TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Sign, Design and De-sign. Socio-cultural heritage and resilience in the high street: an impact assessment of when the professionals are called in with the dual task of attracting investment and preserving identity.

• Author(s) Name:

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• University or Company Affiliation:

Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (Coventry University), Kingston University, Situation Architecture, Imaginary Rock Foundations

• Presentation Method. I would like to:

i. present in person (with a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):

Behind The Facade* addresses the theme of social and cultural heritage, and how it emerges as a product of a social production[1] as opposed to material or physical production. Our aim is to identify and explore practices[2] with spatial and structural consequences, that are prevalent within a community and how they should be classified and protected as an active example of our idea of social heritage.

Our research is an impact assessment of publicly funded small scale urban interventions which took place in London between 2012 and 2014. By revisiting these sites 5 years after
project implementation, we can explore ideas of what is the “High Street[3]" the local “community[4]” and how they are physically and culturally intertwined. We are interested in the events, ideas and structures that help our four case study communities and high streets to be identified as coherent and dynamic ‘places’. We are also interested in how their diversity of use can be preserved, by identifying constructs which support similar adaptability and use of space for future stakeholders. Drawing from the system that allows the European Union to grant Protected Geographical Status[5] to “practices” which protect consumables (regional processes that create meats and dairy products), our project looks to protect urban/ spatial structures that enable specific practices of social exchange. Often, such exchanges take place in manufactured or existent blind spots of policy, power vacuums, spaces of contested ownership, ambiguity, appropriation and misappropriation.

Organised structures of governance implementing material protection or socio-spatial branding tend towards acts of enforced stasis that do not acknowledge the informal or the casual as the methods of adaption that form the basis of high street resilience. Our current form of urban redevelopment often fails to acknowledge, renders precarious and threatens these associated constructs from a number of different social, political, structural and economic forces. We wish in social heritage terms, to consider methods that allow the preservation of such a place’s ability to change, without freezing its capacity to do so.

*Behind The Façade is a research project funded by the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University

[1] The social production of space
[3] Defining the high street…
[4] Defining a community as…
[5] Protected Graphical Status…

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Sebastian Hicks

Sebastian Hicks is an architect and course leader of the MArch Course in Coventry and Research Associate at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations. Educated in Vienna he has practiced in the UK and South America. Current investigations explore the use of the built environment in processes of acculturation, exploring the relationship between the planner as the agent of a professional and cultural establishment and the local agent who generates program and structure within ‘pirate spaces’, using a set of codes and conducts different to those of the planner.
Architectural ‘De-sign’ and ‘Pirate space’ are conceptual apparatus and forms of built interventions employed to guard against acculturation in projects of delicate cultural interface.

Pirate Space – manufactured or existent blind spots of policy and specification, power vacuums, spaces of contested ownership, ambiguity, appropriation and misappropriation.

De-sign – the methodology by which pirate space is generated through duality, pluralism and contradiction; DE-sign - eliminate signs, DE-sign - obscure signature.

In Northern Argentina he is undertaking a reflective analysis of his own projects as a western designer within the rural Kolla community. In Kelantan, Malaysia, he is researching the role of the built environment in the post-disaster cultural assimilation of the indigenous peoples, ‘Orang Asli’, and in London the research project ‘Behind the Façade’ explores the impact of physical space on socio-structural heritage.

**Aoife Donnelly**

London-based, RIAI and ARB registered Architect since 2003, practicing as adA & half of the Imaginary Rock collaboration, Senior Lecturer in Architecture at Kingston School of Art Department of Architecture & Landscape.

Aoife’s practice and research interests focus on Cities and Urban Structures, Pedagogy, Live-Build and Collaborative work, and the making of Play, Social, Arts/Cultural, Education and domestic spaces, often specialising in augmentations of existing situations that deliver tangible contributions to the city or public realm.

She has an extensive portfolio of realised work, such as a series of installations with the Hackney Children’s Theatre, the Anthony Burgess Foundation in Chorlton Mill Manchester, Brecknock Children’s Centre, Camden and the Imaginary Rocks’ London High Streets series, projects which often value the existent, establish the essential and develop through conversation and an holistic approach. An interest in historic built and landscape structures, their narratives and how adaptation and change may be sensitively handled in these contexts, is evident in the work.

Alternative educational models have been the subject of this academic years’ studio practice, culminating in a collective design for an outdoor classroom at Organic Lea Cooperative in Chingford and a developing proposal for a micro housing co-operative with studio workshop and educational elements in North London. Aoife is currently a Senior HEA fellowship candidate.

**Carl Fraser**

Dr. Carl Fraser (D.Phil. Architecture, B.Arch AADipl RIBA) is a researcher whose work explores the cultural and social development of alternative practices in their relation to our understanding of urban spaces of cultural exchange. His work identifies patterns of social, political and economic behaviour in London, and extrapolates these constructs to theorise on their relation to other cities and neo-liberal environments.
He has developed skills which allow him to have an understanding of current research trends in social science and architecture in broad terms, and current philosophical issues in the social sciences. He has the ability to identify research methods appropriate to these fields of study and has used them on a number of recent publications and projects. He has been an invited speaker to a number of conferences including the Contested Spaces round table for the London Festival of Architecture – Central St Martins (2014), AAE Open Lecture Birmingham School of Architecture & Design (2017), Edge Hill University, Department of Social Sciences Seminar Series (2018) and the Com_nu_ties Symposium – Brussels - ISELP (2018).

He has been commissioned to carry out a number of small mapping research projects including a project defining the nature of the social life within the newly renovated Arts Tower, Architecture Department, University of Sheffield (2012/13). He has published papers on the theme of "critical spatial practice" (ISSN:2188-1154-2017-IAFOR) and several chapter contributions due to be completed in 2018/9.