Transcript: Inclusive Spaces: Rethinking disability and the built environment

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

Disability, space, built environment, sensory, architecture, representation, design, public space

**SPEAKERS**

Kamna Patel, Jos Boys, Natasha Trotman, Raquel Mesquer

**Kamna Patel 00:04**

Hello everyone. Welcome to the Bartlett and to Inclusive Spaces. My name is Kamna Patel, and I'm the vice dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Bartlett. I can see that we have a number of people who are joining us today, which is incredibly exciting to see because we are aware that your time is precious particularly at this time, so we really appreciate that you've taken the time to be with us live. Inclusive Spaces is a new initiative from the Bartlett and what we're trying to do in this monthly seminar series, is to showcase some of the academic work that we're doing where issues of equity intersect with the built environment and principally allow us to foreground scholarship, latest thinking, ideas and experiences around specific aspects of equity. In the discussion that we're going to be having shortly we're going to be focusing on disability and ability within the built environment.

I am incredibly excited to welcome you not just to this session but to all the sessions that are to come. We will be looking at questions of LGBTQA and queerness in the built environment, race and the built environment, and a host of other equity related issues. It is my sincere pleasure to welcome Jos, Natasha and Raquel, who are going to be kicking off and - I have all the confidence - setting an exceptional standard for the rest of us to and to try and keep up with. I would like to remind you that this session is being recorded and so we will be making a recording of this available to everyone who registered for this talk, so you can watch it again. It will also be available in the future to current students and to future students as a resource for their own learning and knowledge of the built environment; of what it is and what it can be.

The hashtag, I've been asked to remind you, is #inclusivespaces, so if you're on Twitter please do tweet about this and to help us disseminate the work that we're doing within the Bartlett and the ideas that you're going to be hearing. Without any further ado, I would like to pass over to Jos Boys. Jos is the course director of the MSc Learning Environment and in her capable hands we will be led through this super interesting, exciting, and necessary discussion around ableism and the built environment. Over to Jos.

**Dr Jos Boys 02:50**

Thank you, thank you Kamna, and thank you and welcome to everybody who's here, very nice to have you in the room. I am, as Kamna said, the course director for the MSc in Learning Environments, but really what I want to talk about in this session together with Raquel and Natasha is the work that I've been doing as part of a group that was started in 2008 called the Dis/ordinary Architecture Project. The aim of that group has always been to promote activity that develops and captures models of new practice for the built environment led by the creativity and experiences of disabled artists. So, when co-founder Zoe Parsington, who's a partially sighted artist, and I got together originally we were really interested in thinking about how one could actually bring diverse disabled voices into architecture when although there are many people working in the built environment disciplines, who have an impairment, it's something that you hide, it's something you tend not to disclose. Raising the possibility of having very creative discussions that really forefronted disabled people's creativity, their various experiences of the built environment, working with artists seemed like a very good way of doing that. And the second thing about that is - here it says - modes of new practice. This is not just about us being kind of an alternative access consultant, it's actually about really rethinking completely how we understand disability and ability within the built environment. As most of you will know, there is a normative way of doing that, it is around very functional understandings of disability and a kind of end-of-the-process set of activities, where we engage with disabled people at the end, as a kind of oddity, who have to be included; when we've already excluded them! And we do it through these really banal access, design guidance and regulations. So the Dis/ordinary Architecture Project comes from somewhere really different, which is here: it's from the enormous creativity of disabled artists. It's from the kind of great richness of starting from difference as a way of understanding, exploring, and opening up the world to different ways of being, and learning from that. And I speak as - I come to this, I'm the token architect in the group - and I would call myself non-disabled, so I'm really interested in what counts as allyship. So, the way that we always work is by working together in different ways with disabled artists, designers/architects, and co-developing alternative ways of engaging with the built environment. Those often start very directly with our own embodiment, whatever that might be. So, we're going to start today very directly through the work that Raquel will do next, about what that means, how one might really engage with these processes very differently. Raquel will start and then Natasha will follow on, and I’ll ask them both to introduce themselves in the way that they want to, so if I stop sharing and Raquel - I hope we can go on to you.

**Raquel Mesquer 06:47**

Here we go, thanks Jos. Thanks, so: my name is Raquel Mercier, I am a 44 year old femme of dual heritage. I have long curly hair that I'm wearing today half up, half down, and I'm wearing a bright pink raspberry woolly jumper and I describe myself in that way to already begin to shift the etiquette of this space and make it more accessible to visually impaired people, but also to anybody right now who needs a break from the screen. In the visually impaired communities that I work with, in their forums they have all the screens off, all the videos off; so it's a purely auditory experience, and that's what I invite you to do today. I invite you to have a break from having to look at the screen for the next 10 or 15 minutes that I'm going to be talking you through an exercise, and through my work.

So, another way I would identify is as a cloud spotter and that is my euphemism for the pain and fatigue and the horizontal needs of an invisible disability like chronic pain. I like that title as well because it tells you something about my horizontal needs, but also something, I think, about the poetry and the pause of the cloud spotter. So mine is an unstable mind body intermittent, I navigate precarity, and vertical culture, and built environment that is not designed with my mind body in mind. At the weekend there was an online festival of art by disabled artists, and in one of the events Cyrus Marcus Ware said ‘it's our job to make the future irresistible’. They were talking about a future in which people who were disabled, queer, trans, people of color, and their communities are not marginalized. And I love that provocation - not just to be compliant, but to make it irresistible. So, those new futures that we imagine can only exist in spaces that are designed for different mind-bodies, and that's quite a big responsibility on all of you today, or a challenge, if you like, to create the spaces for more equitable gathering. I think in time ... in this time we need tolerance, understanding, and care more than ever, and we need spaces that help us be together, that facilitate that in different ways. So, one of the ways that we can begin to imagine those spaces, those different spaces, is to begin to take on the lens of different mind-bodies. Mind-bodies different from our own. So, I'm going to walk you through my lens and my work, and as I do that I'd like to give us all permission to find this new, uncomfortable maybe, overwhelming maybe, but to lean into that and to try to be awake to the detail, and to the thing that excites you. It might be one or two things that you can already like to take hold of and begin to weave diversity into your work. Like Jos said, we're interested in modes and processes and practices, so I'm going to take you through an embodied exercise because I think coming back into our bodies is something we don't do enough at the moment.

I'd like you to start by sitting in your chair, or wherever you are sitting, and noticing the shape of the way you're sitting.

Notice the architecture, if you like, and the shape of that.

And notice how you feel.

And that might be hard to describe: it might be something, it might be a color, or a flavor, it might not be, it might be an emotion ... but just try to notice how you feel inside your body right now.

And then I'd like to invite you to really slouch wherever you're sitting at the moment, kind of really really indulging in like the worst posture you can imagine.

And take a moment to be there and again notice that shape.

And notice how you feel inside - not what it might look like from the outside, or how we might read it from the outside - but what it feels inside your body, to you today.

And then I'd like you to stand up

stand up and plant your feet wider than hip width apart, and place your hands on your hips

and again notice the shape, notice how you feel. Is your sense of space around you any different? Is your sense of spaciousness different?

And then I'd like you to go and stand with your back against a door or wall, hopefully you can hear me, but stand with your back right up against the wall

and again notice what that evokes for you and then I'd like you to find somewhere you can lie down for the next 10 minutes.

Somewhere you can lie down comfortably, and when you arrive there let your weight really fall into the structure you've chosen to support you, and notice how you feel

So, in 2016 I set off a security alert by lying down on the sixth floor of the Southbank Centre. I'd begun to experiment with lying down in public spaces so that I could be out in the world for longer, and I got kicked back quite a lot, I got moved on, but this was the first time I'd triggered a security alert. In response to that I began collecting people's stories about times they've tried to rest in public. So, I sent a call out to anybody who is neurodiverse or has an invisible disability or long-term condition, and people started sending me these very frank and truthful telegrams about how they navigate the built environment. My project A Crash Course in Cloud Spotting is an audio installation that tells some of those stories.

Now, the gem of that project for us was that we discovered that when we lie down our sense of self is very different. We're generally more open, more vulnerable, and when we lie down for a longer period of time, we begin to take in information and to listen to stories differently. We found that words land in the body, or can land in the body differently, which is why I'm asking you to lie down for the next 10 minutes as an experiment in what it's like to be together differently and to listen differently, and so that you don't feel like the need to sit up and write down any notes - if there's something you really really want to remember I'm going to teach you a mnemonic. So, if there's a thought you want to remember, circle your finger with another finger three times, and do that on a separate finger for each thought, and that will help you recall it at the end of my talk. So, I have been using rest to disrupt the etiquette in public spaces in works of art and in public interventions for the last couple of years.

Like I said, in our installation we tell some of these stories about lying down in public, and we ask the audience to lie down, to do that to participate in a collective act of rest. We do this to claim the horizontal as a site for theater, and new modes of storytelling, and there are other artists who work to claim the horizontal also as a site for activism and restoration; and I can tell you a bit more about them in the Q&A, if you like. Some other ongoing projects of mine include a photo documentary project called Crap Ceilings, in which I record the many ceilings I have rested under public ceilings I have rested under in the last few years. And right now, I'd like to invite you to take in the detail of your ceiling ... take a moment to look at the cracks, and the shadows, the traces, and the edges.

So, I've called this project Crap Ceilings kind of tongue-in-cheek because I really have developed a real fondness for this view. This view is not really a designed view, it's not really one that we're meant to see but often the brutalism of it and the mixture of light and metal and concrete I've started to find fascinating and I think that points to the epic in the everyday that we can begin to pay attention to. I have another project called Horizontal Conversations, which flips the idea of professionalism and productivity; and in this project I ask cultural leaders, and artists, and people in kind of important positions, to lie down in public with me and have a conversation about what role horizontality does play or could play in their practice. It was really interesting in these conversations to discover that lots of people who don't need to lie down because of a condition, they still use the horizontal as a place to write from, to kind of dream and exist in a more fluid way. And people, writers talk to me about trying to really draw out that time just after they'd woken up, and staying in bed to write, or some people talk to me about using the horizontal as a place for problem solving, like really trying to access blue sky thinking and kind of ‘aha’ moments.

So, I have a kind of ambition to build a rest-in spaces network, in which in any major city in the center there would be places where you were invited to lie down and rest, if you needed to. And you would ideally be no further than half an hour or 15 minutes from somewhere, where you would be welcome to rest. I'm based in Bristol and I've been working with the local cinema, the local art house cinema and a gallery called the Arnolfini and a theatre - and together we are creating horizontal events where you can lie down to engage with art, but also accompanying that with a welcome to rest in those buildings. Not right now, but in the future when we can be together in public again; which relates to a project I'm starting later in the year called We Are All Old Children, which uses play to disrupt public - the etiquette of public spaces - rather than rest. And I think that's going to be really important because when we can be together in space again, I think we're going to have to relearn how to do that. We had a particular etiquette way of being, which I wanted to challenge before Covid. I think after Covid we're going to be even less tolerant and we'll need ways to trust one another, and be in space together again. So through all these projects I have come to define my experience of chronic pain in these terms crip time and deep time experiences, a sense of absence and presence, connection and counterpoints to normative culture, so often I am the still point within activity around me; deeper degrees of listening and embodied experiences, immersive focus and the ability to zoom right in on detail, like we talked about with the ceilings or like zoom right out and different modes of togetherness, ways of being together that value quiet and care for radical softness.

I share these with you because I find them a very rich place from which to design performance and workshops for engagement with spaces.

So, I'd like to ask you to gently open your eyes - if you've closed your eyes - and to gently sit up again and come to a place where you can see the screen again. I'm going to hand over to Natasha and she can tell you about some of the amazing work that she does. Thank you.

**Natasha Trotman 20:52**

Okay, so as you know I'm Natasha and I'm here to share my practice. I do work across multiple modes, so it does include the built environment. I'm an inclusive designer and a researcher and I’m currently an artist in residence at Somerset house studio 48. My work focuses on mental difference, neurodiversity as a way to foster new conversations and new approaches to the world around us. Neurodivergent rever refers to those who experience and process the world in distinct and unique ways due to neurological differences, including but not limited to autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning disabilities, tourette's, ADHD and adverse childhood experiences ACEs. The term mental difference will be used also as this is inclusive of persons living with a dementia, and there are several. Before I go on though, let's do a tiny bit of jargon busting: what is neurodiversity? Neurodiversity is a relatively new term created in 1998 by sociologist Judy Singer, many may not know about her - yet. But learning about neurodiversity and taking steps to better the support in the everyday settings can be hugely beneficial not just for persons who are non-normative, but also the wider community. Learning about lived experiences that are other and different to your own can be transformative.

So, my work examines different ways of experiencing and processing the world from people with mental differences, hidden disabilities and neurodivergent communities; such as, as I mentioned before, dyspraxic and autistic persons through to people living with dementia. I also work with neurotypical and non-disabled people.

So, why do I do what I do? Simply, good design enables, bad design disables. So, whilst working across my projects, I started to realize that not every voice is being heard. This led me to have a strong resonance with a social model of disability - this underpins my work. I also have many hats; two of those, as you can already tell, are design and also research, but along with that I'm also neurodivergent, a woman, I am black and I am a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) or adaptive educational needs practitioner. As we're aware there is one geographical world, however there are many worlds within worlds that many are living right across from you. So, I draw on my various skills, lived and learned experiences when needed to traverse these various tangible and intangible spaces with the aim of illuminating unheard and underserved voices and mapping out better futures through articulated output.

Woven through my work is curiosity, intellectual humility, passion and convergence. These aspects have taken me on an explorative journey through specialisms, neurotypes and communities. One of my aims and hopes is to provide inspiration through my practice and break down barriers; structural barriers, invisible barriers, social barriers and providing encouragement to my neurodivergent siblings and my cognitive cousins of today and tomorrow. To hopefully demonstrate that ambition and adding value in your own unique ways possible, regardless of ability. People who identify as neurotypical or non-disabled; you also have a shared stake in this as well, in creating unculturable futures and addressing ableism. Ableism as defined by Talila A. Lewis, developed with disabled black and other negatively racialized people, is defined as a system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on socially constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, excellence, desirability and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-blackness, eugenics, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person's language, appearance, religion and/or their ability to satisfactorily reproduce, excel and behave. You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism, but also even if you do fall into the mainstream, you are what I would term as simply a TAB, so temporarily able-bodied; because people do age and our circumstances do change. Ability and disability is a continuum of sorts, I feel.

What you can see here is one of my projects. It's called - this is part of the toolkit - it's called Tune in Tune out and that's a multi-modal toolkit born out of my project Tangible Statistics Linguistics. It's an umbrella project that focuses on creating an awareness tool that allows the users to experience this practical trait. In this project I select and shape interventions to foster empathy agency and awareness concerning dyspraxia. One of the articulated outcomes of the toolkit was neurodivergent jewelry as per the image. This helps to build momentum for creating new offerings that sort of harness lived experiences and foster learning for sustainable change. Tangible statistics linguistics and an old experiences a project I'll explain in a bit more detail further into the presentation, are examples of the interactive umbrella projects that I work on and practice that aim to harness empathy, agency, and awareness concerning neurodivergent and non-typical neurotypes through autoethnography provocations and interactive mixed methods, including analog and digital interactions. So, when my curiosity and passion comes into play, I reach out to communities to create dialogues that can go beyond linguistics. What that looks like is collective poetry, speaking with the body, co-authoring papers and inventions to create responses and bridge gaps that address challenges to which solutions didn't currently exist, or were not widely known. So, enabling new methods, approaches and engagements to be of service to all within society. And to coin what underpins my approaches and methods as a force of nurture. I believe finding new ways to innovate within design and agile cross-sector collaborations are vital and so that all within society can be part of a new inclusive, creative economy and exchange system, where the needs and values of a nurtured society can be reflected in the design offerings and engagements people see, experience, set and use - transforming pain points into positive shared collective experiences. So, what you can see here are images that are part of the art experiences umbrella project. This is a project which explores non-normative ways of being by a multi-modal experimental play, focusing on creating and exploring various tools and provocations and providing opportunities for participants to consider and in some instances immerse themselves in non-typical ways of being and experience interventions. Now, how does this impact our industry? Okay, so curiosity, intellectual humility, and convergence, coupled with a passion for inclusion for all, has led to my creating various sensory workshops and exhibits in cultural institutions and organizations including the V&A, the London Design Biennale, Somerset House, the National Gallery and Tate Britain, to name a few... this image shows one of the projects I worked on recently, a research project with the Wellcome trust and the Royal College of Arts and it's called Design and the Mind, and this project focused on joint creation and engagement with neurodiverse groups and neurodivergent non-typical individual, with the aim of enabling Wellcome to improve its approach to inclusivity by addressing issues surrounding cognitive, physical and digital through the Wellcome hub and its resources for a variety of users. This involved looking at the ways in which Wellcome engages and co-creates with neurodiverse audiences with a focus on collaboration, research and public engagement. So the toolkit; one for the hub, and one for wider Wellcome, which is the build environment, the toolkit seeks to complement and build on the emergent and expanding inclusive offerings at Wellcome, so this image shows just one of the many articulated outputs that range across various modes, and access, and entry points.

So, I know that the mundane and different lenses are pertinent, and is a thread that runs through Raquel's work, and sort of what ordinary architecture focuses on, so that leads to this commission within the same thread and looking at the mundane from a different standpoint. I was commissioned to create a short film as part of Hyperfunctional Ultra-Healthy by Somerset House. It explores non-normative perceptions and experiences of the everyday trials, triumphs and challenges, through the contributions of its participants, who have each worked with myself to develop a verse of the narration. The film invites audiences to consider non-normative lived experiences and ways of being - turning lived experiences into learned experiences.

I will quickly stop this share and then start another to show you that. It's a three-minute film SUBSET/RESET (available online with subtitles).

Okay, so I guess I would like to end with a provocation to those that are joining us in the zoom today. My proposition is to those that work in the creative fields or within agile teams, how can you contribute to a more equitable, to more equitable futures through your practice and what potentialities might a new lens or perspective open up in regards to thinking and approaches within your field?

I can add the link in for the video as well at the end. Lots of food for thought! Thank you.

**Dr Jos Boys 37:09**

Thank you so much Natasha, every time I see that film I get more from it! So, that's a really enjoyable thing. Okay, I would also like to share my screen and just finish off with a few very quick comments about trying to bring some threads together, but also recognizing the the very diverse and really important different voices that Dis/ordinary Architecture aims to bring to the wider discipline of the built environment and in terms of thinking about inclusive spaces in a much richer way. So, I'm just going to finish by what I would call Disordinary Architecture Project’s four big claims - some of you might not find these big claims, but in terms of how normatively access and inclusion is dealt with within the built environment, through this incredible kind of retrofitting of banal design solutions, I think these are quite radical and they they absolutely build on the work and the conversations that Natasha and Raquel have just had with you. So, the first claim is we have to re-embody the practice of built environment education and professionalism. The kind of idea of a neutral professional actually often distances us from the realities of different ways of being in the world, including the complexities and nuances of our own ways of being in the world. So, that means putting it into a bigger picture; what is it about bodies and body-minds? What is a kind of ideal body, who counts as normal, who is left out, not just by disability but by other ways in which race is understood or gender, or class and how does that link specifically to an idea of what it is to be a professional in our field in this discipline? I talk as if everybody's from the discipline, but from that, you know … what it is you learn to be, if you learn to be an architect, or you learn to be a state manager, and there's a kind of set of ideas around entrepreneurship, around independence, around a certain idea of competence that can actually be quite difficult for everybody. It would be really good to unpick all these different ideas about what constitutes a disability and what it is to be abled. Also it's so great that Natasha used the same - on the screen I'm showing again Telalia TL Lewis's - definition of ableism. I won't repeat it again, but Natasha said it out loud and it is that idea that - and I speak as somebody who is middle class, who is white, who is privileged, everybody really who's studied architecture is already privileged, everybody who's in the built environment in UCL has found themselves a place of privilege, even if the experience may be quite uneven. So it's really important that we look at our own ableism. I think this idea of how we might rethink disability as not being just this kind of binary and inferior category compared to ability. One of the techniques we use in Dis/ordinary Architecture is something called fitting and misfitting, which is from a very renowned disability study scholar called Rosemary Garland Thompson. The idea about fitting and misfitting is that it's completely relational; it's always about your where, who you're with, and what the built space is like. It's also saying that if you fit, if actually your relationship to the built world is mainly pretty smooth, you don't really notice stuff, you don't have to think about it hard; that's actually a problem because it results in a lack of taking notice of your surroundings and it actually it means that you can't use those things in a creative way. If you have an unproblematic place in the world then there's a lot of things you don't notice, so misfitting where you have some sort of non-normative body mind, we would argue that that really increases creativity because it means you are always paying attention to and negotiating places and encounters in often a very rich way. So, that leads to claim number two which is that disability is in fact a creative generator, it's not some drag on design or development; it's actually really starting from difference. It’s a really valuable place to begin and that's because if we value our rich bio and neurodiversity, our different ways of being in the world, we've got a lot of really inventive ways to to start creating built space or managing built space. The second thing is that disabled people are already creative experts; this goes back to misfitting. If you misfit you spend a lot of energy in negotiating the built environment. Now, some of that's very exhausting and frustrating but some of it's also very creative. Your understanding of the everyday is really rich and detailed. Finally, I think we're really interested in how you might think about the built environment from the experiences of misfitting; how that might be a really good starting point. Other words that get used a lot are unruly bodies / non-compliant bodies. But rather than either having a kind of not thought out user or a norm or an average starting from the outliers actually gives us some really creative opportunities. We do the Dis/ordinary architecture project over these 10-12 years with artists working together with people across the built environment. Particularly we did in education but also working in professional practice, we've developed a whole series of techniques to get people to rethink their own bodies, which is not about feeling empathy for the other or somehow kind of trying to play-act being disabled; it's about how you might be in the world differently, and what you can learn from that as a creative experience - building exactly on the examples that Raquel and Natasha have given us.

I won't even talk about these projects because I would like us to have some time for conversation. So, this is Rachel Gadsden doing large performative development drawings with new students, to allow them to think about developing a brief on a project, which starts from human bodies. This is Dave Dixon, a project we did in Copenhagen which was about how by changing your body you might start drawing differently and therefore designing differently; and how that might be a collective activity. I'm not describing these slides, I apologize but I have a transcript which I can provide. This is Liz Crowe, again this connects to some of the work that Raquel does. This was a project called Tilted Horizons which was about exactly that, what happens when you look at the world from a different angle and what that means if you're a designer; but also what it means in terms of how you might imagine where resting spaces might exist and what they might be like and why we don't have them, why they don't exist. The students did a whole variety of different exercises. This is Liz Crowe again in another example of the sort of things that Raquel does, where she found - in her study group, she was doing a masters - she found that where she lay down in that group, in what would have been otherwise formal seminars, that the whole dynamics of the group changed and became much more open, and curious, and engaged. The third point is to think about disability as a powerful critique of what is normal; that's not just what is normal in the design of space, it's about how we can challenge everyday social material and spatial practices in those situations where they're acting to enable some and disabling others. And again, we use these terms ‘disabling’ you don't have to be disabled to be disabled by a built environment, there are all sorts of other factors that come into play. And, of course, what is normal in architectural and built environment education and practice - could we really rethink that from basics, by bringing in ideas from beyond creative practice, beyond the disciplinary boundaries? I'm not going to talk about this but you can look at it later. So, an example of that would be drawing differently. This is a project by an architect called Thomas Carpenter that i really love, where he was trying to rethink how you might ... it was called the New Standard, how you might imagine different sorts of bodies. It was his diploma project actually in France, and he took a whole series of both fictional and non-fictional bodies, like the borg queen and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and he designed a house for them all to live together. He just developed more and more detail around different sorts of bodies as a way of exploring. It's a kind of provocative exercise in exploring what different bodies mean and this for example is where the project starts, which is from everybody having dinner together. This is Aaron Williamson, who was in that very first slide that I showed at the beginning, he's a deaf artist and he’s been working with Manijeh Verghese at the Architectural Association on a project that's called Disrupting Behavior. It's exactly looking at how you can breach norms both in terms of built space, but also in terms of what constitutes educational or built environment practice. The students' portfolios were really very different to anything conventional. And finally I just wanted to mention a project which has been happening at the Bartlett since 2018 which is called Architecture Beyond Sight, it was commissioned by the previous dean Alan Penn and then Christoph Lindner who has been fantastically supportive. Architecture Beyond Sight is a foundation program for blind and visually impaired people to become architects and it isn't about just enabling somehow blind and visually impaired people to sign on to conventional architectural courses, it's about thinking about how those courses would need to change. What makes an inclusive workshop how you might have different sorts of design methods, could you design a building entirely using words? So, really rethinking the nature of the dominance of the visual in particular in architectural education. It was led by disabled artists by blind and visually impaired artists and architects; and this is Carlos Mourão Pereira who's a blind architect from Portugal, here with some of the blind tutors involved. He showed us some of the many methods that he used and then we've run this course, it's an intensive one week residential study course and we've run it with 18 blind and partially blind participants. The year before last we weren't able to run it, last year because of the pandemic, but we've got participants lined up ready to do it when it's possible. This is Chris Downey, a blind architect from America and here are some of the just I'm clicking through slides showing a range of the kind of things that happened. This slide shows a blind craftsman from Tasmania called Duncan Merding, who worked with the students in the workshop on a very typical foundation project which was called a Box of Feelings and they made these very beautiful boxes.

This changed the whole way that teaching took place, it was entirely run by blind and partially sighted tutors; so here we have an under table crit because of getting the light conditions right for the piece of work that the students wanted to show. Finally my fourth point and I'm going to call it access is love and that's named after a fantastically vital disability campaigning group in the states called the Disability Visibility project which is Mia Mingus, Alice Wong and Sandy Ho and they've basically been developing over the last two or three years a way of working which is about how you can think about access as a collective project, as an engaged project, as one that everybody has responsibility for. So, this way of understanding access and inclusion is not that there is some sort of final design solution, but that it's relational, it's multi-layered, it's intersectional; it goes beyond identity categories. You're no longer saying ‘right, well this is what people who use wheelchairs need’ and ‘this is what blind people need’ but it's actually saying: what are the kind of affinities in the different ways that people use space and are in the world, and what are the differences - and to recognize that there will be contradictions and gaps. These are emergent shared practices that will never be finished, and they'll always be wrong, they'll have parts that don't work for everybody, but that's all right. That's part of why you're always trying to make things to move forward. So that notion that we should move beyond the language of access and inclusion, towards a process of collective care which does actually work, and use words like ‘social, spatial and material justice’ - that's actually interested in justice, not just somehow including a previously excluded group. From my point of view as somebody who's quite academic, but also as somebody who's just really curious about why … my background's in feminist architecture actually and community-based practice, and at a certain point I really didn't understand why disability was treated in this very different way, as a kind of a-historical, functional category. And I just started reading around and found how much extraordinary good work there was in disability arts, disability scholarship, disability activism, all this stuff is here and a lot of it is talking about access and inclusion; but it somehow doesn't penetrate built environment disciplines. I just don't understand why, really. There's a lot of work specifically about access, there's a lot of work thinking about different sorts of bodies, and offering diverse narratives from disabled people, creative people. There's a lot of work that's intersectional, that's thinking about disability across race, across queerness, across class. Over these years, I think that the Dis/ordinary Architecture Project is also itself beginning to build a whole set of bodies of knowledge, which is richly informed by all that other activity that's going on. It's richly informed by the 25 artists who are quite regularly involved and the wider network of artists and educators and professionals who help us build up all the time a kind of better understanding, and a better way of working.

I'm going to stop sharing there although you're welcome of course to have some of those references. I just wondered, I know time is very short but Raquel; we talked when we were just prepping for this, we talked a little about what happens next. A part of what we're arguing for, you can see, is we're asking people to actually think about, reflect on themselves, and reflect on their own practice - so, Raquel if you just wanted to (and then Natasha) just to finish with a kind of note to self?

**Raquel Mesquer 54:26**

I wanted to to really ask everybody because I know that we can engage in these things and then they can become a little lost, so I wanted to invite everybody who's listening to put a date, a notification in your diary for in one month's time to reflect back on this time together and what are the couple of things that really excited you that you'd really like to try and hold and and think about how you can start to weave that into your next project. So really think about applying one of those one of the things that interests you most. And I'd suggest that along with that that you um develop an idea or even a starting point for an embodied practice because so much of this can become abstract, but coming back to the body and what you need and how you feel as part of your practice. I'd also love you to know what we think about is very much influenced by what we're fed by and that is influenced a lot by our social media, and so please do add a couple of disabled voices to your feed, to your twitter, your instagram. I've got a couple of examples here, but I'm not exactly sure where I can post them. I'm not sure if there's any time to answer any of these brilliant questions, but I'll let Natasha leave you with her thoughts and then maybe there's a possibility to answer questions for five ten minutes

**Natasha Trotman 56:02**

Yes, and building on what Raquel said, you know with finding the voices - the voices are there, so once you've found a voice and there's an aspect of what you've discovered that resonates with you. Think about how you can use that in your practice, how can you through your small contribution; because it's a collective effort, how can you contribute to more equitable futures through your practice and what potentialities might a new lens and perspective open up. So, maybe it might be worth jotting down what's enlightened you, and why and how can you build on that. It might be something very simple to do with something like Monday but these new approaches will help to create the step change that we're all working towards. I'm sorry if it's a bit rambling but I think most of the points that we really want the audience to think about have been covered.