

24 | SCULPTING IN TIME

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Unit 24 is a group of architectural storytellers employing design, film, animation, drawing, VR/AR and physical modelling to explore architecture's relationship with time. We nurture free thinkers who are prepared to explore novel ideas and techniques. We find inspiration in the dialogue between film and architecture, study their intertwined histories and seek the magical possibilities arising from their merger.

Craft

This year we will turn our attention to the evolving notion of craft. What is the meaning of craft today, when new digital technologies are rendering the nineteenth-century dichotomy between the hand, the eye and the machine obsolete?

John Ruskin and the 'Arts and Crafts' movement offered an antidote to numbing, dehumanising industrialisation; a highly skilled and 'fulfilled' artisanal workforce was imagined as a morally superior alternative. The movement became an intellectual global force, however, technologically driven growth eventually pervaded and shaped the modern city. Yet a new attention to craft—and its related values of authenticity, engagement with materials, personalisation, skill, care, time and provenance—has recently re-emerged. The popularity of Etsy, Minecraft, BrewDog, The Bake-Off etc. attest to craft's resurrection in a new form that responds to, and harnesses, the post-digital economy.

But, where does craft lie in architecture and film? How does it manifest itself in brick, stone and celluloid, or drawing, editing and cinematography?

Aalto/Tarkovsky | Helsinki/Tallinn

In November, we will set our compasses North and embark on a road trip to the lands that shaped the work of two modern master craftsmen: an architect and a filmmaker.

We will start in Helsinki, where some of the most celebrated buildings of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto are sited. His Tuusula studio pioneered a new design ideology rooted in craft, nature and technology. Through collaborations with Artek and Iittala, Aalto forged a new relationship with industry, which allowed the

hand of the studio to remain close to built artefacts: from vases to staircases and chairs to roofscapes.

We will then cross by boat the Gulf of Finland to visit Tallinn, the city whose fringes acted as the backdrop for *Stalker*, the enigmatic film by Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky. Obsessed with the craft and production of movies, Tarkovsky saw film as a poetic act of making: a sculpting in time. Beyond the industrial ruins of *Stalker's* 'zone', Tallinn is full of surprising contradictions. One of the best-preserved, UNESCO listed, medieval cities, it is also dubbed the Silicon Valley of Europe, with the highest number of startups and a digital economy driven by blockchain and e-residency.

Does a hybrid practice placed between architectural design and filmmaking—one that blurs the boundaries between making and experience—hold the key to defining craft for the future?

We are looking for a redefinition of craft beyond digital form-finding that uses narrative and storytelling to address place, memory and performance.

We will ask: What is the relationship between materiality and craft? Or, more problematically, craft and ethics? Is craft still grounded on local, individual skill, or can it be dispersed between many in the cloud, crowd-sourced and spread globally? And how can we overcome 'the handmade vs the machine' in an era when the human hand and eye have been softly mechanised through emerging, immersive digital technologies?

Film/Architecture Studio

After a period of intense skilling-up and filmmaking in the first term, Year 4 students will propose carefully time-crafted architectures within the modern economies of Finland or Estonia. Year 5 students will build on their last year's investigations, creating architectural 'essay films' that sculpt in time. A series of workshops with filmmakers, games designers, visualisers, VR developers, musicians and sound technologists will support this year's work along with access to our Oculus Rift and an HTC Vive sets. Our innovative work in immersive environments will be supported by Leap Motion.