**Paper / Proposal Title:**
Imago Mundi: informal logics and design in the world

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**Abstract (300 words):**

Architectural education remains wedded to a model of design-production that foregrounds gods-eye-view design techniques which separate the designer from the synthetic values and desires of people in the world and the nitty-gritty of everyday life. This has advantages, of course, helping students develop intellectual ideas that transcend disciplinary borders and terrestrial constraints. However, design for and with actual people remains ambiguous (at best), relying instead on the precise articulation of a sort-of Vitruvian Person with clothes on, a cipher with only a passing resemblance to reality. Architectural educators thus serve as gatekeepers for a culture of architecture rooted in generalizations, by handing-on normative-abstract design processes by which ‘good’ architecture is seen to be produced. And whilst it has become something of a mantra to say that a more successful design education requires the development of programs which advance interdisciplinarity, agility and job-ready skills, in reality this too often seems to translate as little more than competence in IT graphics, some data analysis and a working knowledge of building regulations and u-Values. Recognized for many decades as a problem, reaction to such alienating practices have rarely gone beyond the romantic aestheticization of ‘otherness’, itself a further process of abstraction.
This paper describes Test Unit, a summer school in Glasgow, Scotland which proposes an alternative approach to design education rooted in the logic of informality and marginal practices, guided by situated research methodologies. In contrast to other, alternative and live-build type programs, Test Unit’s pedagogical practice is towards nurturing alternative ways of seeing rather than ways of doing. Through processes of making and intervention which function to reveal the complexity of normative and discrepant realities of [a] place, this paper describes an educational approach which balances the abstract, cosmological endeavor of institutional architecture with the rooted, terrestrial world of everyday life.

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

Ambrose Gillick is a lecturer and researcher at the Kent School of Architecture, University of Kent and latterly a director at Baxendale. He received a PhD for a thesis on coproductive urban development practices in post-disaster contexts from the University of Manchester. Whilst at the Glasgow School of Art he helped write books, make exhibitions, put on conferences and curated shows on modern cities, houses and churches in the UK and Europe.

Baxendale, Ambrose’s practice with Lee Ivett, became a vehicle for exploring situated design practices, specifically working with marginalized groups on issues of representation, recognition and rights, but also exploring issues of live-build and its relationship to community agency and capacity and its potential as an instrument of pedagogy. Baxendale garnered international recognition for its work and was selected (as part of a bigger team) to represent Scotland at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia 2018.

Ambrose continues to write on the architecture of religious space and has developed a strong research interest in postmodern urban and built culture and the role of grassroots and non-professional people in the shaping of the post-industrial city.