

ARCHITECTURE ROUNDTABLES AT THE BARTLETT

12.10.2022



**INCLUSION
AND DIVERSITY:
AN OPEN
FUTURE FOR
ARCHITECTURE**

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12.10.2022 | Roundtable discussion | The Bartlett
Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL



INTRODUCTION

The Bartlett, UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment, hosted a roundtable discussion on 12 October 2022 titled Inclusion and diversity: An open future for architecture.

The Bartlett School of Architecture (BSA) recently received findings from an independent environmental investigation into behaviour, culture and educational practices at the school. This report identified unacceptable conduct. Our apology and statement can be read [here](#), and the full investigation report is available [online](#). We know this must be a moment of change, and we are committed to improving workplace culture and behaviour in the BSA.

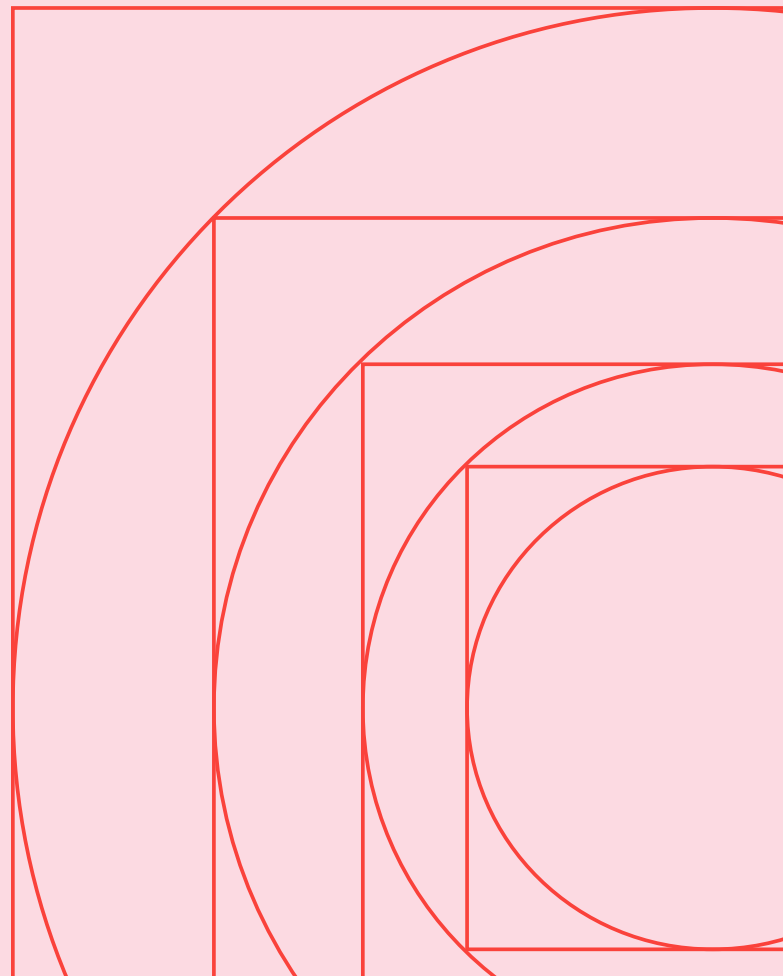
This event was the second in a series of Architecture Roundtables at The Bartlett aiming to start conversations about how to disrupt existing structures of privilege and power, and to create spaces and opportunities for those who have been marginalised.

We invited practitioners, educators, researchers, advocacy groups and professional bodies to join this roundtable discussion. We wanted to hear their views and create space for an open dialogue with colleagues and partners from across the sector.

The agenda focused on empowering people in architectural education and practice, and creating conversations between education and practice.

The event was hosted by Professor Christoph Lindner, Dean of the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, Professor Jacqui Glass, former interim Director of the Bartlett School of Architecture, and Professor Amy Kulper, Director of the Bartlett School of Architecture.

We thank our guests and hosts for approaching these topics with openness, humility and care.



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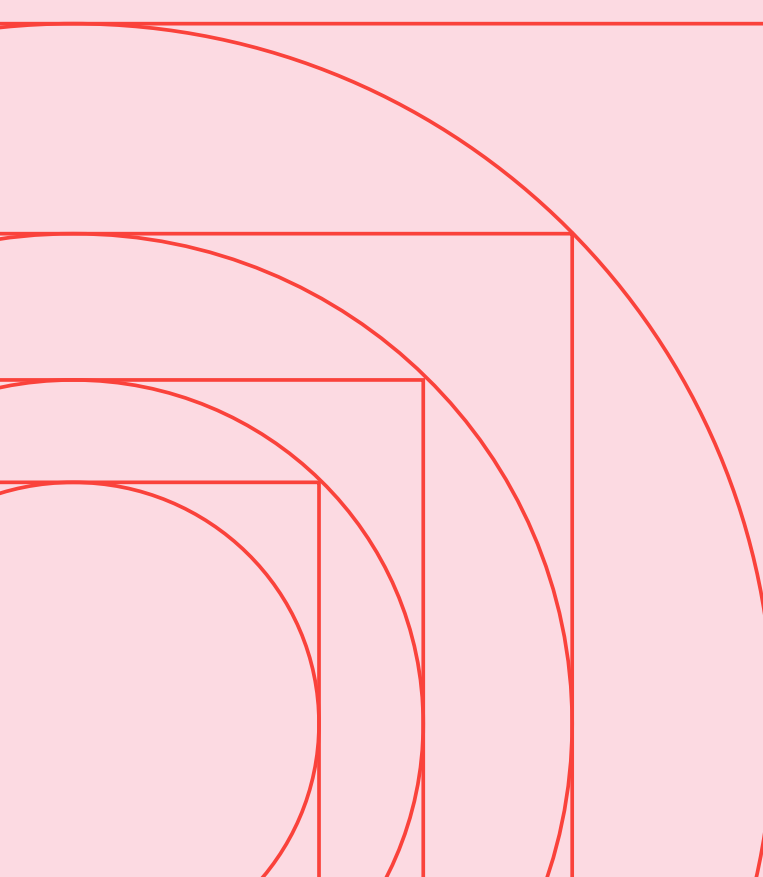
**EMERGING
THEMES AND
IDEAS**

We are sharing a summary of themes and ideas which emerged from the discussion, and we hope this will contribute to real, lasting and positive change in architecture education and practice.

This summary is not intended to represent the views of UCL, or of any individual. It is a condensed summary of the diverse views and opinions expressed during the roundtable discussion.

Creating change that foregrounds equity

- Work to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) will never end – these are long-term issues of intergenerational justice. At the BSA, we do not ‘have’ EDI, but we are constantly working towards it.
- There is an opportunity to create change in architecture education and imagine a radically inclusive, collaborative, egalitarian pedagogy where students and teachers learn from each other.
- Culture change needs to be underpinned by policy and procedure to prevent progress being undone and old patterns of behaviour being repeated.
- Change can be achieved by people coming together to collectively design new ways of thinking, educating and practicing.



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Connections and spaces between education and practice

- A reciprocal relationship between architecture education and architecture practice is valuable to all. Stronger connections, but also some safe spaces and thoughtful separations, are needed to disrupt existing structures of privilege and power.
- Safe, enabling spaces can be created, for example in mentoring relationships.
- For students, architecture practice feels remote, and their main contact is with their tutors. Educators can create more exposure and connection for students to practice through formal and informal means, including alumni talks and mentoring.
- As students graduate and begin working, valuable connections can be difficult to maintain. This is a particular issue for international students, but continued connection can help to create new opportunities for relationships between education and practice.

Agency, confidence and power

- There is no single path into practice, and there are multiple routes to qualification. Agency, underpinned by confidence, is essential for people to find their own paths and strengths.
- Educators and practitioners can help build a sense of agency among individuals entering the profession by focusing on facilitating, nurturing and enabling. There might usefully be a shift away from 'empowerment' as obsolete structures of power are dismantled.
- Agency can be lost in cultures where there is pressure to work long hours and late at night. If students and practitioners lose sense of the value of their time, it will not be valued by clients. Support for personal development and time outside of study and work is needed to reintroduce individual value and agency.

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Dimensions of diversity

- Many architecture students choose non-accredited or non-vocational programmes, and diverse career paths can be followed in the profession. Educators can acknowledge and support this through diverse methods of teaching, presentation and assessment. For example, digital platforms can create safe learning and assessment spaces, and techniques from drama and comedy improvisation can be used to build more diverse skills.
- Practices are also diverse in scale and type, and all types of practice need to be included in creating change across the architecture sector. Some practitioners and practices cannot give their time for free, and this is a barrier to the diversity that is needed in creating change.

Opening career paths

- Barriers exist and hold students back in the transition from study to work. What employers are looking for is not always what students present, and students' talents may not always be recognised.
- Educators and practitioners can do more to signpost the route to success, and help students follow their own paths to enter and stay in the profession.
- Paid internships, supported by educators, can create better contact with practice for students and provide a route to lasting careers in the profession.
- Employers can sometimes be biased toward filling an immediate need, but a longer-term mindset can create greater value through more diverse perspectives, skills and talents.

Building skills and relationships

- Educators can respond to the needs of employers, for example by placing more emphasis on teaching soft skills.
- Group projects can reflect how work is carried out in practice and offer valuable opportunities to develop employer-oriented skills.
- Educators can teach the value of creating long-term and meaningful relationships, moving away from education as a service transaction, and emphasising collegiality and co-design.
- Where competition is valued over collaboration in education, this invariably produces 'losers' and creates a culture of competition that feeds into practice. Instead, collaboration can be taught as a skill which is highly valued in practice.

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CONCLUSION

Many ideas and visions for positive change in architecture education, and across the sector, were shared in this discussion. We are so grateful to the colleagues, peers and partners who contributed to this crucial moment of reflection.

We are conscious that many voices and perspectives that will be vital in creating change were missing from this discussion. We will continue to work towards widening and opening up this conversation as we chart a way forward for the future of the BSA and architecture education.

The BSA is committed to creating radical change, and our students and staff have formed Action Groups focusing on designing changes in care and wellbeing, unit selection, the crit experience, and communications. Changes have already begun, and we will continue to pilot and test new models in the year ahead. We are focusing on listening and engaging with our community of students and staff as we make these changes.

We openly invite you to stay in touch. We look forward to the next Architecture Roundtable at The Bartlett in spring 2023, and to continuing and developing these conversations.

This event is the second in a series of Architecture Roundtables hosted by the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment at UCL.

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