



## AN ARCHITECTURE OF THE WILD

This year we will take an interest in finite and infinite processes, and the exploration of the edge of the remote. To find this edge we will travel to Reykjavik and venture deep into the remote Icelandic wilderness to explore and work inventively over immense scales of time, in places very much alive. We wish to consider how one might activate remote territories rich with aggressive natural phenomena, bursting bellies of thermal heat, and a stretching of time from midnight sun to full days of darkness.

The focus of the unit is as much about noticing the discreet nuances of strangeness in a place as it is being curious and inventing into it. How is architecture able to work with the environment and draw from its immense scale, strangeness and power? We will begin to find out through embarking on a hunt into the wild. The hunt becomes the first act of proposition. Lead by discovery but tested through an equal measure of invention, we will stir up these hostile territories to wonder, how might one design for a curious sense of existence? The design projects set throughout the year seek to imagine new and unapologetic architectures that engage directly within the natural forces at the perceived edge of the civilised world.

From glacier to geyser - An architecture of geology

*"The central highland is one of Iceland's greatest treasures, containing volcanoes, glaciers, voluminous rivers and waterfalls, colourful hot springs and mud pools, vast lava fields and broad expanses of black sand, all contrasted with oases of vibrant but vulnerable vegetation. The power of the natural forces at work there, including the interplay of fire and ice, continuously create and mould an imposing and dramatic terrain, while the tranquility and solitude of the wilderness can enchant visitors in such a way as to be an unforgettable experience."*<sup>1</sup>

We are not alone in our desire to explore this immense and rogue terrain. Iceland's tourism is on the rise and every year the city of Reykjavik, the main port of entry for any traveler visiting Iceland, received over a million visitors. Seeing that the country only has 330,000 inhabitants, one could easily imagine the mounting pressure on the country's resources and infrastructure due to the surge in tourism.

This challenging dilemma is the starting point of the year - how could you invent and design architectural interventions that enables an engaging way to meet and experience the fantastic landscapes, without harming its sensitive ecologies or depleting its resources. And upon returning to the city of Reykjavik again, how could your understandings of larger timescales, and a deeper poetic sense towards such unusual landscape dynamics, open up ways of thinking about the city itself?

To infinity... and beyond! - An architecture of deep time

When thinking about and working with landscapes, we also need to be aware of the shift in timescales from the fast and relentless pace of the 21st century city life, to a slower, deeper timescale. Our lives as urban dwellers are accelerating dramatically. We are curious about what happens if you slow things down and start to think super long-term about the things we make and use. What if what your Architectural interventions need to last for centuries, or millennia? We will ask you to look creatively at working with resource, place, and time with an inventive intelligence.

Imagination as a facilitator of the hunt to explore

We are looking to better understand how a sense of curiosity is developed within remote territories over longer periods, even decades, or perhaps a lifetime. How does one develop a self sufficiency to excite one's own imagination? As many inventions have placed the world easily available at the edge of one's thumb, it has also perhaps allowed us to forget the necessity of adventure and getting lost. Living in place that is on the edge of the remote, with space for silence and the ability to be present during observation, one can find curiosity in a range of ways. The remoteness and emptiness is a place of potential and most importantly, an adventure that is made rather than given.

Methodology

U16 is design laboratory that enjoys the challenge of making difficult things. We seek to generate work and ideas that hold the confidence to find their own language of expression and invention. There is a strong emphasis on exploration through a range of made and drawn physical production. We are not afraid to go rogue with an idea and encourage work that has the tenacity to take risks and rigorously chase a hunch into the unknown. Ultimately, we are interested in creating a learning environment where a variety of approaches to creative production help each student to work in a manor that challenges and draws out their personal character through the work.