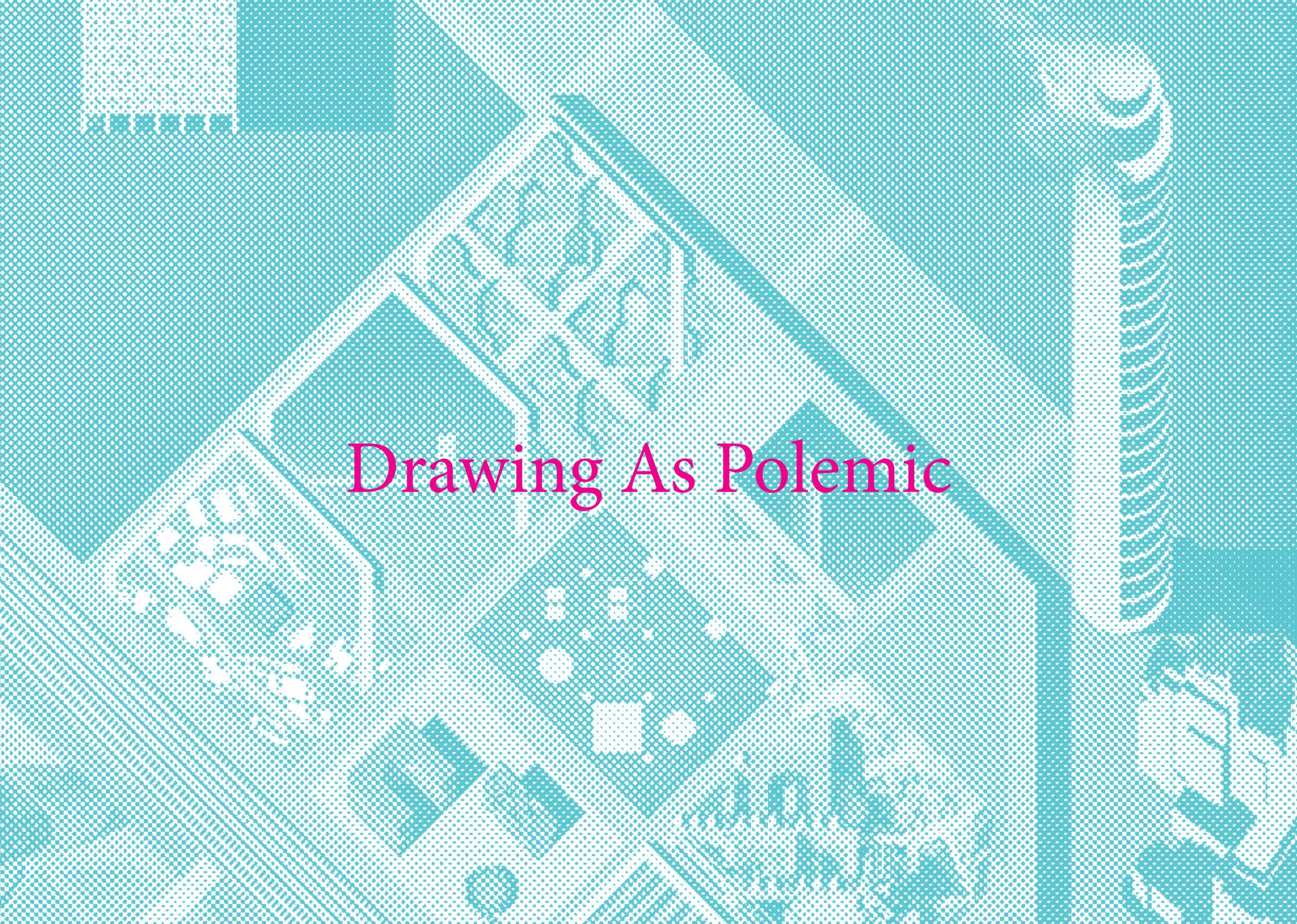


Site

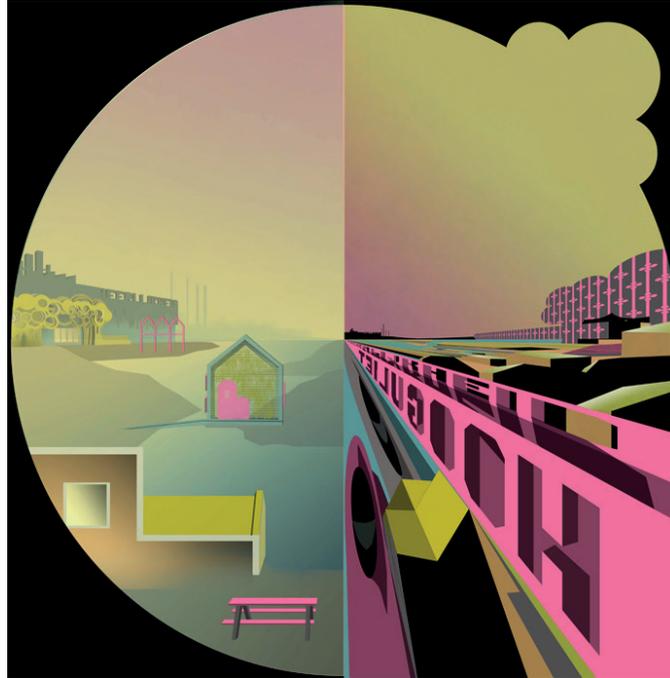
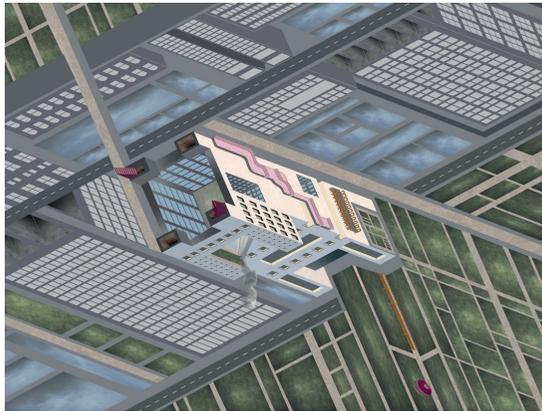
Our eventual site will be a very ordinary business park. We will use our research, newly found skills and knowledge to reinvent the typology of the business park. Here we will tackle the mundane and the recently redundant. We will use this as the perfect Petri dish to conduct our experimental proposals. And here we will begin to explore relationships between work and living, between the artificial and the natural, between history and the future. The business park is exciting precisely because it is so boring. Within its tedium we will see a bright spectrum of possibilities from which bright new social ideas might emerge.

Workshops and Expert Advice

The research unit will connect with live projects that Sam Jacob Studio are involved in. We will engage with experts, clients, designers and developers involved in thinking about the nature of work and workspace. Hearing from and experiencing the cutting edge of workplace design will be formative in how we develop new strategies. And we will use our panel of experts as a sounding board towards questions of plausibility even at the limits of our imaginations. The unit's ambition is to produce a body of work - collectively and individually - that has real cultural significance both within the school and beyond.



Drawing As Polemic



Right: Examples of recent student projects from units run by Sam Jacob at Yale and UIC. These show the graphic speculation and precision of the studios ethos carried through to final proposals.

How We Will Work

We will work making speculative drawings that propose new forms of organisation, large scale models that explore form. These will be tools that allow the politics of the project to be explored through form, space and materiality. We will make incredible drawings and models that engage a wide range of approaches, media and materials. They will be big and stunning!

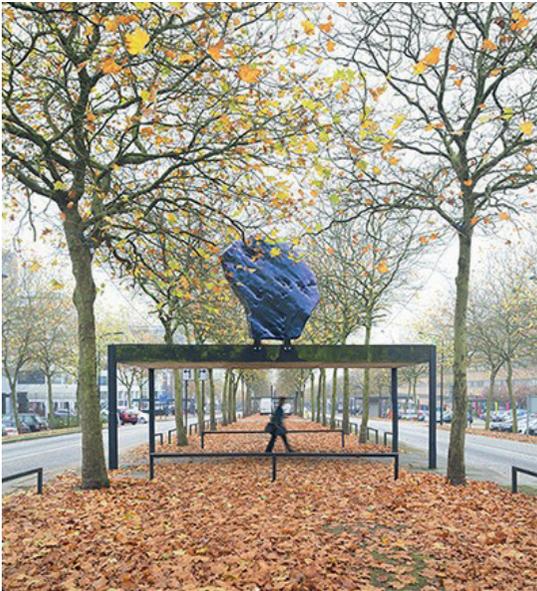
We will work often through iteration - making our drawings better and better each time we revisit them. We will use the drawing as the site for speculation - so begin with drawings so good that they look like the final project.

They will draw on the history of architectural representation as well as fine art references, but they will create works that are completely new and of our own time.

We will work through scales from the object to the city - from 1:1 projects to masterplans. At a 1:1 scale we will use installation and performance as well as fabrication as devices to imagine new possibilities of productivity and exchange. Through masterplans we will figure ways in which forms of labour create urban forms.

Our work will marry explosive and striking representational approaches with conceptual and critical approaches. When this works well, the drawings and models become arguments and manifestos themselves: These will be far more than illustrations. They will be powerful statements where the aesthetic becomes

About Us



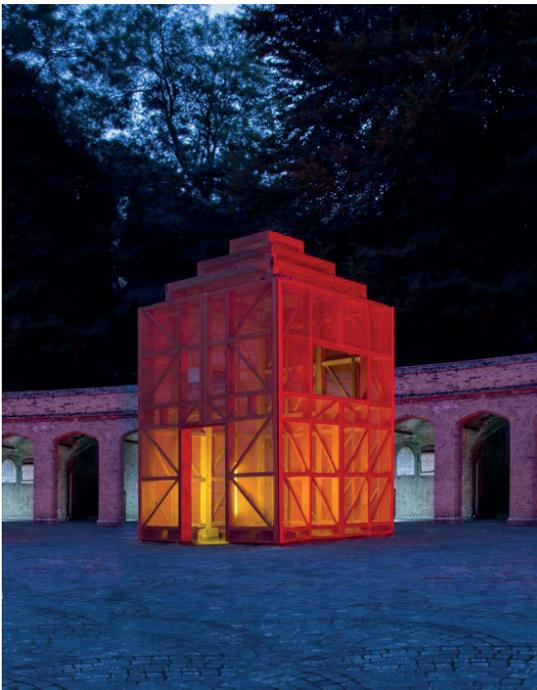
Recent SJS Projects:

Bottom Right: A Very Small Part Of Architecture, 2016

Bottom Left: Ivy Street, 2015 -

Left: MK Menhier, 2015

Below: Arts Centre, Chicago, 2015



The unit will be taught by Sam Jacob and Eddie Blake of Sam Jacob Studio and will be supported by Chloe Leen and Flick Barbur also of SJS.

Sam Jacob Studio (www.samjacob.com) is a collaborative practice working across architecture, design and urbanism. The studio operates on design projects at urban and architectural scales as well as devising objects and strategies.

Current and recent work includes a resurrected version of a never-built design by Adolf Loos for a mausoleum, a new mixed use building in London's Shoreditch, installations at the Venice Biennale, exhibition designs for the V&A and the Design Museum, as well as masterplans that reinvent the possibilities of living and working on, surprisingly enough, a business park.

Sam Jacob is principal of Sam Jacob Studio for architecture and design, a practice whose work spans scales and disciplines from urban design through architecture, design, art and curatorial projects. He has worked internationally on award winning projects and has exhibited at major museums such as the V&A, MAK, and The Art Institute of Chicago as well as cultural events including the Venice Architecture Biennale. He is Professor of Architecture at UIC, Chicago and had been visiting professor at Yale School of Architecture as well as teaching previously at the Architectural Association, London. Sam is columnist for Art Review and Dezeen. Previously he was a founding director of FAT Architecture (www.fat.co.uk).

Eddie Blake studied architecture at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow followed by the University of Westminster.

Before joining Sam Jacob Studio, Eddie was part of Studio Weave where he worked on diverse schemes ranging from masterplanning to public space and pavilions for clients such as the National Trust, City of London and the Guinness Trust. His last project with Studio Weave was the widely acclaimed Midden Studio, Scotland.

Eddie also writes on architecture for magazines including