

Urban Laboratory

Activities Report 2019 — 2020

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UCL Urban Laboratory
Activities Report 2019—2020



UCL Urban Laboratory Director Clare Melhuish, *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019. Credit: Declan Slattery, Mediorite.



Attendees at *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019. Credit: Declan Slattery, Mediorite.

Welcome,

I didn't anticipate that my directorship of UCL Urban Laboratory would coincide with the world's most serious pandemic since 1918, bringing more dramatic alterations to established post-war patterns of urban life, work and social interaction than citizens of global north cities have experienced in several generations. Since early 2020, we have been preoccupied with, and divided by, fundamental questions about the future of cities which even the climate crisis had not impressed upon urban populations to the same degree. Tightly interlinked with historic systems of human organisation and territorial colonization rooted in social, racial and economic inequalities, Covid-19 and accelerating ecological breakdown have shone a spotlight on the strengths and weaknesses of cities around the world: from healthcare to housing, public parks to transport, education, livelihoods, cultural life, and social infrastructure.

Of course, Urban Lab's extended network of urban researchers has been working across these issues for some 15 years, in collaboration with a wide range of urban stakeholders. The disruption this year to our lives, and to our research, has not only been significant and traumatic, but also provided a further stimulus towards developing and disseminating urban knowledge that explicitly tackles difficult questions around inequality and environmental degradation in cities.

Since 2019 we have worked hard to realise my commitment to make Urban Lab more visible, diverse and dynamic in its contribution to urban research and practice, and this report shows something of what we have achieved. Our new set of priority areas has foregrounded the research and profiles of our eight Co-Directors from different faculties [pp. 14-18]. We have run a number of high-profile events which have brought Urban Lab to the attention of new and diverse audiences. Our international conference, *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, brought together 179 speakers from 27 countries, to address pressing urban challenges with an emphasis on perspectives from the global south

and east [pp. 20–22], while our Cities Imaginaries lecture and Performance Lab event on music and the city brought together a number of significant figures from the worlds of Black urban culture and scholarship to discuss the role of music and performance in the creation of networked urban landscapes [pp. 24–25]. The NITE research project investigates the experiences of migrant communities in European cities, with a focus on LGBTQ migrants in London [pp. 34–35], while the community mapping workshops on which we collaborated with The Building Exploratory considered the relationship between east London’s past and future with children and senior citizens on the Olympic Park [pp. 62–63].

Consolidating Urban Lab expertise on London as a complex, diverse city within national and international circuits of mobility and influence, our optional Masters module, *Histories of Global London: 1900 to the present*, has become a popular, established choice since 2018; and we are currently looking forward to the approval of a brand new sister programme to MSc Urban Studies, the MASc Global Urbanism, due to launch at UCL East in 2022 [p. 57]. The new Urban Room and Memory Workshop which we envisioned five years ago, and have since dedicated so much energy and time to, is now under construction at Pool Street West, and presents an exciting public-facing resource for our programme of research and engagement in the near future, in collaboration with our partners and colleagues.

None of this would have been possible without the continuing support of the Deans of the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, Social and Historical Sciences, Engineering, and Arts and Humanities, the immense commitment and input of our steering committee and Co-Directors from numerous departments, and the passion and enthusiasm of urban researchers and students of all ages who participate in our programme year after year. It is this which drives our ongoing mission to grapple with the challenges we face and participate in building a better future for urban dwellers everywhere, based on a solid foundation of critical and creative research.

Dr Clare Melhuish
Director, UCL Urban Laboratory

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Geomatic Engineering)Patrick White
(Slade School of Fine Art)



Stephanie Burrell, performing alongside Nacheal Catnott, *Cities Imaginaries: Performance Lab*, May 2019.
Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.

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Co-Director Matthew Beaumont leading *The Walk Against Distracted Walking Walk*, UCL Festival of Culture, June 2019. Credit: David Tett.



Waste photo competition entry, Caroline Cunningham.

FOREWORDS

From an Arts and Humanities perspective, Urban Lab continues to be a crucial example of interdisciplinary and cross-faculty engagement that can help to break down traditional disciplinary boundaries in hugely creative ways.

Engagement with notions of the urban, the intersections between the city and identity are central to the humanities (in literature, film and media, cultural exchanges) and I welcome the opportunity to continue to support the multidisciplinary events and research nurtured by and debated within Urban Lab. With UCL East in mind, the synergies between the Urban Room and Memory Workshop and the creative humanities, media and art-focused programmes being developed in the School for Culture and Creative Industries are invigorating and exciting.

Stella Bruzzi
Executive Dean, UCL Faculty
of Arts and Humanities
Professor of Film

Getting to know UCL over the last year as the new Dean of The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, I have been struck by the extraordinary range of exciting, edgy research initiatives active across the university. The ability to connect and collaborate across disciplinary boundaries is definitely one of UCL's greatest strengths. To my mind, Urban Lab is a perfect example of this.

Created and led by a cross-faculty team of urban specialists, Urban Lab is a vital space where researchers, students, practitioners, and community partners come together to interpret and shape contemporary cities. For more than a decade, this collaboration has been pushing the conceptual and methodological boundaries of "urban studies", opening up new ways of understanding spaces and communities, asking new (and different) questions about everyday life and urban environments, surfacing hidden problems and emerging injustices, and developing new tools and platforms for engaging diverse publics. Along the way, Urban Lab has not only worked across London and the UK but also in cities around the world, from Beirut and Johannesburg to Paris and Toronto.

In a time of global pandemic, widening inequality, technological acceleration, and climate emergency, we need Urban Lab to continue and even amplify this work. As the many projects featured in this report make clear, we need the lab's energy, innovation, and commitment to urban justice.

Christoph Lindner
Dean, The Bartlett UCL Faculty
of the Built Environment
Professor of Urban Studies

2019–20 has seen another amazing array of research projects and events co-ordinated and curated by UCL’s Urban Lab. The academic year began with no intimation of what was to transpire when Covid-19 hit the world and turned our lives upside down and inside out, and there were many stimulating and exciting conferences, seminars, workshops, film screenings and exhibitions in that period ‘B.C’. With lockdown came a move online for all of us, and Urban Lab responded with agility and imagination, demonstrating just how much academic activity and public engagement is still possible—or indeed more possible—with only virtual co-presence possible. I was particularly delighted to see the emergence of a new stream of collaboration between Urban Lab and the Institute of Advanced Studies around the highly topical subject of Waste, and the work on global urbanism, feminist cities, queer infrastructure and urban night life.

Big thanks and congratulations are due to everyone involved with Urban Lab—from across faculties and departments—for all their work over the past year. Radical thinking about the future of cities is needed more than ever at the moment, and I look forward to next year’s programme of Urban Lab events and projects.

Sasha Roseneil
Executive Dean, UCL Faculty of Social
and Historical Sciences
Professor of Interdisciplinary Social Science

I have been hugely impressed with the progress that Urban Lab has made over the past year. The range of activities is tremendous and impactful too. That UCL Urban Lab reaches out to a broad spectrum of communities, and in a series of innovative ways, is a real hallmark.

The UCL Urban Lab’s success is due to a vigorous vision and an empowered set of co-directors drawn from across UCL. I’m looking forward to the next year of activities and to the continued growth in the reach of this brilliant initiative.

Nigel Titchener-Hooker
Dean, UCL Faculty of Engineering
Professor of Biochemical Engineering

AN ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE:

Akil Scafe-Smith, Head of Design,
Resolve Collective Urban Lab Collaborator

‘As a student working as a sort of ‘runner’ during an Urban Lab symposium a few years ago, I was assigned the task of addressing the dilemma of a leaking ceiling in the Darwin Lecture Theatre. And so, whilst attempting to listen to Adrian Lahoud deliver what became a career-changing lecture for me, I ran up, down, and around an annoyed international intelligentsia sitting in the grey-blue-green landscape of the auditorium, trying desperately to fight the flood with a leaky sponge, a bucket, and a few aimless wads of blue tissue paper.

More than a poor re-enactment of a scene from *One Man, Two Guvnors*, this vignette is, in hindsight, symbolic of what the UCL Urban Lab meant and still means to me. It is at once a platform for life’s most intimate and most exhibitive moments; an infrastructure that connects awkward, unassuming yet critical spaces for friendship, mistakes, collaboration, and reflection just as deftly as it facilitates some of the world’s most prolific creatives and thinkers. Though the roll call of associated names throughout its history reads like an all-star cast of ‘Urbanism: The Movie’ they sit fraternally amongst hundreds of names of career-confused students who were just looking for something to get involved in, members of the public who came to a talk thinking it was something else, and non-academic university staff who found some solace in the professionalism and warmth of the Urban Lab team at the end of events.

The UCL Urban Laboratory makes otherwise vastly disparate lives proximate and personal, across time and space. It gave me the confidence to speak about the life and work of Ruth Glass for Part W’s momentous Alternative Gold Medal event last year. It has also brought me one of my now closest friendships; a student I met at the 2015 symposium who was an invited attendee from the urban laboratory at the KRVA in Mumbai. Just as how five years ago that curious lecture theatre became one of the UCL Urban Lab’s many sites for an intimate connection of global ideas, projects, and practices, all those who pass through its remit, and perhaps particularly its most awkward, peculiar, and curious sojourners, are in some way transformed into sites of similar connection. Past and present, all Urban Lab associates owe a great debt to this closeness but also a duty to emulate and augment it, now more than ever.’

URBAN LAB TIMELINE

2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

2005

Inspired by discussions between geography and architecture, the UCL Urban Laboratory was established by geographer Matthew Gandy, quickly drawing in colleagues from other fields such as anthropology, engineering, film studies and urban sociology.

2005 —————> 2008

The Urban Laboratory continues to grow, launching a dedicated website, and creating the Urban Salon seminar series in partnership with several London universities.

2008 —————> 2011

The Urban Laboratory is awarded £250,000 by the Provost's Strategic Development Fund.

2008

Urban Studies MSc launched and now recognised as a flagship programme in the field.

2009

Inaugural Cities Methodologies exhibition—'a marketplace of urbanism'—initiated with the Slade School of Fine Art.

We begin hosting PhD students, and continue to have a wide range of 'affiliated' research students from across the university.

2011

Urbanist and architectural historian Ben Campkin becomes director.

Ongoing institutional commitment and funding for the Urban Laboratory is provided by a pioneering collaboration between UCL faculties.

2013

Launch of the first *Urban Pamphleteer*, containing a range of articles on Future & Smart Cities. The eighth issue was published in April 2020.

First full-time researcher appointed with funding from UCL Estates to work on university-led urban regeneration case studies, published in 2015.

We become a partner in the Urban Lab+ international network of urban laboratories, funded by the European Union's Erasmus Mundus programme.

2015

The City Centre in UCL's Department of English merges with the Urban Lab to form Cities Imaginaries, a new strand of work on the cultural representation of cities, led by Matthew Beaumont.

Dr Rodrigo Firmino joins Urban Laboratory from Curitiba, Brazil, as a visiting researcher on surveillance and security.

2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026

2016

Launch of Cities Methodologies anthology *Engaged Urbanism* with Free Word Centre.

LGBTQ+ nightlife spaces research initiated by Ben Campkin and Lo Marshall, in collaboration with community groups Raze Collective and the Queer Spaces network. A comprehensive report commissioned by the Greater London Authority is published in 2017.

2017

Urban Lab Exchange launches to deliver professional short courses.

2018

Anthropologist Dr Clare Melhuish becomes Director.

2019

Launch of the Urban Laboratory's first Annual Theme—Waste

The Urban Laboratory organises a major international conference—*At the Frontiers of the Urban*—a three-day event featuring over 150 speakers, investigating how urban concepts and practices are responding to global change.

2020

Co-Director Ben Campkin is the British lead in the international research project Night spaces: migration, culture and integration in Europe (NITE)—awarded a €1m Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) grant. Our Research Fellow Lo Marshall and Co-Director Matthew Beaumont are also on the project team.

Launch of our second Annual Theme—Emergency

Replacing our six previous Activity Areas, in 2019 we launched eight new priority areas focusing our research and activities into eight timely and vital streams. Through these eight priority areas—each led by one of our Co-Directors or Director—you can find out more about the research that guides us, propose future activities, and connect with our work.

Research

Priority Areas

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Top, left to right: Ellie Cosgrave,
Jennifer Robinson, Camillo Boano.
Middle, left to right: Ben Campkin,
Clare Melhuish, Matthew Beaumont.
Bottom, left to right: Andrew Harris,
Pushpa Arabindoo.

FEMINIST CITIES

How can fundamental freedoms to the city be secured through public policy, innovation and design?



A feminist city is more than a city free from sexual violence: it is the fundamental freedom to access the opportunities and resources of the city regardless of any protected characteristic such as gender, race, class, physical ability, sexuality. Because, while the city is a place of opportunity and liberation—offering a range of employment types, exposure to diverse cultural experiences and education—it is unequally accessible depending on categories of gender, race, class and physical ability. But interpreting this philosophy in terms of physical infrastructure design and public policy is an ongoing endeavour, which we explore through this theme.

In March 2020, the UCL Urban Laboratory, along with the UCL Urban Innovation and Policy Lab, published an independent scoping report [[see p.49](#)]*—London’s participation in UN Women’s Safer Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme*—the report offers a guide to the fundamentals of gender inclusive public space design; highlights tools for investing in gender-informed public spaces; presents examples of existing action in the capital; and lays out a set of recommendations for action. The full report is can be downloaded on our website.

The academic lead for this priority area is Dr Ellie Cosgrave. Ellie is Associate Professor in Urban Innovation and Policy at UCL’s Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy, where she is Co-Director of the Urban Innovation and Policy Lab. Contact e.cosgrave@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

GLOBALISING URBANISMS

Developing frameworks for engagements and dialogue with urban scholarship globally, across a diversity of urban experiences.



Urban theory has historically been dominated by European and American perspectives, but the ‘southern turn’ has opened up discussion around a range of disciplinary and practice-based approaches to understanding the processes, impacts and representations of urbanisation and urban experience in, and from, different regional contexts.

This priority theme focuses on developing frameworks for engagements and dialogue with urban scholarship globally, across a diversity of urban experiences, and on building comparative, cross-regional, insights into urban experiences through grounded, collaborative, and community-led research and practices.

African Urbanism was a key strand of our major conference of 2019, *At the Frontiers of the Urban: Thinking Concepts and Practices Globally* [[see p.21](#)], and Professor Jennifer Robinson has recently been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant to explore ambitious research ideas related to global challenges. The project, titled *Making Africa Urban: The transcalar politics of large-scale urban development*, will help build African-based research capacity in urban studies, along with researchers in Accra (Ghana), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Lilongwe (Malawi).

The academic lead for this priority area is Professor Jennifer Robinson. Jenny is Chair of Human Geography at UCL’s Department of Geography. Contact jennifer.robinson@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

HOUSING URBANISM

Unpacking, problematising and constructing a critical inquiry into housing across a diversity of global perspectives.



Housing urbanism seek to unpack, problematise and construct a critical inquiry into housing, as noun and verb, as product and process, and as one of the most powerful agents of urban transformations. It frames housing as city-making and highlights its political parameters, at a time when bordering, exclusion, and violence are permeating the quotidian, and when bodies are frequently detained or under threat of having their rights of mobility severely infringed.

Against the backdrop of surging racisms and populisms, whilst so many are abandoned to live and/or travel in highly precarious and often inhumane conditions, there is a heightened necessity to scrutinise what housing means today as an urbanism of inhabiting within different latitudes and epistemic frameworks.

In 2019 the UCL Urban Laboratory and The Bartlett Developing Planning Unit (DPU) co-organised a series of roundtable conversations: **THE CAMP**: Conversations around the making and un-making of bodies, space and time, aimed at looking at the camp as more than a mere space, discussing it as a form, a practice and a concept. In 2020, in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, our co-director Camillo Boano, along with Catalina Ortiz from the DPU published '*Stay at Home: Housing as a pivotal infrastructure of care?*' available at blogs.ucl.ac.uk

The academic lead for this priority area is Professor Camillo Boano. Camillo is Professor of Urban Design and Critical Theory at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL. Contact c.boano@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

QUEER INFRASTRUCTURE

Considering the networks of people and sites that have helped to support communities with non-normative sexualities and genders.



Infrastructures are symbolically highly charged networks, bringing people and services together, as well as allowing possibilities for different ways of being in the future. This activity stream accommodates research and other activities on the networks of people and sites that historically, and in the present, have helped to support communities with non-normative sexualities and genders. It brings insights from queer theory into the domain of urban theory, and vice versa.

Building on concepts of social and cultural infrastructure in academic and policy debates, we aim to move beyond essentialist readings of queer space, and better understand the inter-relationship of subjectivities and space. Our work is international, transdisciplinary, intersectional and multi-media.

In 2020 our co-director Prof Ben Campkin and researcher Lo Marshall published a briefing note building detailed evidence of the changing profile of LGBTQ+ communities and spaces across the London borough since the 1980s. Ben and Lo also led the UCL Urban Lab's role in co-curating the exhibition *Queer Spaces: London, 1980s to today* [see p.26] at London's Whitechapel Gallery.

The academic lead for this priority area is Professor Ben Campkin. Ben is a former Director of UCL Urban Laboratory and Professor of History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. Contact b.campkin@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

URBAN HERITAGE

Engaging with heritage as a key shaper of urban experience and identities, the urban environment, and urban futures.



Heritage is often seen as the preserve of conservationists and historians, but for urbanists the ways in which architectural, cultural and social heritage narratives frame urban experience and identity, and shape the urban environment, are critical to understanding urban futures.

This theme links to the work of the *Curating the City* research cluster led by Urban Lab and the Institute of Archaeology in the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies at UCL. It promotes critical, transdisciplinary, and participatory approaches to the definition and evaluation of urban heritage, and engages particularly with heritage research in complex, cosmopolitan and postcolonial cities.

During the 2019–2020 period the UCL Urban Laboratory was pleased to host both a delegation of young mayors and civic leaders from across Italy [see p.63] and students from the Caribbean School of Architecture [see p.55] to exchange knowledge in this research area.

The academic lead for this priority area is Dr Clare Melhuish. Clare is the Director of UCL Urban Laboratory and a Principal Research Fellow. Contact clare.melhuish@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

URBAN NIGHTS

Exploring the various ways in which we use and abuse the urban environment at night.



The appointment of Amy Lamé as London’s Night Czar in 2016 has focused the attention of policy-makers, politicians and academics, among others, not only on the significance of the night-time economy, in the 24/7 society we are said to inhabit, but on the politics of the city, and its commercial and non-commercial spaces, after dark.

This research strand brings together all those with an interest in the distinct ecology of cities at night, in order to explore from a historically informed perspective, as well as one shaped by a comparative geography, the various ways in which, after nightfall, we use and abuse the urban environment.

In 2019, our co-director Matthew Beaumont, along with Ruth Austin, co-founders of the UCL Cities After Hours colloquium series hosted a panel at the UCL Festival of Culture considering the ways in which cities have been the loci of inclusion and exclusion, policing and controlling, after-hours. Matthew is also an associate professor of the collaborative *NITE* project [see p.34], led by another of our co-directors—Professor Ben Campkin.

The academic lead for this priority area is Professor Matthew Beaumont. Matthew is Professor in English Literature at UCL. Contact m.beaumont@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

URBAN VERTICALITY

Developing new cross-disciplinary, comparative and creative engagement with ideas and issues associated with urban verticality.



Urban scholars are increasingly questioning the flat and horizontal way that cities have historically tended to be represented and understood. This greater recognition of the inherent vertical dimensions of urban life has been accentuated by a recent rapid three-dimensional growth of many cities around the world through high-rise construction, new forms of vertical mobility as well as greater interest in underground sites and spaces.

This strand of Urban Lab activity recognises, in particular, how processes and patterns of urban investment, inequality and identity are increasingly shaped by the relationship between above and below.

In 2019, funded by UCL Grand Challenges, our Co-Director Andrew Harris and Steering Committee member Aris Komporozos-Athanasίου hosted a panel speculating on the future of London's Canary Wharf, and In 2020 Andrew organised a workshop on vertical urbanism in London and Paris, due to explore the key drivers, technologies and motivations underpinning post-war dynamics of urban verticality in Paris and London, which was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The academic lead for this priority area is Dr Andrew Harris. Andrew is convenor of the MSc Urban Studies at UCL and an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography. Contact andrew.harris@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

WASTELAND

How can the increasing challenge of societal waste open up new ways of charting the uneven geographies of urbanisation?



Wasteland encompasses the real and the imagined of a waste-defined landscape in a canny utilitarian valorisation of land within the production of the urban.

Challenging its antithetical relationship to nature, the objective of this priority theme is to bring in multidisciplinary conceptual tools from archaeology, anthropology, geography/remote sensing, architecture/planning, anthropology, literary and cultural studies, etc., to challenge not only its pejorative connotations but also open up new analytical possibilities to theoretically and empirically employ waste in charting the uneven geographies of urbanisation relationally across the global North and South.

In 2019, as part of Madras Week celebrations in the Indian city of Chennai, our Co-Director Pushpa Arabindoo curated the photo exhibition *Spectral City: Excavating Chennai From Madras*, documenting documents urban transformations, using her investigations to engage with broader theories on the processes of urbanisation.

The academic lead for this priority area is Dr Pushpa Arabindoo. Pushpa is an Associate Professor in the UCL Department of Geography. Contact p.arabindoo@ucl.ac.uk to propose activities or connect with our work under this priority area.

A selection of key highlights from our varied calendar of events and research activities over the 2019–20 calendar years.

Highlights

**AT THE FRONTIERS OF THE URBAN:
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 21**

CITY, ESSAY, FILM 23

**CITIES IMAGINARIES /
PERFORMANCE LAB 24**

QUEER SPACES EXHIBITION 26

At the frontiers of the urban: thinking concepts & practices globally

10—12 November 2019

Supported by The Bartlett Development Planning Unit
and UCL Centre for Critical Heritage Studies

bit.ly/urban-frontiers
ucl.ac.uk/urban-lab
#UrbanFrontiers

International conference exploring emerging
themes and critical methodologies at the
frontiers of urban theory and practice.

UCL Urban Laboratory will convene three days
of cutting-edge scholarship and dialogue across
50 panels and roundtables aimed at stimulating
new conceptualisations of the urban that are
resonant with distinctive global experiences.

Tickets
£15—£55 Full conference
£5—£10 Evening only plenaries



AT THE FRONTIERS OF THE URBAN: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

International conference featuring over 100 academics and practitioners from across the globe, tackling critical and emerging urban themes and concepts.

Opposite: Poster for *At the Frontiers of the Urban*.
Designed by Bandiera.

AbdouMalik Simone, *At the Frontiers of the Urban*,
November 2019. Credit: Declan Slattery, Mediorite.



In November 2019, UCL Urban Laboratory hosted a major international conference—*At the Frontiers of the Urban: re-thinking concepts and practices globally*—exploring emerging themes and critical methodologies at the frontiers of urban theory and practice. Comprised of 34 panels and 6 plenary sessions, it was organised according to three broad thematic: Reshaping Urban Spaces, Remaking Urban Experiences, and Redefining Urban Futures.

Urban societies are undergoing immense changes; how are urban concepts and practices responding? Over the three days of cutting-edge scholarship and dialogue, the conference sought to stimulate new conceptualisations of the urban resonant with distinctive urban experiences across the globe. Our starting points were: how land, investment, finance, law and the state are reshaping urban spaces; how processes of reproducing everyday life, identity politics, popular mobilization and contestation are remaking urban experiences;

and how challenges of urbanisation, such as climate change, data, health, housing and poverty are redefining urban futures.

Panels were curated to provide scope for researchers to engage across the wide field of urban studies and related disciplines, and to share knowledge on similar issues across different regional contexts, and from different analytical and disciplinary approaches.

The conference made use of a range of formats (round tables, inter-panel report backs) to stimulate collegial exchanges across different geographical and disciplinary perspectives.

The cross-disciplinary conference steering committee included Prof. Camillo Boano (UCL DPU), Dr Clare Melhuish (UCL Urban Laboratory), Dr Susan Moore (UCL Planning), Prof. Peg Rawes (UCL Architecture), Prof. Jennifer Robinson (UCL Geography), and Prof. Oren Yiftachel (UCL Visiting Professor DPU-Geography / Ben-Gurion University). The conference coordinator was our Centre Manager Jordan Rowe.



Attendees of *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019.
Credit: Ondre Roach, Mediorite.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of The Bartlett Developing Planning Unit, UCL Centre for Critical Heritage Studies, UCL Global, UCL Grand Challenges, UCL Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Toronto, IJURR and the ERC grant 'Making Africa Urban' in the co-funding of this conference.

UCL Urban Laboratory Director Clare Melhuish writes:

With the Bartlett Centenary anniversary approaching in 2019, I mooted the idea that Urban Lab might host a high-profile international conference presenting cutting-edge urban theory, to our Co-Director Jennifer Robinson in June 2018. As an acclaimed international scholar of comparative urbanism, and lead on our Globalising Urbanism research priority, her support and commitment to an event that would prioritise global south perspectives on pressing urban issues, was critical to realising a conference that far surpassed the scale of the original conception, on the most minimal of budgets.

Guided by our dedicated cross-disciplinary steering group of urban scholars from across the departments which support Urban Lab, the development of the conference gained fresh impetus with Oren Yiftachel's arrival at UCL in January 2019, bringing his own perspectives from the East to the mix. The aims of the initiative crystallised around the need to convene a debate which would foster engagement between approaches across different emerging positions in global urban studies. During Spring 2019, we assembled an ever-growing list of potential speakers which would benefit from the further input of Caren Levy and Julio Davila in the DPU, and formulated an over-arching structure, thematics, and title for the conference. We issued an open Call for Papers in late June, while commencing the intensive process of inviting speakers from different regions across the world for the planned plenary sessions.

Our steering committee sifted through an impressive 174 submissions to the Open Call, and on a very hot day in August finally selected 60 of those papers for presentation, allocated across multiple parallel sessions in an increasingly complex, ever-expanding, three-day structure. Jordan managed the impressive feat of organising all the materials to our website and co-ordinating registration; booking rooms at short notice across much of Wilkins Building, South Wing, 22 Gordon Street, Geography department, DPU and IOE, and organising wayfinding; finalising travel and accommodation arrangements for participants from different regions across the globe, and managing the modest financial subsidies we were able to offer; as well as organising a cohort of helpers to support preparation and delivery of the conference on the day. Guglielmo Rossi (Bandiera) set to work on translating a complex field of information into navigable and memorable designs for programme and posters.

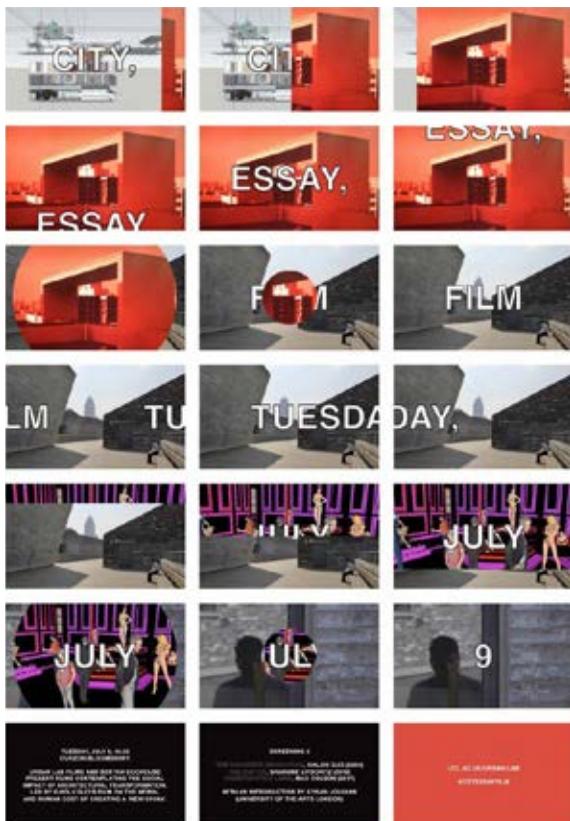
Including all presenters, chairpersons and respondents for each session drawn from across Urban Lab's network, plus participants in Oren's TheoriSE workshop and our 'Thinking London from elsewhere' opening session on the Sunday evening, the total number of researchers exchanging ideas and perspectives across the social sciences, design, engineering, and community development, reached 179, from 92 institutions and 27 countries around the world. Participants commented on the convivial and non-hierarchical atmosphere which it generated across UCL's diverse ecology of spaces, even if the multitude of parallel events and intensity of the timetable presented a challenge to taking in more than a fraction of what the conference offered across the many themes incorporated in the programme as a whole. Will we do it again, post-Covid?—that remains to be seen. For the time being the vitality of interactions and debates that developed during that animated gathering of visitors from near and far afield seems like an already distant memory on UCL's deserted campus, but we hope it will fuel future scholarship and impact for some years to come.

CITY, ESSAY, FILM

Talks, screenings and roundtables exploring the depiction of cities in the 'urban essay film'.



Practitioner Roundtable Conversation at *City, Essay, Film* with Ayo Akingbade, Eva Weber and Karen Alexander. Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.



Poster for *City, Essay Film*. Designed by Matthew Crislip.

An international line-up of researchers, practitioners, artists and critics joined us in London for a series of conversations and screenings on the concept and practice of the urban essay film. Curated by Dr David Anderson (Queen Mary, University of London) with our Centre Manager Jordan Rowe, a one-day symposium took place on 7 June 2019. As Anna Sborgi subsequently wrote in *Mediapolis Journal*, the global range of work showcased the liveliness of this form of filmmaking, which has travelled far beyond its largely European origins as an experimental form linked to the early twentieth-century 'city symphony'. A new generation of artists are using the medium as research critique or celebration of the city. This was explored in two keynotes by Nora M. Alter (Temple University) and Laura Rascaroli (University College Cork), who provided fascinating commentaries on how the essay film is used as a multi-sensory tool to explore aspects of our neoliberal condition. Further panels invited debate on Identities—both in the context of city branding and that of individual and collective experiences—and Peripherality—the representation of cities' margins and the experience of marginality itself.

The symposium was accompanied by a successful month-long screening series with our partners at Bertha DocHouse in the Curzon Bloomsbury, and with Deptford Cinema. An opening night presented an evening of exemplary urban shorts from Lisbon to London and New York to Buenos Aires, including three UK premieres. Other evenings highlighted the work of pioneering film essayists such as Chantal Akerman, John Akomfrah and Xialou Guo, paired with emerging artists including Ayo Akingbade, Max Colson, Sharone Lifschitz, and Manuel Ferrari.

With thanks to Prof Stella Bruzzi (Dean, Arts & Humanities at UCL) for her support, and to Matthew Crislip, who created a cohesive and thoughtful design identity for the series.

CITIES IMAGINARIES: PERFORMANCE LAB



Munesu Mukombe, *Cities Imaginaries: Performance Lab*, May 2019.
CreditL Jacob Fairless Nicholson.

Following our 2019 Cities Imaginaries Lecture by Sonjah Stanley Niaah, we hosted an afternoon and evening of performance and discussion in the Bloomsbury Studio as a new collaborative initiative with UCL Culture. Exploring how different music and dance cultures shape diverse neighbourhoods and urban narratives in large cosmopolitan cities, the event proposed that performance forges ties between communities dispersed across historic transnational networks, and creates shared urban histories and heritage between cities.

The first panel, chaired by our director Clare Melhuish, responded to Sonjah Stanley Niaah's lecture, questioning how performance culture shapes urban narratives. We would like to thank the following for their presentations of their own innovative projects: Richard Bramwell (Loughborough University), Julian Henriques (Goldsmiths, University of London), Sonjah Stanley Niaah (University of the West Indies), Mykaell Riley (University of Westminster), Joy White (author and researcher).

The second panel, comprising a roundtable of current PhD candidates, explored cultures, geographies, practices, histories, and theories of music and the city to examine—through collaborative discussion—questions and provocations formed by their own abstract submissions, chaired by Peter Hawking-Sach of UCL Geography. Participants included:

Ben Assiter (Goldsmiths, University of London)—*Beyond Night Time Economy: Sounds, Spaces and Communities in London's Electronic Dance Music Cultures*.



Melz, *Cities Imaginaries: Performance Lab*, May 2019.
CreditL Jacob Fairless Nicholson.

Natalie Hyacinth (Royal Holloway, University of London)—*Diaspora Dub & Acoustemology: Exploring Dub's Urban London Eco-System*.

Timo Koren (University of Southampton)—*All under one roof raving? Cultural production of electronic dance music in Amsterdam's night club*.

The evening event featured artists working across different mediums, performing and discussing their work in relation to their creative influences, inspirations, and their approach to creating and performing music and poetry which consider questions of identity, mobility and migration. We would like to thank the following performers for taking part:

Derrick Kakembo (film-maker)
Melz (grime MC)
Munesu Mukombe (poetry)
Natalie Hyacinth (dub)
Nacheal Catnott (poetry)
Shama Rahman (sitar singer-songwriter)

CITIES IMAGINARIES



Dr Sonjah Stanley Niaah, *Cities Imaginaries Lecture 2019*.
Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.



Screen capture of Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, *Cities Imaginaries Lecture 2020*.

Activity strand encompassing the curation and creation of cultural representations of cities and urban life, featuring an annual lecture.

Led by Urban lab Co-Director Matthew Beaumont, Professor of English Literature at UCL, since 2014 this broad public programme of screenings, salons, exhibitions, performances, workshops and other events explores the aesthetics and semiotics of cities past, present and to come.

In 2019 we were delighted to welcome Dr Sonjah Stanley Niaah, head of the Institute of Caribbean Studies at the University of the West Indies, to give the annual lecture.

Her talk focused on Dancehall Performance, Visual Communication and the Philosophy of 'Boundarylessness', expanding on research conducted on the phenomenon of the 'videolight' (video camera), the making of dancehall celebrities, and the evolution of the dancehall performance aesthetic afforded by the spectacle of, and for, the videolight.

Our latest lecture, in 2020, was delivered by Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, the founding director of the V&A East as part of a new programme of events designed to highlight the future activity of Urban Lab at the Urban Room and Memory Workshop, UCL East. Prior to taking up his current post, Gus was Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

His talk focused on how V&A East will respond to London's ongoing and future needs. The new cultural landscape requires a new type of institution, one that can re-energize its collections for new audiences and recalibrate itself to the concerns, rhythms, and modes of production of our new age. The V&A has an extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build that institution, creating a world-first experiential storehouse of art and design in the form of the CRC and pairing it with an experimental partnership-based gallery and exhibition platform at the Waterfront at East Bank. We look forward to ongoing collaborations and partnerships between colleagues at V&A East and UCL East, following the signing of an institutional memorandum of understanding in 2020.

QUEER SPACES: LONDON, 1980s TO TODAY

Exhibition of research on the history of London's queer spaces, held at the Whitechapel Gallery.

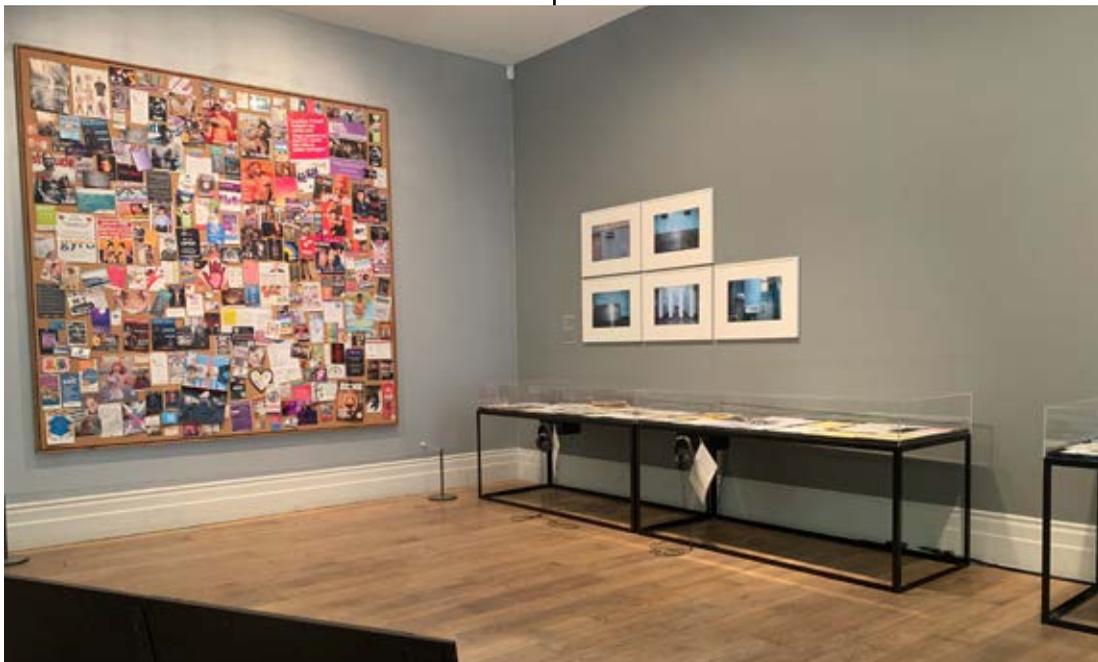


Queer Spaces: London, 1980s to Today at London's Whitechapel Gallery. Credit: Whitechapel Gallery / Photos: Stephen White.

Co-curated by UCL Urban Laboratory, this exhibition at London's Whitechapel Gallery focused on rarely seen archives of LGBTQ+ venues and social networks collated during our research on queer night spaces, led by Prof Ben Campkin and Lo Marshall. An interactive map charted the appearance and disappearance of spaces over the last 30 years.

Among the featured case studies were the London Lesbian and Gay Centre and Black Lesbian and Gay Centre, both running in the 1980s and '90s; Glass Bar (1995–2008), a space in Euston for anyone identifying as a woman; and venues such as The Joiners Arms, The Black Cap and The Royal Vauxhall Tavern that are the subject of current campaigns against redevelopment. Together, they reveal the radical inventiveness and creativity of London's LGBTQ+ communities since the 1980s.

Whitechapel Gallery also commissioned a series of artists to give their perspectives on 21st century cityscapes of sociability and self-expression, including Tom Burr (b. 1963, USA), Ralph Dunn (b. 1969, UK), Evan Ifekoya (b. 1988, Nigeria), Hannah Quinlan & Rosie Hastings (both b. 1991, UK), Prem Sahib (b. 1982, UK).



Our research explores a wide range of subject areas across disciplinary and geographical boundaries, using experimental, collaborative and participatory methods.

Research and Collaboration

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Waste Photo Competition entry, Yuxi Zeng.



Waste Photo Competition entry, Caterina Lantaffi.

2019/20

Annual Theme: WASTE

For our first ever annual theme, Urban Lab committed to thinking through the idea of 'Waste' across the arts, humanities and social sciences—bringing engineering, planners, architects, hard science and the Medical School into the conversation with us. Several rounds of funding for events/research proposals related to the theme were launched from June 2019 onwards.

The theme was opened to the widest possible interpretation and assumed to address the concerns of many disciplines and departments while providing a frame for thinking across or even bypassing entrenched or established modes of thinking.

The theme also provided a framing for student engagement on the MSc Urban Studies programme, particularly the Urban Practices module in Term 2, when the cohort worked with the West End Partnership on issues around waste and urban management in London's West End.

In October 2019, to launch the theme, the new Dean of the Bartlett, Christoph Lindner, Professor of Urban Studies, gave his first UCL public lecture, on the subject of his book *Global Garbage: Urban Imaginaries of Waste* (Routledge Research in Sustainable Urbanism 2015). Jose Torero Cullen (CEGE) participated as respondent, bringing perspectives from Engineering to the topic. The event was introduced by Tamar Garb (IAS) and chaired by Clare Melhuish (Urban Lab).

The funding provided by UCL Urban Lab and the IAS was intended to support UCL researchers, and their collaborators, to produce public events or public engagement activities around the concept of Waste, as a widely defined grand challenge.

In collaboration with UCL Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), UCL Urban Lab explored 'Waste' as its first annual theme for the 2019/20 academic year.

Two proposals were funded in October 2019:

WASTE AS (URBAN) PRACTICE

Pushpa Arabindoo & Fabien Cante

OUR SYNTHETIC ENVIRONMENT

Maya Fowkes & Reuben Fowkes

A further eight were funded in February 2020:

WASTED EXPERIENCE: ART AND THE TOXIC POLITICS OF WASTE

Hanna Baumann

NO PLACE FOR OLD URBANITIES? AGEING ROYAL DOCKS AND FORMS OF MAINTENANCE AND CARE

Giorgio Talocci

LONDON WASTELAND

Andrew Harris & Sonia Freire Trigo

TERRAIN VAGUE

Graham Gussin

REFRAMING THE WASTE CRISIS: ENVIRONMENTAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Ulrike Sommer & Bruno Vindrola-Adrós

FROM THE GROUND UP: REMAKING WASTELAND

Onya McCausland & Joy Sleeman

WASTELAND METABOLISMS AND THE PREDICAMENTS OF GROWTH IN AFRICA

Dr Noémi Tousignant & Dr Véra Ehrenstein

'WASTE' AS A SEDIMENT OF READING: THE FORENSIC STUDY OF HISTORIC BOOKS

Robyn Adams

Applicants for the Waste project funding were asked to think of the theme around the following concerns:

WASTE AND SPACE, WASTE OF SPACE wastelands, waste dumps, no-go areas and washed out zones, land laid waste, disused space, space abandoned or unloved, uninhabited and uncultivated, overgrown or desolate, watery waste, space laid waste by damage/design, environmental/ecologies of waste/space, spatializing waste, land-fill and land left, leakages and spillages, poisoned landscapes and toxic fall out, weeds and wild growth, international politics of waste, transporting waste, geographies of consumption and rubbish

WASTE AND CITIES lifecycles of buildings and sites, atmospheric waste and pollution, waste management planning, waste and density, energy waste, waste and urban/building design, urban wastelands, demolition/destruction waste (e.g. through fire) and urban contamination/ regeneration, waste and regeneration

WASTE AND TIME time wasting, spare time, squandering effort and energy, using up time, spoiling or spilling time, life-wasting, wasting away, degeneration and decay, the ravages of time, the uses of time

WASTE AND MONEY useless expenditure, rampant consumption, squandering and seduction, throwing away, used up stuff, writing off, built in expendability, economies of waste, consumer culture, excess, extraneous commodities and surplus stuff

WASTING OF/FROM THE BODY decay, disease, wasting away, waste matter, secretions and emissions, bodily waste (blood, sweat, skin, excrement, snot, pus, urine) shedding and peeling, oozing and emitting, pouring and secreting, unsuccessful organ transplantation and tissue regeneration, recycling bodies—burying, incinerating and composting

WASTE AND THINGS rubbish and rot, throwing out, throwing away, wear and tear, decay, left-overs, refuse, uselessness, by-products and binned goods, putrefaction, literal waste—garbage, excrement, detritus and trash, refuse matter; unserviceable material, remainders, useless by-products, unsaleable stuff, dangerous waste—pollution, carcinogenic and

radioactive matter, poisoning—and its psychic and physic consequence

USEFUL WASTE repurposing, recycling, re-using, transformation, treatment and technology, repair and reuse, channelling waste—infrastructures of waste—sewage, excremental economies, lavs and loos, the architecture of waste—toilets, recycling plants, building materials and structures from left-overs and salvage, sustainability and harnessing energy and stuff, composting and composing from waste and muck, fermenting and rotting, circular economy and zero waste

PEOPLE AND WASTE societal dregs, those designated as rubbish or worthless, useless folks and expendable groups, the dirty and undesirable, the surplus and vilified, class and caste, labour and livelihoods, waste workers and garbage collectors, waste harvesters and contaminated/infected communities/folks, figurations of filth: rag pickers, street urchins, marginalised groups; unproductive labour, citizens and subjects

WASTE AND BEHAVIOUR brain function and waste, habits of wastefulness, changing behaviour, managing waste, psychic excess, emotions and energies, dirt and desire, scatology, waste and education – consumption behaviour, mass media, information and propaganda, political correctness

WASTE AND TECHNOLOGY obsolescence, malfunctioning, disused matter and materials, digital waste and trash—and its consumption of physical

WASTE Photo Competition

UCL staff and student photography competition highlighting the 2019/20 demolition theme of 'Waste'.



1st Place Winner: *Nocturnal Demolition*, Tom Farshi—UCL Computer Science.

Among our judges' comments:

Wonderful dramatic image, great lighting, dynamic interaction of machinery and building in process of disembowelment by night. Focuses attention on the waste generated by building demolition and replacement and the intricate processes of sorting different waste and reusable components involved in the dismantling of the urban fabric.

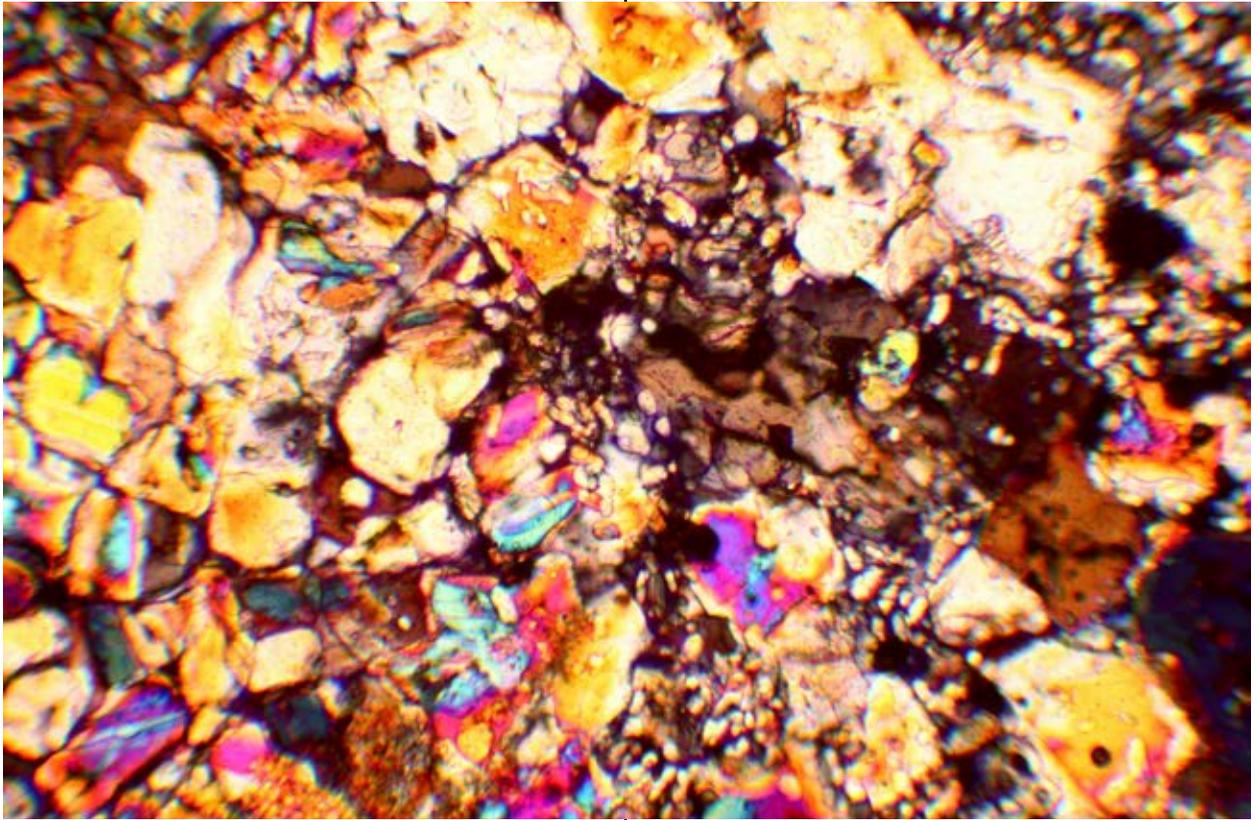
A nicely framed shot, with the photographer choosing a precise moment of composition in a process of violent destruction. It's the only photograph we received taken at night, which puts the viewer in a different, more dynamic relationship with waste; night as the time of urban cleaning, maintenance, demolition. I like the drama and violence of the image and that it represents the action of wasting a building, not simply the end product (waste). The photographer is witness, not observer.



2nd Place: *Waste: by the Human, of the Human*, Rohit Lahoti—The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL.

The theme of Waste was also the theme of our second photography competition, open to entries from UCL staff and students.

The winning entry, titled *Nocturnal Demolition* features a scene in Bristol, UK. The photographer, Tom Farshi from UCL Computer Science said: 'I joined the other spectators and watched as hydraulic shears pulled pieces off the building. This process only took place at night, and not long after this building had disappeared.'



3rd Place: *Rubies in the Rubble*, Carla Washbourne—UCL STEaPP.

The judging panel comprised of Dr Pushpa Arabinndoo (Co-Director, UCL Urban Laboratory), Nicola Baldwin (UCL Creative Fellow), Prof Tamar Garb (Director, UCL Institute of Advanced Studies), Rachna Leveque (EngD Researcher in Urban Sustainability & Resilience, UCL CEGE), and Dr Clare Melhuish (Director, UCL Urban Laboratory).



4th Place: *Between the Waste and the Sacred*, Javiera Sanchez Rios—UCL Institute of Education.

Night Spaces: Migration, Culture and Integration in Europe (NITE)

UCL Urban Lab Co-Director Professor Ben Campkin is the British lead in an international research project recently awarded a €1m Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) grant to study how night spaces are produced, imagined, experienced and narrated by migrant communities in eight European cities. The project is a collaboration across an international team of researchers, led by Dr Sara Brandellero (Leiden University).

Through a programme of community co-designed cultural events and activities, and close engagement with policy-makers, NITE aims to contribute to policy approaches to night-time economies, releasing the potential night spaces offer in creating more inclusive cities. With migration a defining characteristic of contemporary urban life, key and often polarizing in current policy, political and public debates in Europe, NITE aims to support community wellbeing and better integration at local, national and transnational levels.

The project covers night spaces in cities in the Netherlands, Ireland, UK, Germany, Denmark and Portugal, considered intersectionally within the context of migration with questions of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, class, and age. NITE considers how migrants' experiences in public spaces at night and the stories that emerge from them can productively inform current and future debates, policies and practices. Thus, it contends that night-time culture (expressed through e.g. music, film, digital platforms, performance) opens up new opportunities and spaces of belonging and intercultural understanding.

It considers material, symbolic and virtual public spaces associated with and created by migrant communities in night-time urban settings, which are understood as being important sites of crisis and regeneration, memory and heritage, community solidarity and growth.

Authorities have historically wrestled with the issue of night-time control, and the hours after dark are often still perceived as harbouring threats to public order and potential criminality. However, the current policy attention to night-time urban economies, exemplified by the creation of the office of Night Mayor (Amsterdam, 2014) and Night Czar

Transdisciplinary collaboration to understand the how night spaces are dynamically produced, imagined, experienced and narrated by migrant communities across eight European cities.



Still from Ben Campkin's interview with London's Night Czar Amy Lamé, July 2020. Available on Vimeo.

(London, 2016), illustrates the increasing interest in the potentialities of the urban night. Harnessing this growing interest, NITE's transdisciplinary, humanities-led research will contribute with otherwise overlooked evidence on the production, experience and narration of migrant night-spaces, adding to the timeliness of its approach.

The five strands of the project are:

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND QUEER (LGBTQ+) NIGHT SPACES ORIENTATED AROUND MIGRANT IDENTITIES AND HISTORIES IN LONDON, 1980s—PRESENT (UCL)

MIGRANT BIKE COURIERS IN THE 'SMART CITY' AT NIGHT (LEUPHANA UNIVERSITY)

MIGRANT YOUTH OUT OF PLACE? CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF NIGHT AND BELONGING IN LISBON AND AARHUS (AARHUS UNIVERSITY)

STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT: AFRICAN MIGRANT MUSIC-MAKING IN IRISH CITIES (MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK)

NIGHT NARRATIVES OF INTEGRATION IN THE NETHERLANDS (LEIDEN UNIVERSITY)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ+) night spaces orientated around migrant identities and histories in London, 1980s–present (UCL).



London at night from above (NASA / Tim Kopra, licenced under CC BY-NC 2.0).

The UCL element of the NITE project, supported by UCL Urban Lab, focuses on night-spaces, cultures and narratives of migrant LGBTQ+ communities in London (1980s–present). London is the focus because of its international profile as city with a large and diverse LGBTQ+ population, because of its histories of colonialism and migration, and because of the significant number of night-time venues and events oriented towards groups with specific national and ethnic identities. London’s Mayor and recently appointed Night Czar have prioritized the night-time economy and support for LGBTQ+ venues, recognizing the value of these spaces to engender belonging and social integration within and across communities with distinct forms of heritage. A reported fall of LGBTQ+ night venues (58% over the past decade) due in large part to real estate pressures has resulted in specific policy innovations and media narratives that the researchers will study, alongside the production, operation, cultural and intercultural significance of LGBTQ+ migrants’ night spaces and narratives.

This research adds to the limited number of studies of migrant LGBTQ+ communities in Europe new qualitative and empirical evidence on the socio-cultural value of nightlife venues for those communities and to public life more broadly. It will consider the distinct qualities of formal licensed premises alongside transitory and long running events that move between venues, serving groups who face barriers to inclusion in mainstream commercial night-scenes (e.g. women, people with trans and non-binary identities, queer and trans people of colour). It will analyse the cultural heritage embedded in specific buildings, interiors,



Screenshot from *Night Scenes*. Top, left to right: Chardine Taylor Stone, Dan de la Motte, DJ Rituu. Bottom, left to right: Ella Harris, Zoe Adjonyoh, Julius-Cezar MacQuarie.

venues and events associated with migrant LGBTQ+ minorities, offering insights on the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion to inform policies that might challenge prejudices and foster integration.

For more information and project resources, visit the project website: <https://www.nightspace.net>

Lo Marshall, UCL Urban Lab Research Fellow

'I joined the UCL Night Spaces: migration, culture and integration in Europe (NITE) team as Research Fellow in March 2020, having worked with Ben Campkin and UCL Urban Laboratory as a Research Assistant since 2016. Our research in the NITE project focuses on LGBTQ+ night-time spaces in relation to migration in London. In 2020, we organised the first conference for the NITE project, Night Scenes and co-hosted a session in Night Clubbing for The Bartlett School of Architecture's International Lecture Series. Our project has also produced the world's first 3D-scan of an LGBTQ venue, the iconic, Grade II-listed performance venue, the Royal Vauxhall Tavern.

Night Scenes was originally planned to be hosted in-person at UCL, but in response to the Covid-19 pandemic we re-organised the conference to be hosted online, a new experience for many of us at the time, and a world first for an transdisciplinary conference on nocturnal urbanism. Night Scenes took place online between 30 April and 15 May 2020 and examined how night spaces have been imagined, produced, experienced and narrated in European cities by communities who have mobilized around particular migrant identities and histories. The conference set out to explore night-time urban settings in their complexity as sites of crisis and regeneration, memory and heritage, visibility and invisibility, community solidarity and growth, and to contribute evidence from the arts and humanities to policy and wider debates on cities at night. Night Scenes included four panels, Soho Scenes, Night Scenes Roundtables, Night Times, and Night Modes, and featured a range of speakers, including activists, community organisers, scholars and artists. Recordings from each session are available to view on the NITE website, which was also initiated by the Urban Lab NITE team.'

2020/21 Annual Theme: Emergency

Since the start of 2020 the UK and the world have been engulfed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to the sudden imposition of substantial emergency measures across the globe. These measures have been designed to control and restrict movement of populations across urban and rural areas, and will fundamentally alter our interactions as an academic community on and off campus during the coming year.

But this is not the only global emergency in recent times to have particular implications for urbanism, generating far-reaching interventions in the ways that cities and towns are being governed, designed and managed. For years, cities in the UK and abroad have been thrown into crisis management mode as a result of floods, fires, and other hazards. Many cities around the world have taken the lead on declaring their commitment to measures designed to address human-caused climate change, alongside various forms of disaster, famine, impoverishment, environmental devastation, and racism and other forms of social marginalization and exclusion. These phenomena, closely interconnected with war, terrorism, and political conflict, have stimulated large-scale movements of displaced peoples, mass public demonstrations and violence, and a variety of further emergency management responses, resulting in the implementation of significant measures in the surveillance and control of urban space.

Policing and other urban emergency services have themselves become the focus of emergency orders to facilitate intervention and control in the context of mass protests and other scenarios of urban crisis management. Such interventions, and abuses of power, have heightened debates in the public domain about citizens' rights, racial inequities, and government authority.

The aim of this year's annual theme then is to explore the characteristics and consequences of 'emergency urbanism' in its different forms, and in relation to the underlying structural causes of planetary and other emergencies. When does a momentary crisis become an emergency, and what happens next? We will examine the implications of such emergencies—both in the suspension of existing consensual processes and the imposition of new

In collaboration with the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, UCL Urban Laboratory are exploring 'Emergency' as an annual theme for the 2020–21 academic year.

constraints—and in the opportunities it offers for new ways of mobilising, operating, and innovating in the field of urban governance, design, representation, equality, and infrastructure.

Working in collaboration with the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, we will host a series of online/hybrid format talks, workshops, and activities throughout the year addressing this theme, and run a small grants scheme for project proposals from both students and staff. We look forward to engaging widely and creatively across the college and co-creating a platform for critical insights into the phenomenon of 'emergency urbanism' in all its variants, which reflects the vast range of experience across and beyond the UCL community as we grapple with the challenges posed by the previous and upcoming academic year.

Urban Lab Under Lockdown

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on urban life across the globe. At the UCL Urban Laboratory we took the decision to cancel all of our in-person activities on 16 March 2020, in advance of advice from the British government, and in line with UCL's evolving guidance. The subsequent months have required innovation.

A number of planned events and activities had to be postponed, including the vast majority of projects funded through our Waste small project grants with the UCL Institute of Advanced Studies. The impending launch of the eighth issue of the Urban Pamphleteer—*Skateboardings*—was pushed back, although was made available online as an open access resource. The first conference in our joint HERA-funded project on migrant night spaces in Europe was re-tooled to an online edition.

Urban Lab's network of scholars have been busier than ever exploring the impact of Covid-19 on our way of life.

Urban Lab Director Clare Melhuish participated in a discussion on priorities for a green recovery following lockdown, as part of the CPRE London AGM, a key part of which was the need to create new spaces for public engagement and participation in future urban decision-making.

Co-Director Camillo Boano wrote an article with Catalina Ortiz titled '*Stay at Home*': *housing as a pivotal infrastructure of care?* as part of the DPU's Post Covid-19 Urban Futures blog series.

Our Centre Manager, Jordan Rowe, also hosted a panel on how lockdown London functions as Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's 'State of Exception'. The panel formed part of the online edition of the annual Open City Documentary Festival, and featured Prof Boano (who has written a book on the spatial transfer of the theory), and artist/researcher Henrietta Williams.

Co-Director Dr Pushpa Arabindoo wrote an article titled *Pandemic cities: Between mimicry and trickery* for City & Society reflecting on the specificities of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown in Chennai, India.

Another of our Co-Directors, Matthew Beaumont, wrote for The Guardian and was quoted in other publications such as Huck Magazine com-

menting on how city-dwellers may rediscover the joys of walking post-lockdown, and his fears that we may forget any lessons we learn as the liberal city resumes its usual rhythms.

Our Steering Committee member Garbiele Manoli was also one of the authors of *Global convergence of Covid-19 basic reproduction and estimation from early-time SIR dynamics* in the journal PLOS ONE 15(9).

Ava Fatah gen. Schieck, another of our Steering Committee, also recently became part of a new two-year international research collaboration led by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences into the design of public spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic.

For links to all these documents and to view other documents and media uploaded online in the wake of Covid-19, please visit our website at ucl.ac.uk/urban-lab.

heading out of lockdown

Clare Melhuish
@DrClareMelhuish

First steps to easing lockdown, as per UK government guidance: re-start construction work and encourage people to get into their cars and to work. Not a good start to building a better, carbon-neutral future after COVID @BartlettUCL @UCLurbanlab

11:16 AM · May 11, 2020 · Twitter for iPad

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A new opportunity to tackle climate change. Countries should seize the moment to flatten the climate curve.



Countries should seize the moment to flatten the climate curve. The pandemic shows how fast it will be to de-accelerate—and creates an opportunity. [@economist.com](#)

You Retweeted

Mark Tewdrow-Jones @MTJProf · Aug 7

A good piece by @ollysewinright. After 40 years of neoliberal planning reform, the proposals will not necessarily lead to the outcomes the gov't expects. They could ask why & learn from previous reform attempts. But sadly they're just a broken record.



Race to the bottom: reform to planning system in England could ... Government's dramatic building reforms likely to cut democratic input into the planning process by half. [@theguardian.com](#)

32 Retweets 42 Likes



learning from histories of London



County of London Plan 1943:
a city of villages; eggs in a basket model of London; neighbourhood units integrated with open public spaces

Skeffington Report 1969:
principle of community participation enshrined in London's planning history

people and planning



UCL East: Urban Room and Memory Workshop



creating spaces for public engagement and participation in urban decision making after lockdown



- a public space
- a space for workshops
- a space for making
- a space for debate
- a space for exhibitions
- a social space

a UCL Urban Laboratory + Culture Lab collaboration at UCL East

Visiting Researchers

CREATIVE FELLOW NICOLA BALDWIN

THE CITY DIONYSIA—NARRATING WASTELAND IN URBAN LIFE

Playwright Nicola Baldwin joined Urban Lab on a Creative Fellowship to stretch the relationships between research, learning and creative practice. She collaborated with Urban Lab co-director Dr Pushpa Arabindoo on *The City Dionysia*, invoking the ancient Greek theatre festivals, where drama fuelled public urban debate; using as a testbed Pushpa's priority area of Wasteland and Urban Lab's annual theme of 'Waste'. Research activities included a week-long cross-disciplinary collaboration culminating in an immersive performance at Petrie Museum, and supporting Urban Studies students' agitprop tours of UCL. Urban Lab hosted a performance of *We The Young Strong* for Bartlett100 at Bloomsbury Theatre, produced by Jordan Rowe, with panel discussion on far-Right radicalisation with Aditya Chakraborty, Professor Julie Gottlieb and David Rosenberg. Nicola found the interdisciplinary friction of Urban Lab's programme offered constant challenge and stimulus. She wrote *Wasteland* in response to industrial action by UCL cleaners and academics in terms 1 and 2; asking what does 'zero waste' mean, applied to people? Workshopped in term 3 during Covid, lockdown enabled performers traditionally excluded by disability, childcare, language, or income to participate in the *City Dionysia*. *WASTELAND* had an online first-draft reading in July 2020, and development continues in collaboration with Urban Lab.

Events:

Online reading of *WASTELAND*, July 2020.
The Duchess, March 2020 (for UCL Art Museum—postponed due to Covid).
Bug & The City' collaboration, November 2019.
'Waste Words' workshop, November 2019.
We The Young Strong performance, October 2019.

We continue to enhance our research community with a mix of visiting research and creative fellows.



Screen capture of a first draft online reading of *WASTELAND*. Image courtesy of Nicola Baldwin.

RESEARCH FELLOW JOEL PEREIRA FELIPE

I was interested in post-doctoral research at UCL Urban Laboratory due to my interest in conducting a comparative study between the UK and Brazil on the role of university campuses in urban regeneration in the two different contexts, using the time for reflection on the Federal University of Southern Bahia's campus, where I am associate professor.

The bibliographic research carried out in the collections of the Urban Laboratory and the UCL Bartlett Library was focused on the theme of urban regeneration and the sustainability policies implemented by British universities. It was also possible to deepen the theme of sustainability literacy for students, teachers and staff through interviews conducted at UCL Estates and with staff of the Bartlett School of Architecture.

My perception of how this topic is conceptualized and studied in the UK has been revised and updated. For me, a relatively new theme has emerged in the Brazilian academic literature, defined as 'studentification', which accompanies these processes as a new form of gentrification.

I also had the opportunity to present the current state of research at the International Conference *At the frontiers of urban*. In conclusion, it was a very profitable three months. Thank you, Urban Lab.

For more information on Joel Pereira Felipe's work, visit joelfelipe-ufsb.blogspot.com

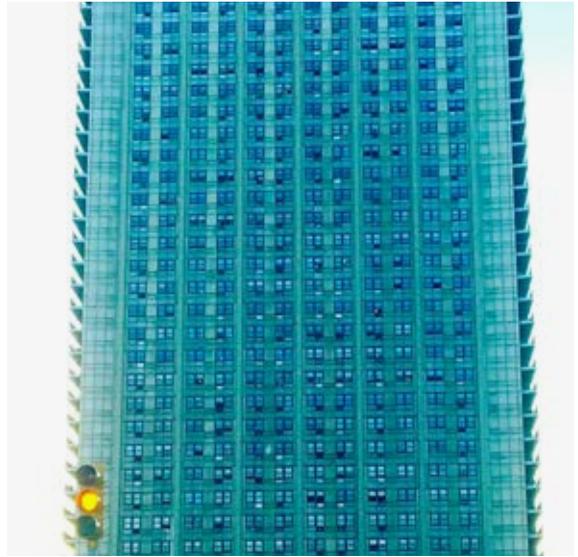
Urban Verticality Photo Competition

Our first themed photo competition open to students and staff from across UCL.



1st Place Winner: Alexander Macfarlane—The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL.

This photograph represents the essence of Urban Verticality and its evolution through the years, what was once deemed as 'vertical' and 'urban' might now be considered insignificant. Whilst it is a well-known, almost cliched, vertical landscape, it is still an extraordinary one. The image manages to crop out any hint of sky and contains an impressive variety of different heights/styles of high-rise. The photo is sharply captured with the individual lights also offering a sense of the differentiated interior life across this scene. The composition and quality of the photo is exemplary and it is a deserving winner.



2nd Place: Talia Clarick—UCL Geography.



3rd Place: Jonah Rudlin—The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL.

Our inaugural photography competition was open to entries from UCL staff and students on the theme of 'urban verticality'. As one of our Priority Areas, this theme responds to an increasing questioning of the flat and horizontal ways cities have historically tended to be represented and understood.

The winning entry came from the DPU's Alexander Macfarlane. On the photo, Macfarlane said, 'With a constrained geography and a lack of space, Hong Kong has long been the archetypal vertical city. In the northern section of Kowloon, away from the main tourist sights and across the bay from Hong Kong Island, the comparatively low-rise though densely populated district of Sham Shui Po contrasts with the newer high-rises that have sprung up around it, as across the rest of the city.'

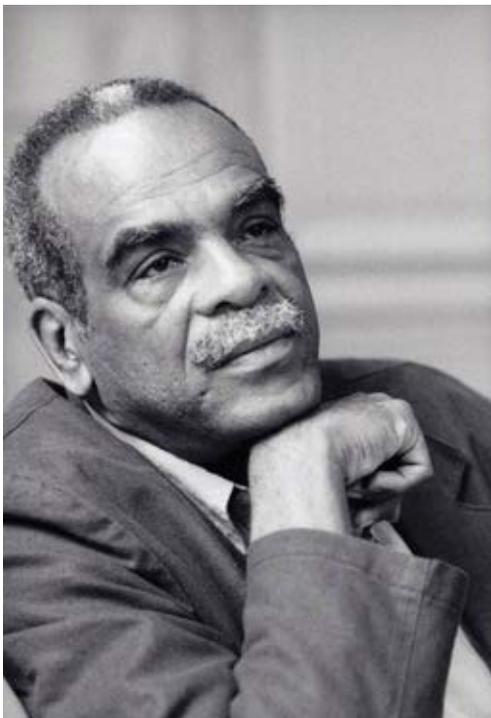
The judging panel comprised of Dr Andrew Harris (Co-Director, UCL Urban Laboratory), Dr Clare Melhuish (Director, UCL Urban Laboratory), Prof Jose Torero Cullen (Head of Department, UCL Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering), and Sidra Ahmed (PhD student, UCL Geography).

Second place went to Talia Clarick from the Department of Geography, for her photo of *The Bridge Apartments* in New York City, which sit directly atop the busy Trans-Manhattan Expressway. The judges commented that the photo 'disables the viewer from establishing the full magnitude of the building, yet the visible floors and the dimensions of the windows provide a sense of the enormity of the structure. The traffic light on amber opens the question of how adequate a building of this nature is, whilst leaving it to the viewer to decide.'

Third place was awarded to Jonah Rudlin of The Bartlett Development Planning Unit. Their photo is a record of a multistorey conversation between the residents of an apartment block in Templehof, Berlin. 'Only a small minority of the submissions we received showed or implied any kind of social activity', said the judging panel. 'We really like the more ordinary qualities of the vertical scene here and the social interactions between above and below, all counterbalanced by the presence of the satellite dishes pointing as if dismissively away and hinting at more international realms of vertical connection.' The winner received a £100 prize.

Space in Relation: Édouard Glissant

Recognised as an increasingly major figure in post-colonial studies, Édouard Glissant's commentary has in the past not been widely critiqued outside of literary and francophone disciplines. Building on recent exhibitions and texts that have sought to take Glissant's work into other areas, the event explored the application of his writing—including the books *Poetics of Relation* and *Caribbean Discourse*—and key concepts—such as *détour* and *retour*, *errance*, *opacity* and *trace*—to discourse and thinking around urban studies, architecture and spatial practice. Preceding the panel, an afternoon workshop was held for researchers and others with an interest in a deeper examination of Glissant's work.



Édouard Glissant. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Panel discussion and workshop exploring the work of Édouard Glissant, hosted by Urban Lab, as part of the UCL Festival of Culture, in collaboration with the Institut du Tout-Monde.

'I initiated the idea of holding an event around the work of Édouard Glissant in relation to architecture, space and urban studies after having had conversations with Clare Melhuish, Urban Lab director about our mutual interest in his work, which I had written about in my PhD. I was excited about the possibility of gathering Glissant scholars together to think through the links to the fields of architecture and urban studies, and to invite those also wanting to learn from them to take part in workshops. The format of the day was afternoon workshops followed by a speaker panel in the evening which was open to larger numbers. It was a privilege to have Glissant's widow Sylvie join us for the speaker panel and to have the range and breadth of ideas presented by the workshop leaders (also on the panel), Heidi Bojsen, Abdoumalig Simone, Sam Coombes and Charles Forsdick.'

Dr Katy Beinart
University of Brighton
Panel Convenor

We produce a variety of books, reports, papers, briefings and other media outputs exploring the urban dimension from multiple perspectives.

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Urban Pamphleteer

Publication series edited by Ben Campkin and Rebecca Ross confronting key contemporary urban questions.



Urban Pamphleteer is a publication series produced in collaboration between UCL Urban Laboratory and Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. Each issue addresses a theme and set of questions that have recently surfaced in urban debate, framing contemporary challenges historically, and bringing together a diversity of text and visual contributions, written in an accessible way, to address audiences who are affected by the topics raised and/or are in a position to enact change. Past issues have covered as varied topics as *Smart Cities*, *Heritage & Renewal in Doha*, and *LGBTQ+ Night Spaces*.

Our latest issue, *Urban Pamphleteer* #8 titled: *Skateboardings*, brings together voices who are pushing forward debate on the role of skateboarding in effecting urban and social change. The lived experiences of skateboarders of colour, of diverse genders and sexualities, of different mobilities and class backgrounds, intersect with the politics of their everyday lives and negotiations with public and private space. With this in mind, the issue asks: What does a skateable space look and feel like, and for whom? Does skateboarding benefit from accessible urban design, and if so, why? Can skateboarders be good partners for cities?

The issue contains 16 short pieces by 18 authors, and was guest edited by Thomas Callan-Riley and Sander Hölsgens.

Urban Pamphleteer is produced by UCL Urban Laboratory in collaboration with Central Saint Martins' Graphic Communication Design. You can follow @UrbanPamplet on Twitter.

Issues are distributed for free and are available at urbanpamphleteer.org

London's Urban Landscape: Another Way of Telling

Edited study featuring contributions from UCL Urban Laboratory director Clare Melhuish, and anthropologist Rafael Schacter, a member of our Steering Committee.

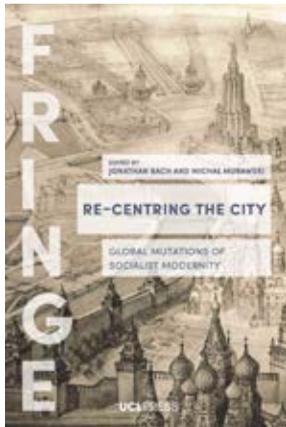


London's Urban Landscape is the first major study of a global city to adopt a materialist perspective and stress the significance of place and the built environment to the urban landscape. Edited by Christopher Tilley, the volume is inspired by phenomenological thinking and presents fine-grained ethnographies of the practices of everyday life in London. In doing so, it charts a unique perspective on the city that integrates ethnographies of daily life with an analysis of material culture.

The deeply sensuous character of the embodied experience of the city is invoked in the thick descriptions of entangled relationships between people and places, and the paths of movement between them. What stories do door bells and house facades tell us about contemporary life in a Victorian terrace? How do antiques acquire value and significance in a market? How does living in a concrete megastructure relate to the lives of the people who dwell there? These and a host of other questions are addressed in this fascinating book that will appeal widely to all readers interested in London or contemporary urban life.

Re-centring the city

Open-access publication edited by Jonathan Bach and UCL Urban Lab Steering Committee member Michał Murawski. Available from UCL Press.



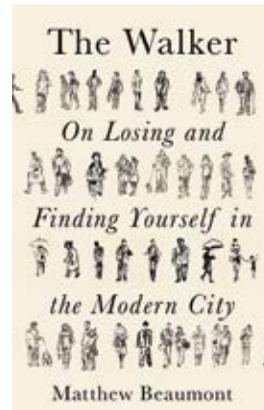
What is the role of monumentality, verticality and centrality in the twenty-first century? Are palaces, skyscrapers and grand urban ensembles obsolete relics of twentieth-century modernity, inexorably giving way to a humbler and more sustainable de-centred urban age? Or do the aesthetics and politics of pomp and grandiosity rather linger and even prosper in the cities of today and tomorrow?

Re-Centering the City zooms in on these questions, taking as its point of departure the experience of Eurasian socialist cities, where twentieth-century high modernity arguably saw its most radical and furthest-reaching realisation. It frames the experience of global high modernity (and its unravelling) through the eyes of the socialist city, rather than the other way around: instead of explaining Warsaw or Moscow through the prism of Paris or New York, it refracts London, Mexico City and Chennai through the lens of Kyiv, Simferopol and the former Polish shtetls. This transdisciplinary volume re-centres the experiences of the 'Global East', and thereby our understanding of world urbanism, by shedding light on some of the still-extant (and often disavowed) forms of 'zombie' centrality, hierarchy and violence that pervade and shape our contemporary urban experience.

Contributors include UCL Urban Laboratory Co-Director Dr Pushpa Arabindoo, and former artist in residence Tom Wolseley.

The Walker: On Losing and Finding Yourself in the Modern City

A literary history of walking, from Dickens to Žižek from our Co-Director and UCL Professor of English Literature, Matthew Beaumont.



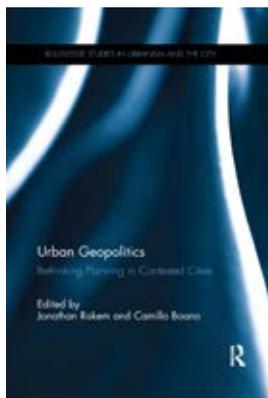
There is no such thing as a false step. Every time we walk we are going somewhere. Especially if we are going nowhere. Moving around the modern city is not a way of getting from A to B, but of understanding who and where we are. In a series of riveting intellectual rambles, Matthew Beaumont retraces episodes in the history of the walker since the mid-nineteenth century.

From Dickens's insomniac night rambles to restless excursions through the faceless monuments of today's neoliberal city, the act of walking is one of self-discovery and self-escape, of disappearances and secret subversions. Pacing stride for stride alongside literary amblers and thinkers such as Edgar Allan Poe, André Breton, H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys and Ray Bradbury, Beaumont explores the relationship between the metropolis and its pedestrian life.

Through these writings, Beaumont asks: Can you get lost in a crowd? What are the consequences of using your smartphone in the street? What differentiates the nocturnal metropolis from the city of daylight? What connects walking, philosophy and the big toe? And can we save the city—or ourselves—by taking to the pavement?

Urban Geopolitics: Rethinking Planning in Contested Cities

A collection bringing comparative perspective to the forefront of urban studies, edited by our Co-Director Camillo Boano and Jonathan Rock Rokem.



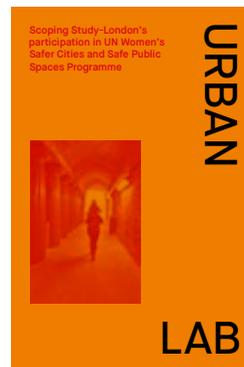
In the last decade a new wave of urban research has emerged, putting comparative perspectives back on the urban studies agenda. However, this research is frequently based on similar case studies on a few selected cities in America and Europe and all too often focus on the abstract city level with marginal attention given to particular local contexts.

Moving away from loosely defined urban theories and contexts, this book argues it is time to start learning from and compare across different 'contested cities'. It questions the long-standing Euro-centric academic knowledge production that is prevalent in urban studies and planning research. This book brings together a diverse range of international case studies from Latin America, South and South East Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East to offer an in-depth understanding of the worldwide contested nature of cities in a wide range of local contexts. It suggests an urban ontology that moves beyond the urban 'West' and 'North' as well as adding a comparative-relational understanding of the contested nature that 'Southern' cities are developing.

This timely contribution is essential reading for those working in the fields of human geography, urban studies, planning, politics, area studies and sociology.

Scoping Study: London's Participation in UN Women's Safer Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme

Independent scoping report produced by our Steering Committee member Dr Ellie Cosgrave, Tiffany Lam and Zoe Henderson, co-published by UCL Urban Laboratory and the UCL Urban Innovation and Policy Lab.



Offering a guide to the fundamentals of gender inclusive public space design; this scoping report highlights tools for investing in gender-informed public spaces; presents examples of existing action in the capital; and lays out a set of recommendations for action.

People flock to cities like London for opportunity; for work, education, culture, nightlife, and social connectedness. We know that these can be a liberation and freedom to those people who are able to access it. However, we also know that public spaces are used and experienced differently by men and women.

Simply presenting as female in public space increases vulnerability to violence and this is exacerbated at certain times of night in certain locations of the city. This is especially relevant in London, where 40 per cent of sexual assaults take place in public spaces including the transport network

UN Women founded the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces programme in recognition of the discrepancy between how violence in the private domain is largely regarded as a human rights violation, yet violence against women and girls (especially sexual harassment) in public spaces remains

neglected and is accepted as normal or inevitable.

As a signatory to this programme, London has committed to furthering work ensuring that women and girls are empowered in public spaces and that they are free from sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence.

Among the recommendations laid out in the report is a call to re-instate the Women's Design Service; to implement gender mainstreaming pilot projects using gender disaggregated data; to conduct night safety audits; build on existing public awareness campaigns and create positive imagery in the public realm; and to integrate a gender perspective into TfL's Healthy Streets Approach.



Centre Manager Jordan Rowe presenting Urban Pamphleteer at the *Imprint* publishing fair, November 2019. Credit: Jordan Rowe.

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UCL Urban Laboratory promotes an exciting culture of interdisciplinary urbanism in which all UCL undergraduate, postgraduate and research students can engage.

Teaching

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Attendees of *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019. Credit: Declan Slattery, Mediorite.



Visit from students from the Caribbean School of Architecture. Credit: Jacquiann T. Lawton.

MSc Urban Studies

This MSc develops innovative, comparative and interdisciplinary modes of analysis and research that can address the scale and complexity of contemporary urbanism.

Administered by UCL Geography, the course has greatly benefited from its ongoing relationship with the Urban Lab's interdisciplinary agenda and pedagogical programme. The course engages with staff across UCL departments, including Architecture, Planning, Anthropology, DPU, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, English, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy. The programme is run by Andrew Harris and co-convened with Ben Campkin, Pushpa Arambindoo and Clare Melhuish, with a number of other Urban Lab people affiliated with the programme.

Notable strengths include the recruitment of high-calibre students from widely varying academic and professional backgrounds. Through a varied instructional programme that includes classroom teaching, field visits, essays and project-based assessment activities, and a range of additional learning supports, students are given a strong critical foundation in urban studies while developing a range of skills that will enhance their future personal and career ambitions.

PhD Affiliation

With our PhD affiliation scheme, the UCL Urban Laboratory continues to support UCL's PhD community and connect research students from across UCL's varied department's and faculties. In addition to Urban Lab affiliation, we also encourage PhD students across all London universities to join the Stadtkolloquium PhD network of students with a research interest in urbanism.

To help launch our 2020/21 annual theme of 'Emergency', we hosted a roundtable of our affiliated postgraduates whose work spoke to the theme. Participants from across UCL spoke about the characteristics and consequences of 'emergency urbanism' in all its different forms.

Caribbean School of Architecture Study Visit

Visit co-hosted by UCL Urban Lab from students from the Caribbean School of Architecture.

In December 2019 the UCL Urban Laboratory was delighted to help host the Caribbean School of Architecture's MArch, Year 1, Urban Study visit to London at the end of November, led by Head of School Jacquiann Lawton.

The group of 13 students from University of Technology, Kingston, Jamaica, spent an intense fortnight conducting fieldwork and archive research in the City of London, with a view to developing a detailed urban analysis focused on the historical evolution of the Square Mile's morphology and inhabitation since Roman times, its public spaces, and urban landmarks.

Generous and invaluable input was provided by architectural historian Peter Guillery (UCL Survey of London), who led a walking tour of the City's historic churches, with added input on post-war and contemporary development from Clare Melhuish and Jordan Rowe. Conservationist Dean Sully from the Institute of Archaeology coordinated a fascinating visit to the archaeological remains of the Billingsgate Roman Bath House on Lower Thames Street, hosted by Howard Bengé; and Kay Richardson, IoA doctoral candidate and landscape architect for Historic England South-East Region, hosted a visit to Historic England's offices and talk on London Bridge by London Region's David English.

The students presented work in progress at an interim crit attended by Barbara Campbell Lange (BSA) and Giorgio Talocci (DPU) before the final presentation and exhibition of work at the Jamaican High Commission which concluded their visit. We look forward to collaborating on future exchange and a return visit to Kingston by UCL students and researchers in the future.



Co-Director Ben Campkin, *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019. Credit: Ondre Roach, Mediorite.



Co-Director Jennifer Robinson, *At the Frontiers of the Urban*, November 2019. Credit: Declan Slattery, Mediorite.

MASc Global Urbanism at UCL East

The MASc Global Urbanism will be embedded in the activities of UCL Urban Laboratory, and developed in collaboration between Co-Directors Ben Campkin and Jenny Robinson, Steering Committee member Pablo Sendra, and Director Clare Melhuish, in consultation with Co-Director and MSc Urban Studies programme director Andrew Harris. It will stand alongside the existing programme based in Bloomsbury, as a pair of Urban Lab-sponsored MASc programmes which are strongly inter- and trans-disciplinary, working across different knowledge sectors.

MASc Global Urbanism will provide two pathways, Global Studio or London Studio, which offer students the opportunity to build their critical understandings of global urbanism through immersive engagement, specialising either in the highly globalised urban context of London, or on selected international urban contexts, in collaboration with overseas partner institutions. The use of the term 'Studio' indicates the new programme's distinctive transdisciplinary, case study-based and collaborative approach to learning, and the degree takes London and identified international cities as living laboratories, providing a structure for emerging researchers to learn about the history, geography and application of methods of urban research and practices of urbanism internationally. The aim is to immerse students in a collaborative and experimental research environment at UCL East's Future Living Institute, engaging with their environs and the university's local and international partners. They will acquire specialist knowledge and research training through taught modules in a blended learning format, and work with a supervisor to design and realise their own rigorous research, being guided to generate new knowledge with societal impact to advance the more sustainable, people-centred forms of urbanism imagined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Students will benefit from UCL Urban Laboratory's track record of more than a decade of advancing engaged, critical and creative urban research, teaching and public engagement, and will have access to the new Urban Room and Memory Workshop facility at UCL East. They will be able to

This Master of Arts and Sciences degree is a new programme, pending approval in 2021, in Global Urbanism, intended to launch at UCL East in 2022.

take advantage of the resources centred in this space as they develop and present their original research. Urban Lab, the Urban Room and Memory Workshop and the Future Living Institute all prioritise links to industry, professional built environment practice, community organisations and UCL's East Bank partners, and it is envisaged that students' research projects will be developed through collaboration with these partners among others.



Construction photo of UCL's new campus in east London, which will house a new MASc Global Urbanism.
Credit: UCL East.



Construction photos of UCL's new campus in east London. Credit: Duncan Wilson.

Connecting across UCL, collaborating with partners outside of the academy, and engaging with the broader public has always, and remains, key to our mission.

Public Policy and Engagement

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Stills from *Victoria*, directed by Sofie Benoot, Lisbeth De Ceulaer and Isabelle Tollenaere, shown at *Open City Documentary Festival*, September 2020.

Urban Lab Films

Screening programme engaging audiences with the work of filmmakers depicting cities, the urban landscape, and life in urban societies.

Our regular screening series continued in partnership with Bertha DocHouse. In addition to the *City, Essay, Film* programme, we hosted a special screening of acclaimed new release *The Street*, a moving portrait of an area in east London being quickly transformed by luxury redevelopments and sky-high property prices. It was accompanied by a conversation with the director Zed Nelson, and Big Capital author Anna Minton.

Our partnership with Open City Documentary Festival continued with the 2019 and 2020 editions. We co-hosted the European premiere of *Yeh Freedom Life*, an exploration of alternative lifestyles in a working-class area of South Delhi, by first-time director Priya Sen at Regent Street Cinema in 2019. The festival moved online in 2020 as we supported the UK premiere of *Victoria*, a moving portrait of Black lives in a planned, but mostly unrealised city in the Californian desert.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on our plans in 2020, but at the start of the UK's lockdown we shared an online collection of Urban Lab Films for home viewing, featuring works that had been part of the programme over the preceding nine years. In the month after its publication, access to the collection accounted for 44% of our website audience, and over 50% of 'entrances'. It had generated over 7,000 page views by August 2020.

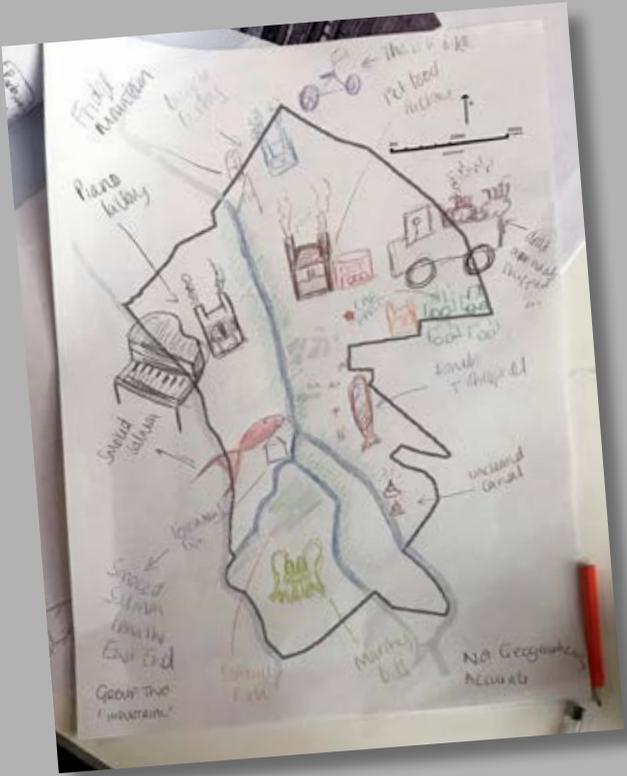
In December 2020 our collaboration with Bertha DocHouse continued with screenings of *Kink Retrograde* by Lebanese artist Basseem Saad, and *Waste Underground* by anthropologist Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins and Palestinian cinematographer Ali Aldeek. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, ticket holders were able to view the films from their own locations, with a live Q&A taking place virtually.

Urban Lab at the Urban Tree Festival

CPRE London Partnership for the 2020 Urban Tree Festival: Trees and the New Urban Ecology.

CPRE London (Campaign to Protect Rural England) was delighted to partner with UCL Urban Lab to organise a hugely popular webinar as part of the 2020 Urban Tree Festival, which went ahead in virtual form in May despite the Covid-19 lockdown. *Trees and the New Urban Ecology* was one of nine daily online presentations and discussions on urban tree themes hosted by CPRE London. Although urban populations often have better socioeconomic livelihoods, city living is associated with adverse human health effects. Evidence suggests that natural environments, including woodlands, in cities, offer important health benefits. Dr Clare Melhuish chaired the discussion and outlined how trees can be a vital part of more 'nature-smart' cities, helping to provide ecosystems to make dense conurbations more resilient and healthier. Inspiring presentations by Kate Jones (Professor of Ecology and Biodiversity, UCL) and Dr Gabriele Manoli (Lecturer in Environmental Engineering, UCL) considered the mathematics of trees, how we should understand their role in shaping ecological processes in the city in an era of climate change, and how rewilding our cities can be good for our health. Involving practitioners and policy-makers, as well as interested citizens from around the world, the subsequent discussion explored how trees can help make our cities more liveable. The webinar demonstrated the value of combining academic and practical approaches to a very urgent challenge affecting over half the world's population.

Neil Sinden
Director,
CPRE London



Urban Room and Memory Workshop: Community Mapping

Two participatory mapping workshops conducted to explore people's relationship with the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, funded by the UCL East Engagement Seed Fund.

Hosted in July 2019, the aim of these workshops was to pilot the types of community partnerships, audiences and activities that might be developed as part of the Urban Room and Memory Workshop at UCL East when it opens. This document summarises the activities that took place, outlines their effectiveness and highlights issues for consideration in future UCL East and Urban Room public engagement work.

The workshops were run in partnership with local community practitioners, Nicole Crockett (project coordination) and John Walleth (Livingmaps Network). The project developed and tested two participatory mapping workshops exploring ideas around heritage, memory and the future, in the changing urban landscape of east London, specifically the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The two workshops engaged loosely with The Groundbreakers, a heritage engagement project by Livingmaps Network, which is seeking to create two audio trails presenting the rich and varied heritage of the Park. The workshops aimed to engage local people in journeys around the Park, visiting heritage hotspots on the Groundbreakers trail, uncovering the hidden history of the site, and working together to create maps, which captured audience members, experiences and responses to the area.

Opposite: Participants' maps of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Urban Room and Memory Workshop: Community Mapping, July 2019.

Training Day for Italian Mayors

Training day for delegation of forty young Italian mayors and civil leaders, as part of the Cities Partnerships Programme.

In 2018 UCL launched the Cities Partnerships Programme, a cross-UCL initiative to support, fund, and promote work carried out by UCL academics with partners in global cities, with the aim of developing sustainable, multidisciplinary research and teaching partnerships.

The first city launched with the programme was Rome, with the academic leader being Urban Lab Steering Committee member Florian Mussgnug. The programme has now expanded to include Paris and Stockholm.

In early October 2019, a delegation of forty young mayors and civil leaders from all over Italy came to UCL to engage with leading academics and practitioners on innovative practices around urban regeneration.

Urban Lab, UCL Innovation and Enterprise and Cities Partnerships Programme convened a conference that explored key areas of urban regeneration, governance, sustainability, housing and community engagement. The programme was introduced by Dr Clare Melhuish and featured sessions by UCL academics and outside speakers. The delegation spent time in the busy, diverse borough of Camden, and visited UCL's historic Bloomsbury campus before going on a tour of the award-winning HQ of Camden Council. The conference was also attended by representatives from the British Council, the Italian Embassy, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

The National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) delegates came to London with a range of aims and agendas—some hoped to use the visit to help develop and shape their careers. Others will use the topics discussed as a catalyst for looking at issues in their own geographical areas of focus.

Antonella Galdi, Chief of Publica-ANCI Young Administrators School, said: 'This conference was the first of its kind organised by Publica, ANCI's school for young administrators. Our goal was to broaden the horizons of our young Italian administrators and give them inspiration about new approaches and methodologies. Given the positive feedback expressed by the participants, we can say this experiment was successful!'

Stadtklang: Ensemble Work

Stadtklang is UCL Urban Laboratory's music night and weekend evening get-together exploring urban sound, hosted in collaboration with Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Since the first event in March 2013, we have explored the sounds of the city within the relaxing surroundings of the Arcola Theatre Bar. Evenings include a mix of music, audio essays and discussion from invited guests.

In the past we have collaborated with artists, such as BJ Nilsen and Rinse FM DJs Dusk and Black-down, academics including Matthew Gandy, and writers including Mark Fisher, along with our house DJ Louis Digital.

The latest event in the series 'Stadtklang: Ensemble Work' took place in November 2019, and featured conversation and jazz music connecting with AbdouMaliq Simone's new book *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South*.

To open up the book's themes, Simone selected a collection of tracks from Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Sun-Ra and others, which gave us a sense of the city as a space of 'uninhabitation', an 'ensemble work' whose surging rhythms and modes of improvisation generate a very different idea of urban performance.

AbdouMaliq Simone is Senior Professorial Fellow at the Urban Institute at the University of Sheffield. He is an author and urbanist with an abiding interest in the spatial and social compositions of urban regions.

Urban Heritage and SDG Workshop

A half-day workshop at UCL during UCL Centre for Critical Heritage Studies showcase week, organised by our Steering Committee member Dr Kalliopi Fouseki.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations, the international development agenda makes, for the first time in history, reference to heritage. There is currently growing research undertaken at heritage institutions and research centres on this theme. However, this research is disconnected. And yet, the international heritage community will largely benefit if the disconnected attempts on developing theories and methods of assessment of urban heritage's role to SDGs are synergized.

The aim of this one day workshop was to bring together representatives from international and national heritage institutions in order to set up the foundation for an Urban Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals Network that will ultimately host a shared platform of sharing knowledge and research on this subject.

Participants in the workshop were asked to help identify the needs of the heritage and cultural policy sector in relation to urban heritage and SDGs, map current methods and explore future methods for addressing the research and policy needs related to this subject, and explore the potential and feasibility of a shared open-access knowledge-exchange platform that will be collating information on the impacts of urban heritage on SDGs.

Events Appendix

2020		2019			
17/12	'Emergency' Research Students' Roundtable	29/11	Imprint publishing fair	05/06	Space in Relation —Édouard Glissant in architecture and urban studies
03/12	Art and the Toxic Politics of Waste: Lebanon and Palestine	26/11	Urban Lab Films: The Street	03/06	The Walk Against Distracted Walking Walk
26/11	Cities Imaginaries Lecture 2020: Gus Casely-Hayford	17/11	Stadtklang: Ensemble Work	17/05	Performance Lab: Cities Imaginaries
17/11	Lunch Hour Lecture with UCL East: Urban Rooms	14/11	Waste Words: recycling research into performance	16/05	Cities Imaginaries Lecture 2019: Sonjah Stanley Niaah
09/09	Victoria + Q&A at the Open City Documentary Festival	10/11	At the frontiers of the urban: thinking concepts and practices globally	16/04	Historical Perspectives on Urban Infrastructures
16/07	WASTELAND draft reading	04/11	Hide & Seek: the bug and the city	02/04	Queer Spaces: London, 1980s—Today
19/05	Trees and the New Urban Ecology	26/10	We The Young Strong	29/03	Urban Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals: Exploring Opportunities for Synergies
27/02	Constructing Realities Lecture Series: Urban Surveillance	14/10	Documents of Urban Change: experiences of absence in Burgess Park and the Aylesbury Estate	29/03	Cities and the New Nationalism: Rethinking Contemporary Urbanism
18/02	Urban Green Space: reflections on ecological design	10/10	Urban Lab Open House	11/03	Society for the Promotion of Urban Discussion 14th meeting
		08/10	Echoes Of The City	04/03	Public Values in a Platform Society: Urban Governance by Platforms?
		02/10	IAS/Urban Lab Waste: Christoph Lindner on 'Global Garbage'	28/02	Future Cities: Architecture and the Imagination book launch
		14/09	Thinking Through Design: Between Urban and Rural	27/02	THE CAMP: Conversations around the making and un-making of bodies, space and time
		08/09	The Ring of Steel: A Walking Tour Around the City of London	11/02	Producing the 21st Century City: Labor Unions as Urbanists in Las Vegas
		07/09	Open City Documentary Festival: Yeh Freedom Life	11/02	Designing Practices of Transformative Urbanism for the 21st Century City
		31/07	Speculating on Canary Wharf	05/02	Water Works?
		09/07	City, Essay, Film: The Concrete Revolution	31/01	Africa Urban Value workshops
		24/06	City, Essay, Film: Handsworth Songs		
		10/06	City, Essay, Film: News from Home		
		08/06	City, Essay, Film: In the Claws of a Century Wanting		
		07/06	City, Essay, Film		
		06/06	City, Essay, Film: Opening Screening		
				31/01	Creating and Capturing Urban Land Value: Contemporary Challenges in South Africa
				30/01	Planetary Improvement: Cleantech Entrepreneurship and the Contradictions of Green Capitalism
				28/01	The globalisation of urban policies: the case of Participatory Budgeting



MA Situated Practice students, *City, Essay Film—Symposium*. June 2019. Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.



Nora Alter, *City, Essay Film—Symposium*. June 2019. Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.

UCL Urban Laboratory's cutting-edge urban agenda is driven by a multi-disciplinary network of urban experts, students, and visiting researchers from around the world.

People

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Biographies

DIRECTOR

Clare Melhuish

An anthropologist specialising in architecture and the built environment, Dr Melhuish was appointed Director of UCL Urban Laboratory in 2018. Her work focuses on the design and social impact of large-scale interventions in the urban environment in the post-war period, and she has conducted comparative research on university-led urban regeneration to inform UCL's plans for the development of a new campus in east London (UCL East).

CENTRE MANAGER

Jordan Rowe

Jordan is a writer, curator and researcher on urban culture, nights, heritage and identities. He is Urbanist in Residence at the Museum of London and a Research Fellow at Theatrum Mundi, alongside his role at the Urban Lab, where he project manages our communications, programming and administration.

Sophie Mephram

Joining the lab in late 2020, Sophie has an MA in Cultural Heritage Studies with a focus on urban heritage in conflict cities, having previously worked on development projects in the Middle East and Afghanistan for NGOs and UNESCO. In addition to her Centre Manager role, she also manages UCL's Grand Challenges programme for Sustainable Cities and Transformative Technology.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Joseph Cook

Joseph is a current PhD student in UCL Anthropology, looking at the datification of corporate architecture and the use of novel metrics to measure architectures impact on the worker. He has helped produce a number of the Lab's events and publications, including this one.

CO-DIRECTORS

Pushpa Arabindoo

Associate Professor in Geography & Urban Design, Pushpa trained in architecture and urban design before completing her PhD in planning and finding her place in UCL's Department of Geography. Drawing on her ethnographic research in the Indian city of Chennai, she has been using the specificity of her research to engage with broader debates in urban studies ranging from middle class activism and subaltern politics to the idea of the public and waste in the South as well as planning modes of regionalisation and conceptualisations of the hinterland.

Matthew Beaumont

Professor of English Literature at the UCL Department of English, Prof. Beaumont is the author, among other books, of *Nightwalking: a Nocturnal history of London* (2015) and *The Walker: On Finding and Losing Oneself in the Modern City* (2020). He is responsible for the Urban Lab's Cities Imaginaries strand, which organises an annual lecture whose speakers have included Amit Chaudhuri, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Urvashi Butalia and David Olusoga. He is currently working on a history of London and literature for Cambridge University Press.

Camillo Boano

Professor of Urban Design and Critical Theory in the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), Prof. Boano's interests centre on the complex encounters between critical theory, radical philosophy and urban design processes, engaging with informal urbanisations, urban collective actions, and camp urbanisms. He is working on a series of interconnected research projects in Latin America, South East Asia and the Middle East on habitability and city-wide upgrade.

Ben Campkin

Professor of History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism at The Bartlett School of Architecture, Prof. Campkin was previously Director of the Urban Lab (2011–2018). He is the author of *Remaking London*

(2013), and the upcoming monograph, *Queer Premises*, as well as a founding co-editor of *Urban Pamphleteer* (2013–). Ben's current research focuses on queer spaces in London from the 1980s to the present, and he recently co-authored the influential report, *LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure in London: Night Venues, 2006–present* (2017). He is also an Academic Lead for The Bartlett's presence at UCL East.

Ellie Cosgrave

Ellie is Associate Professor in Urban Innovation and Policy at UCL's department of Science Technology Engineering and Public Policy, where she is co-director of the Urban Innovation and Policy Lab. She is also an outspoken advocate and campaigner for increasing the quality of Women's health services. She is a BBC broadcaster, presenting the *Tomorrow's World* Podcast and the BBC World Service series *My Perfect City*.

Andrew Harris

Dr Andrew Harris is convenor of the MSc Urban Studies and Associate Professor in the Department of Geography. Dr Harris has worked extensively on the role of culture and the visual arts in urban-regeneration strategies as well as on the three-dimensional geographies of cities, with expertise in London and Mumbai.

Jennifer Robinson

Jennifer Robinson is based in the department of Geography. Professor Robinson was Principal Investigator of the project *Governing the Future City: A Comparative Analysis of Governance Innovations in Large Scale Urban Developments in Shanghai, London, Johannesburg* (2016–2018), and has recently been awarded a European Research Council Advanced Grant for her latest project *Making Africa Urban: The Transcalar Politics of Large-Scale Urban Development* (2019–2024).

STEERING COMMITTEE

Yasminah Beebeejaun

An Associate Professor in the Bartlett School of Planning, Dr Beebeejaun's research focuses on the relationship between spatial planning and ethnic and gendered identities; community engagement in decision-making; and exploration of the creation of inequalities both within historical and contemporary debates about nationhood, colonialism, and postcolonial society in post-war Britain and North America. She is a founding editor of the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City*.

Sarah Bell

Director of the Engineering Exchange and Professor of Environment Engineering in the Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources, Prof. Bell's research investigates the sustainability of urban water systems, particularly social and policy factors as they relate to engineering. her work also addresses community engagement with engineering and infrastructure provision.

Claire Colomb

Claire Colomb is Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at the Bartlett School of Planning, and Academic Director for Paris in the UCL Cities Partnerships programme. As a sociologist and urban planner, her research interests span urban governance, policies and politics, European spatial planning, and urban sociology.

Ava Fatah gen. Schieck

Ava Fatah is an Associate Professor of Media Architecture and Urban Digital Interaction at The Bartlett School of Architecture. She is the Principle Investigator of the EPSRC Research in the Wild funded project *Screens in the Wild*, leads a longitudinal living 'Media Architecture' lab environment which investigate the design, implementation and evaluation of, situated and mobile, digital media in the city, and is part of a new two-year international research collaboration with AUAS into the design of public spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kalliopi Fouseki

Professor in Sustainable Heritage Management at UCL's Institute for Sustainable Heritage, Dr Fouseki's research interests fall within the field of heritage management, including heritage values; heritage, conflict and cultural diplomacy; urban and rural regeneration; and energy efficiency in historic neighbourhoods. Dr Fouseki is also the Deputy Course Director of the MSc sustainable heritage, the Director for Research and the lead for the heritage risk and resilience research strand at ISH.

Mark R. Frost

Mark Ravinder Frost is Associate Professor of Public History, with research interests in war, empire and decolonization in modern Asia, and their place in popular memory. He is the author of *Singapore: A Biography* (2009; 2012, co-authored by Yu-mei Balasingamchow) and he currently leads the ongoing 'War Memoryscapes in Asia Partnership' and the 'Living with Violent Heritage: contests and coexistence in post-war Sri Lanka' exchange.

Haidy Geismar

Professor of Anthropology and co-convener of the MSc Digital Anthropology, Prof. Geismar's research interests include intellectual and cultural property; indigenous rights; new forms of cultural representation; and the anthropology of art, critical museology and the South Pacific. She is also faculty lead for the development of UCL's new campus in East London, heading up the Culture Lab initiative.

Rodney Harrison

Rodney Harrison is Professor of Heritage Studies at the UCL Institute of Archaeology and AHRC Heritage Priority Area Leadership Fellow. He is co-Director of the joint UCL-University of Gothenburg Centre for Critical Heritage Studies and leads the Work Package on *Theorizing heritage futures in Europe: heritage scenarios* as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie action

Doctoral Training Network CHEurope: Critical Heritage Studies and the Future of Europe.

Aris Komporozos-Athanasios
Dr Komporozos-Athanasios's research tries to make sense of finance's insidious impact on contemporary societies: how modern markets' speculative engagements with the future influence the ways we come to imagine shared communities, collective bonds and intimate desires under conditions of radical uncertainty. Aris leads the UCL Sociology & Social Theory Research Group, and along with Judith Butler and Chiara Bottici convenes the project 'Imaginal Politics' in collaboration with the ICCT Program at UC Berkeley.

Susanne Kuechler
Professor of Art and Anthropology, Susanne Kuechler has conducted fieldwork in island Melanesia and Eastern Polynesia. She is an elected fellow of the British Academy and Academy of Social Sciences, Member of the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Member of the Scientific Committee of the Fyssen Foundation, and Co-editor of the *Journal of Material Culture*. Her current research is on image-based modelling of complexity.

Barbara Lipietz
Dr Barbara Lipietz is Associate Professor at the Development Planning Unit where she directs DPU's MSc in Urban Development Planning and convenes the DPU Research Cluster on Urban Transformations. She is Co-Chair of UCL's Grand Challenges of Sustainable Cities and a member of the Urban Planning Advisory Group (UPAG) for UNDRR, the United Nations' Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Susan Moore
Dr Susan Moore is Associate Professor in Urban Development and Planning in the Bartlett School of Planning. Her research deals with the relational geographies of urban (and suburban) development and built form, specifically the formation of

development cultures and the normalisation of 'best practice' in planning and development. Her teaching focuses on comparative understandings of planning, urbanism and social change. Her recent work explores platform urbanism, the use of social media in localised practices of urban transformation, and comparative studies of urban data cultures in European housing policy and provision.

Michał Murawski

An anthropologist of architecture and cities based at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Dr Murawski is Lecturer in Critical Area Studies and Co-Director of the UCL FRINGE Centre. His work, focusing on Warsaw and Moscow, examines the complex social lives of monumental buildings and on the architecture and planning of Eastern European communism. *Palace Complex: A Stalinist Skyscraper, Capitalist Warsaw and a City Transfixed* was published by Indiana University Press in 2019.

Florian Mussgnug

Professor of Comparative Literature and Italian Studies, Prof. Mussgnug is interested in the emergent cross-disciplinary framework that links cultural theory, the modern languages and the environmental humanities. His current research explores apocalyptic thinking and narratives of emergency, catastrophe and survival in a damaged world. He is Academic Director for Rome for the Cities partnerships Programme, a cross-UCL initiative that supports, funds and promotes the work UCL academics carry out with partners in global cities.

James O'Leary

Associate Professor in Architecture and Situated Practice at the Bartlett School of Architecture, James directs the Situated Practice MA. He is also a partner in Kreider + O'Leary—a collaborative pairing who make performance, installation and time-based media work in relation to sites of architectural and cultural interest. His current research explores the contested spaces of the 'peacewalls' in Belfast,

Northern Ireland.

Gabriele Manoli

Lecturer in Environmental Engineering, Dr Manoli's research focuses on the complex mechanisms regulating water, carbon and energy exchanges at the land surface considering both natural and urban ecosystems. In 2017 he was awarded a Branco Weiss Fellowship and in 2019 he joined UCL where he now leads the Urban Ecohydrology Laboratory.

Kieren Reed

Senior Lecturer and Director of the Slade School of Art, Kieren Reed's practice encompasses sculpture, performance and installation, from studies in form to the production of architectural structures. He co-led Urban Lab's Cities Methodologies exhibition programme and the 2017 Edge symposium series, in collaboration with the Folkestone triennial.

Katherine Saunders-Hastings

Dr Katherine Saunders-Hastings is Lecturer in Latin American Studies at UCL's Institute of the Americas, where she teaches and researches on urban and political anthropology. Her research interests encompass issues of violence, (in) security, illicit economies, citizenship, and governance in Latin American cities. As an anthropologist, she employs ethnographic methods based in long-term fieldwork to understand urban violence and criminal economies in poor and marginalized neighbourhoods.

Rafael Schacter

Dr Rafael Schacter is an anthropologist, author, and curator, working on issues related to public art, global art, and socially engaged art practice. A lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, he has published several books, most recently *Street to Studio* (2018). His most recent project, *Motions of this Kind*, took place at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, from April 11–June 22 2019. He is also currently curating an ongoing, four-year public art project in Heerlen, the Netherlands, entitled *Regrowth Degrowth*.

International Advisory Board

Pablo Sendra

Associate Professor of Planning and Urban Design at the Bartlett School of Planning, Dr Sendra's main areas of research interest are collaborative planning and urban design processes, social housing and community activism. He is Programme Director of the MSc Urban Design and City Planning and coordinator of the Civic Design CPD course. He carries out radical teaching and research in collaboration with communities and activists in London. He is co-Founder and Director of the urban design practice Lugadero, which works on co-design processes, and co-founder of the CivicWise network. He is co-author of *Designing Disorder* (2020), *Community-Led Regeneration* (2020) and co-editor of *Civic Practices* (2017).

Helena Titheridge

Professor of Mobility and Sustainable Transport in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering at UCL, Dr Titheridge's current research focuses on the social dimensions of sustainability, in particular the links between social exclusion, transport provision and other urban systems.

Patrick White

Patrick White is Senior Teaching Fellow in Fine Art Media at the Slade School of Fine Art. Predominantly using text, sound, and image, his work investigates forms of rationale, perceptual indiscernibility, and writing systems, attempting to unravel these by example. Current research involves the auditorium without an audience, the tuning rituals of marching pipers, and egg puns.

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Belgium

Links and Partners

We continue to work with a wide range of organisations beyond the academy.

Key partnerships over this period include:

Arcola Theatre Bar
Bertha DocHouse
Bloomsbury Theatre
Free Word
Institut du Tout-Monde
The Whitechapel Gallery
UCL Festival of Culture
Urban Tree Festival

‘What began several years ago as a one-off event hosted by Urban Lab Films in our cinema has now developed into a fruitful curatorial partnership. The nature of the ad-hoc collaborations means Urban Lab events at Bertha Doc House can take on different forms according to the content and allows us all to try new formats and offer our audiences novel and fascinating events. We’re always delighted with the audience response to these and enjoy the collaboration, which we hope will continue in imaginative and engaging ways.’

Jenny Horwell, Associate Programmer, Bertha DocHouse

‘Free Word is an arts organisation and producer exploring the power and politics of words. Our partnership with the Urban Lab began in 2016 with the launch of Engaged Urbanism at our Farringdon Road venue. Since then, Urban Lab staff have contributed to our public activities and internal group sessions, including helping to shape our 2019 programme ‘Writing Our Way Home’. As part of that season we collaborated on ‘Echoes of the City’, an evening with an eclectic line-up and discussion focused on how we can rebuild community in in city space. Free Word can count on Urban Lab to bring expertise, contemporary relevance, and a brilliant way to make big ideas engaging.’

Alex Solo, Season Producer, Free Word

Looking Ahead

It is tempting to look back on 2020 as a 'lost year' of sorts. The pandemic forced us to put the brakes on many of the planned activities, journeys, and collaborations we were preparing. But for anyone interested in cities and urban life, it has undeniably been a period of more sudden and far-reaching change than we could have imagined, throwing us overnight into creative ways of living, working and socialising which will have a lasting legacy in terms of the way we inhabit, manage and experience our urban environments.

Moving forward, we welcome the opportunity to reflect on the impact of these changes on the way we see cities of different scales and densities, but most particularly perhaps, how we make sense of the emptiness of public space which we've witnessed, and the evaporation of concepts of the 'convivial' 24-hour city which have underpinned understandings of the urban, and formation of urban policy, in the global north and west for decades. None of this is new for those who are used to living with curfews and other forms of social restriction in divided, unsafe, and dysfunctional cities throughout the world; conditions which drive displacement and migration, in the hope of better lives.

Looking ahead then to Urban Lab's contributions to these debates in the coming year and beyond, we anticipate some productive conversations, framed by the theme of Emergency, around the place of improvisation, dissent and recovery in urban lives across the global north-south divide. We will address the role of key urban institutions in shaping fresh ideas about participation in better urban futures, with an event on Museums, Cities and Power scheduled for the summer, and our sights trained on the emerging space of the new UCL East Urban Room and Memory Workshop as a much-needed future resource for public participation in urban debates from 2022. And, in the years following Brexit, we will continue to nurture and develop important historical ties with our colleagues and fellow city-dwellers across mainland Europe, recognising the value of shared experience in addressing and mending difficult, colonising pasts, in order to build better urban futures in harmony with renewable planetary resources and human wellbeing.



Rendering of the under-construction UCL EAST campus in Stratford. Credit: Glass Canvas.

Front cover: Jonah Rudlin's entry for our 'Urban Verticality' photo competition, 2019.

Back cover: Stephanie Burrell, performing alongside Nacheal Catnott, *Cities Imaginaries: Performance Lab*, May 2019.
Credit: Jacob Fairless Nicholson.

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE URBAN RESEARCH,
TEACHING, PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

