

# UNIT 14



Dirk Krolikowski  
Jakub Klaska

At the center of Unit 14's academic exploration lies Buckminster Fuller's ideal of the 'The Comprehensive Designer', a master-builder that follows Renaissance principles and a holistic approach. Fuller referred to this ideal of the designer as somebody who is capable of comprehending the 'integrateable significance' of specialised findings and is able to realise and coordinate the commonwealth potentials of these discoveries while not disappearing into a career of expertise. Like Fuller, we are opportunists in search of new ideas and their benefits via architectural synthesis.

As such Unit 14 is a test bed for exploration and innovation, examining the role of the architect in an environment of continuous change. We are in search of the new, leveraging technologies, workflows and modes of production seen in disciplines outside our own. We test ideas systematically by means of digital as well as physical drawings, models and prototypes. Our work evolves around technological speculation with a research-driven core, generating momentum through astute synthesis.

Our propositions are ultimately made through the design of buildings and through the in-depth consideration of structural formation and tectonic constituents. This, coupled with a strong research ethos, will generate new and unprecedented, viable and spectacular proposals. They will be beautiful because of their intelligence - extraordinary findings and the artful integration of those into architecture.

## PIONEERING SENTIMENT<sup>1</sup>

*“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”*

Albert Einstein

This year’s UNIT 14 focus shifts onto examining moments of pioneering sentiment. We will find out about how human endeavour, deep desire and visionary thought interrelate and advance cultural as well as technological means while driving civilisation as highly developed organisation. For example: Pioneering sentiment is obvious on urban planning scale within European cities but extends to the endeavours of settlers in the Wild West of the United States, for a long time the fringe of western civilisation.

The underlying principle and observation of our investigations will be that futurist speculation inspires and ultimately brings about significant change. A prominent thinker is the Californian Syd Mead who envisages and has scripted a holistic vision of the future with his designs and paintings. Supported by competent research we will search for the depicted pioneering sentiment and amplify found nuclei into imaginative tales with architectural visions fuelled by speculation.

In the first weeks, we will start with our individual investigations of pioneering drive throughout history and relate them back to contemporary standards to understand impact and project the learned. As universal as our commitment and thoughts is our testbed and territory for our investigations and proposals. Possible sites are as such global or specific to our visits, as much as the individual investigations suggest and opportunities arrive. Throughout Unit 14 will be supported by a working relationship with innovators across design. We will liaise with experts from practices such as ARUP, AKT, RSHP, Zaha Hadid Architects and Foster + Partners. We will engage specialists, but remain generalists, synthesising knowledge towards novel ways of thinking, making and communicating architecture.

This year’s cultural expedition will start with the exploration of Berlin in its heydays in the vibrant ‘golden 1920s’. Its internationally influencing role in science, architecture and design as the birthplace of the Bauhaus but also place of residence of many excellent minds of the epoch -like Einstein, Gropius, Klee, Kandinsky and Wachsmann- was a melting pot of pioneering thoughts and endeavour before the cold and dark cloak of the war swallowed its civilisatory achievements driving most brilliant minds to the US. On our trail to rediscover the golden Berlin of the 1920s we will experience a Berlin that is once again keen to play out its dream as European capital and place of pioneering thoughts. Departing by ICE at night from the former American/Soviet Checkpoint Charlie, the territorial node of two superpowers, we arrive further south in Saxony where we find out about Dresden, a city of baroque beauty before leaving for Leipzig the setting of Goethe’s Faust. There we will visit the place where the devil Mephistopheles acquaints Faust in Auerbach’s Cellar and the protagonist calls upon the ghosts of nature to provide metaphysical insight. After night-time drinks, with freshly hatched plots we continue our journey southwards over the mountains onto the plateau that hosts the beautiful city of Prague and its rich cultural heritage. As it is Jakub’s hometown, he will guide us into the unknow Prague, invisible to the casual visitor: We will discover an unexpected, mysterious, dark and amazing side to Czech culture which will serve us as an inspiration to dream of the wild and wonderful, the science and science fiction. While we envision possible futures, we push hard to pioneer with the tools of architectural proposition.

- 1 to pioneer: to develop or be the first to use or apply (a new method, area of knowledge, or activity)
- 2 to innovate: introducing new ideas; original and creative in thinking