

# Performative Intraventions and Matters of Care: Choreographing Values

OREN LIEBERMAN

Professor, Dean

Arts University Bournemouth

Bournemouth, UK

olieberman@aub.ac.uk

ALBERTO ALTÉS

Architect, Lecturer, PhD Candidate

Umeå School of Architecture, Umeå University

Umeå, Sweden

alberto.altés@arch.umu.se

## Abstract

Thinking through choreography as dance/writing – both the doing and the score for that doing, the event and the discourse - we propose to shift the focus of architectural practices and pedagogies from an emphasis in the attainment of competencies and static knowledge, to a privileging of processes and modalities of learning that nurture the values of engagement, empowerment and caring responsibility. Choreography situates our work in the realm of performative action and transformation, and it does so with and through our bodies; also, it helps us frame the power of our intraventions, which aim at transforming the world through immediate, responsible and often fragile acts of engagement with matter, movement and life.

**Keywords:** Intravention, matters of care, choreography, architectural pedagogies, modalities of learning

## Intro

The shift we propose in architectural practices and pedagogies – toward a privileging of processes and modalities of responsible making and learning – starts with an active stance that focuses on the transformational nature of interventions performed in real times and places. Through the performative, we shift our attention from *what a thing looks like* to *what a thing does*, and from objects and artefacts to ‘movements’ as well as to the effects of our practices and actions in life. This transformational ‘mode’ echoes the proposed category of *worlding* – with its accompanying history of ‘indefinition’ and indetermination as well as its clear co-responsive engagement in the making of the world – and locates us in the realm of ‘situatedness’, or inside phenomena.<sup>1</sup> We are within, and active parts of, specific situations that we encounter in relationship to a series of concerns, things that really matter and that have to do with the ongoing becoming of the world. Becoming inside these situations requires a certain fidelity, a certain willingness to stay and to endure; a caring in duration. In this duration it is both possible and necessary to develop situated knowledges, which emerge as ‘ways-of-doing-and-making’ from our engagement in worlding practices, practices which are also, for that reason, learning

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the constitutive role of phenomena in reality, and a thorough account of the importance of thinking *things-in-phenomena*, see: Barad, K. 2007. *Meeting the universe halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press, chapter four.

experiences.

Through the choreographing of our learning processes we create the conditions for engagement/entanglement and production/transformation, which are all modalities of movement and action. So we see pedagogical, architectural and professional practices as potential practices of transformation and co-learning. Dance – somehow both connected to and different than choreography – brings with it a whole set of values which we consider significant for the architectural pedagogy we enact. Lepecki lists the 'constitutive qualities' of dance as "*ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring and performativity*" (Lepecki 2012:15) He goes on to say that "[t]hese qualities are responsible for dance's capacity to harness and activate critical and compositional elements crucial to the fusion of politics and aesthetics ..." (Lepecki 2012:16) His 'compositional' and 'critical' elements echo the event/discourse relationships within our pedagogy and in our use of choreography as dance/writing. These qualities allude to specific modes of engagement and making, and state particular values. We will use them to underscore our pedagogical modes, and develop them as necessary in a teaching practice which desires students' engagement, empowerment, and caring.

In that sense, ephemerality can be related to immediacy and an engagement with the here-and-now which cares about effects and duration. Corporeality speaks of a body, but if we ask whose body or what body, then we can expand it to be any-body, in order to speak of matter or, more precisely, of *mattering* and *bodying*. Other names for precariousness can be fragility or vulnerability, somehow always already a condition of our impossibly immediate interventions. Scoring, which can be both a 'writing' and an unfolding, creates spaces and times and modes for and of improvisation. And performativity always returns us anew to movement, multiplicity, effects and life: "[...] the body [...] continually transforms itself and is already not, at the moment when I speak of it, what it was a few seconds ago." (Laplantine, 2015:13)

### **Engagement, Empowerment, Caring**

We are introducing with this essay a choreographic turn to pedagogical methodologies and practices of transformation and what we have elsewhere called 'inventions'<sup>2</sup>, shifting the emphasis from valuing outcomes which might somehow 'prove' attainment of *knowledge, skills* and *understanding* to modes, processes and artefacts which resonate different overarching values: *of engagement, empowerment, and caring*.

There are several 'impulses' which move us towards engaging in choreography and the choreographic, – for us, *dance/writing* – to re-evaluate, reconfigure and transvalue architectural pedagogies and practices. Firstly, the choreographic foregrounds *multimodal* engagements in the participation *in* and the making *of* the world, that is, in performative practices. These engagements range from the scored to the improvised, from the discursive to the acted, from the moving to the spoken, from the directed to the anticipated. Secondly, choreography with its firmly established connections to dance and the body focuses our attention on the importance of the corporeal in all we are, from the affectual engagements in the world to the body as part of a complex distribution of cognition, from an understanding of the social and geographic variations of rhythmic movement in time and the always engendering of space, to the deep (often 'unconscious') ethics of bodies-in-relation. Thirdly, defining choreography as *dance/writing* affords us a mode of engagement, a diagrammatic *score* for making differences in the world. Through this construction of *termA slash termB* (termA/termB) we connect to the various

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<sup>2</sup> More on 'inventions' can be found in: Altés, A. and Lieberman, O. 2013. *Invention, Durations, Effects: Notes of Expansive Sites and Relational Architectures*. Baunach: Spurbuch Verlag.

couplings of words and concepts which form one of our main 'beats' in our practice: our *matters of concern*. We use these word pairs as dimensions of our making of, and engagement in, complex sites. Some of these dimensions pattern themselves upon the 'figure/discourse' (Lyotard) relationship, which echoes that of the theme *worlding/u-topos*. And the virgule, the slash which is between the two terms, is no less important than the words themselves. 'Dance' and 'writing' are together, yet are "*orders of experience which are incommensurable*". Manning + Massumi continue: "*Language cannot fully describe movement. Movement does not give itself over to the order of language, any more than it surrenders itself integrally to visible form.*" (Manning 2014:41)

We see this slash as the 'gap' in which ethics, the political, and values coalesce and *move*. Like two dancers, the two terms and their in-between not-excluded middle are together but not 'one'.<sup>3</sup> They can be 'unstable, precarious, problematic.' The two termed matters of concern accept "*the gap between each [other's] respective sensibility [...] and in so doing resist[s] ... uniformization*" (Laplantine, 2015:87). But Laplantine does not abandon discourse: "*Giving sensations back their full place does not condemn to silence, but rather pushes toward recognition of a gap, a stimulating tension between perceptual, auditive, tactile, olfactive, gustatory activity, and its celebration through the acts of a speaking subject.*" (Laplantine, 2015:119) This gap is the singularity of the *ethical duration*.

The slash is also an index of another productive tension that we are interested in exploring, namely the double sidedness of the ethical dimension of care. On the one hand, care can result in the separation that is aware of autonomy in relations, with the slash as a gap that respects and frees, and the gap as the necessary distance for responsiveness and co-responsance: care as separation, discontinuity and mediation. On the other hand, care can be seen as the fidelity and affinity with the situation/phenomena/movement, a willingness to come closer and to listen and to remain that speaks of closeness, continuity and affect.

Such is the tension of co-existence in co-operations, or in Jean-Luc Nancy's terms, the difficulties of 'being-singular-plural': "*That which exists, whatever this might be, coexists because it exists. The co-implication of existing [l'exister] is the sharing of the world. A world is not something external to existence; it is not an extrinsic addition to other existences; the world is the coexistence that puts these existences together.*" (Nancy 2000:29)

Lastly, the focus on bodies, movement, and the *sensible* in choreography, on 'modalities of enunciation', help us think the fullness of learning and making to include affect, intuition, opinion, nuances, flows, *and* limbs, eyes, ears, skin, the nose, the mouth. And: how a 'bodying' (Manning) choreography engages in the redistribution of another sensible, one that Rancière has already spoken about: "*Artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility.*" (Rancière 2004:13)

### **Choreography and Pedagogy**

When we refer to pedagogy and choreography, we are aware that both terms are 'contested', though the former less so than the latter. Whilst the route through the Greek roots of pedagogy delivers us to 'leading children', and *andragogy* is sometimes used to refer to the education of adults, for the purposes of this paper we will start with a more general understanding of the term as the discipline that deals with the theory and practice of education, in order to approach an even broader – we think more precise – definition: pedagogy as the process of thinking through and engaging in/*with situations and modalities of learning*.

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<sup>3</sup> Loraux as quoted in Laplantine, F. 2015 [2005]. *The Life of the Senses: Introduction to a Modal Anthropology*. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic. p. 86

Before we look at choreography and how we are thinking it, more generally we can ask the questions: is it pedagogy *as* choreography? Or are we saying that pedagogy *is* choreography? In keeping with the underlying theme of dance/writing, of events/discourses, we would say both. Richard Schechner's differentiation between 'as' and 'is' with respect to performance is useful: "*Everything and anything can be studied "as" any discipline of study [including performance] – physics, economics, law, etc. What the "as" says is that the object of study will be regarded "from the perspective of," "in terms of," "interrogated by" a particular the discipline of study.*" (Schechner 2002:34-35) And: "*Something "is" a performance when historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is.*" (Schechner 2002:30)

He expands on the *is* to include various performative practices outwith the theatre which coincide with his definition of performance, and indeed concludes that there is significant blurring between 'as' and 'is'. For us, it is useful to consider pedagogy *as* choreography because it allows us to draw upon significant modes of engagement to interrogate what we do with students of architecture. At the same time, to say that pedagogy *is* choreography performs our pedagogical practices in particular, dance/writing ways.

Though the first use of the term choreography (by Feuillet in 1700) referenced its etymological roots in the 'writing down', or tracing, of dance<sup>4</sup>, it has generally come to refer to "*the 'art' or 'practice' of creating/designing movements of human bodies in which motion, form, or both are specified.*"<sup>5</sup> Whilst 'dance notation' has replaced Feuillet's meaning, choreography has been molded in different ways by creators of dance, and indeed it "*... has become a metaphor for dynamic constellations of any kind, consciously choreographed or not, self-organizing or artificially constructed.*"<sup>6</sup>

If we consider architectural practice as artistic practice, it has been suggested "*[...] that choreography is a field of contemporary arts practice that provides not only vectors for new forms of trans-disciplinary arts research but also a locus for questioning the orthodoxies of contemporary art work and practice. Through this work choreography can now be seen to invoke, recuperate and incorporate other forms of cultural practice (both historical and contemporary).*" (Alssop and Lepecki, 2008:4) And resonating with our impulses, McCormack writes: "*[R]esearch encounters with dance offer opportunities for thinking about three sets of issues: the relation between bodies and cultural geographies; the importance of affectivity in spatial experience; and the relation between the lived and the abstract.*" (McCormack, 2008:1822-1836) Alssop/Lepecki and McCormack's words elicit issues that we believe should become vectors of our work of 'architecting', if 'architecting' is ever to be socially relevant again beyond the production and exhibition of grand gestures and icons.

More specifically, we are attuned to *thinking in-the-making*. Manning and Massumi refer to "*techniques of relation' – devices for catalyzing and modulating interaction – and these comprise a domain of practice in their own right.*" (Manning, 2014:91) For us, the various modes we employ describe such techniques, which require substantially different learning tools for the development of architectural and spatial apparatuses of relationality. These are for instance 'scores' that – in the place of prescriptive 'briefs' with detailed programs and given sites – provide instructions to initiate actions and engagements, but require and demand improvisation, and a readiness and openness to engage 'others' and to follow the emerging effects (or what would be subsequent 'contacts' in choreographic terms) and trajectories that will keep the exploratory and situational currents flowing, 'siting' us also in site-making modes and eventually turning those flows and currents into worlding practices. The techniques and scores might be

<sup>4</sup> see Louppe et al. 1994. *Traces of Dance*. Paris: Dis Voir, for rendering of choreography and notation.

<sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choreography>; accessed 01.03.15

<sup>6</sup> Klein, M. and Valk, S. 2008. Choreography as an esthetics of change. In: *Choreograph.net. A state of dance*.

enacted through exploratory urban mapping practices that involve, for instance, hugging cranes, or retelling the stories of urban transformation and lived space that oldest and youngest people in a certain area keep and recall, or the realization of constructive difficulties and the perceived properties and affordances of materials through direct, real time engagement in processes of improvisational construction of relatively complex architectures in relatively short times. All these of course affect both ongoing bodying/making as well as the discursive understandings and conceptualizations of what these materials and these practices mean, and what the urban is or could be, and what architectural construction entails or is about, fundamentally challenging the state of things in our discipline. We wish to create a particular 'distribution of the sensible' which has its power in a "*multimodally palpable, [...] unfolding composition of sense modes, spaces, roles, and rhythms of transition [which enter into] unaccustomed resonance*"(Manning, 2014:115) And we see our practices with students as a choreography which is "*[...] an intervention into the dominant patterns of action, consumption and experience and can be seen as an attempt to address the structures that govern the given 'distribution of the sensible' in society at large.*" (Wood, 2007:27)

The choreographer William Forsythe states that: "*Choreography is a curious and deceptive term. The word itself, like the processes it describes, is elusive, agile, and maddeningly unmanageable. To reduce choreography to a single definition is not to understand the most crucial of its mechanisms: to resist and reform previous conceptions of its definition.*"(emphasis ours) (Forsythe 2011:90) We draw upon both his notions of choreography and of the 'choreographic object': "*[...] a model of potential transition from one state to another in any space imaginable*" to inform an understanding and making of our pedagogies and their relationships to transitions, and durations, for instance in the gap (virgule). Forsythe's choreographic object describes both 'pedagogy' and 'pedagogies' in that learning is that state to state transition anywhere, as well as specific techniques of transitioning and transforming.

### **Instrumental Pedagogies in Architecture: Structures, Categories, Competencies**

We believe that the language used in the structuring of pedagogy at at university level both indicates and, if one is not careful, enacts particularly (proleptic) instrumentalist values. The structuring of 'competence' categorised under the headings 'knowledge, skills and understanding' in the quality assurance of higher education degrees goes back decades in the UK - but evidenced at least in the Dearing Report of 1997. In that report, Recommendation 21 explicitly calls for Higher Education institutions "*[...] immediately to develop, for each programme they offer, a 'programme specification' which identifies potential stopping-off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programme in terms of:*

- *the knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion;*
- *key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn;*
- *cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis;*
- *subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills.*"<sup>7</sup>

Programme specifications quickly became the norm, and structuring of education shifted to the achievement of explicit, numbered learning outcomes which can be clearly tested/assessed in an assessment component against explicit assessment criteria.

In the Dearing view, the 'intended outcomes' of a program are certainly biased towards

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<sup>7</sup> The Dearing Report (1997) (formally known as National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education) "Higher Education in the learning society". <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dearing1997/dearing1997.html#01> accessed 01.03.15

particular subjects whose knowledge bases are less obviously inclusive of body-knowledge (for instance, those subjects in which artefacts are made which more obviously involve the body's engagement, viz. art and design, or indeed subject areas in which the 'tool' is the body itself, viz. acting and dance). But more fundamentally, outcomes as put forward by Dearing neglect the sensorium and the body *at any rate*, focusing on a quite limited notion of cognition (i.e., here 'the brain', the mind), of verbal/discursive communication, of critical analysis, etc.

This approach to knowledge and education based on measurement, evaluation and scrutiny ignores the wondrousness and fullness of being human in a complex world that cannot be measured. It is not commensurate with the dimensions and modalities of our lived life and experience of that world. It ignores the fundamental 'excessive-ness' of life which locates it outside the confines of discrete scrutiny. Or in Bataille's terms: "*Beyond our immediate ends, man's activity in fact pursues the useless and infinite fulfillment of the universe.*" (Bataille 1988:21)

In addition to this (apparently) 'generic' view on structuring education, architecture overlays the curriculum with criteria of its own. In the UK (and other European countries), the professional bodies (ARB and RIBA) base their criteria on the European Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. The so-called '11 Points' list the different competencies a graduate architect should have. The language of the directive echoes those of Dearing: the testing of attainment and achievement of 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'understanding' play out variously in all the points.

Schools of architecture tend to organize their educational programs around these generic guidelines, and continue to be quite influenced by the legacy of functionalist and rationalist approaches that originated in the work of Jacques-Nicolas-Louis Durand and his followers and that have been developed through several generations of polytechnical institutes and schools. These curriculums take for granted the need to separate parts and areas of knowledge and establish the paths for the required acquisition of competencies of architectural design, history and theory of architecture and art, architectural construction, structural calculation and physics, installations and services, project management, law and regulations, and a few other sub-fields, in separate and quite isolated compartments. In some cases, schools driven by design-believers tend to drift in the opposite direction offering design as a hook for everything else so as to integrate all these other things in the design studios. For us, there is a worlding, political and u-topian project in the attention to, not so much the definition and articulation of the different components of architectural education and the sequence of their attainment, but the dance/writing (choreography) of the pedagogy itself, the very design of the modalities of learning – each a choreographic object – which can enact many or few unfair exclusions and can be or not be based in matters of care and responsible imaginations of what the university could be and ought to be.

In his introduction to Laplantine's *The Life of the Senses*, David Howes draws on differences between categorization and its desire to binary-ise, to make essential and identifiable, and other practices which "*focus on duration, modulation, and rhythm [...] [s]ensible thinking' or 'modal thinking as [Laplantine] also calls it, is continuous with the world [worlding], sensitive to the slightest gradations and movements and effects.*" (Howes, 2015:x) And Laplantine quotes Marilena Chaui: "*Today one of the principal aspects of the fight against exclusion is to succeed in breaking the discourse of competency*". (Laplantine, 2015:29) It is in part this very categorisation (knowledge, skills, understanding, competencies, etc.) which limits this way of thinking. There is an inherent separation between the intelligible and the sensible: "*...category thinking eschews that which is formed in crossings, transitions, unstable and ephemeral movements of oscillation. It opts, in a drastic manner, for the fixity of time, movement and the multiple [...]*" (Laplantine, 2015:56) Or at least, categories must be constantly investigated with a caring curiosity that wants to know and understand and explore relations: "*We need new category*

*work. We need to live the consequences of non-stop curiosity inside mortal, situated, relentlessly relational worlding.*"(Haraway in Gane 2006:143) This curiosity is another form of care that sets us in a productive tension with situations both underscoring our responsibility – to take part, to stay, to care, to endure, to open up – as well as creating the conditions for learning. It drives us through a process of constant search of the illegitimate in any knowing, describing, naming, and governing practices, both the ones we encounter and those of our own.

Assessment practices in higher education, biased as they are (as seen in Dearing's list) along discursive, language-based conceptions of knowledge, skills, and understanding, have neglected the body and its location *in* and *of* situations. These practices do not explicitly engage in the complexities and contingencies of corporeal experiences which are 'partners' with 'things' in creating specific material contexts, and therefore remain incommensurate with learning (and making)-in-the-making.

Our work in our masters level architecture programs looks at the acquisition and evaluation (judgement) of knowledge, skills and understanding in the learning and teaching in architecture by including the body and its distribution through other 'bodies' (be they human, non-human, technological, artifactual, etc.).

The assessment of the student's achievement of competencies at different levels has tended to foreground a predominantly discursive, language-based, and 'scientific' bias, one which echoes the exhortation on institutions to " *...make learning explicit in the form of outcomes, level descriptors, and assessment criteria*"(Fava 2011:130) The *processual* learning which occurs in situations and through the body, i.e., the breadth of learning which is always in physical movements, gestures, postures, expressions, and exchanges with other bodies and things – which constitute the development of expertise in architecture – is absent in evaluations of student learning. Again, the very assessment of competencies is part of a discourse of exclusion, but also of what might be loosely rendered as neoliberal marketisation of everything, which operates here through an almost exclusive focus on entrepreneurship, flexibility, self-transformation, competitiveness, market-responsibility, employability, self-reliance, efficiency, the products of knowledge and other values (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001) which constitute what has been referred to as "*enterprising education*", ultimately pushing us toward some form of 'global corporate citizenship'. (Mccafferty, 2010)

### **Modalities of Invention**

In the work we have been doing with postgraduate architecture students we have been focussing on the relationships between performative and discursive practices and methods – between worlding and u-topos – and how intra-actions within and amongst such practices engender other 'architectural' values.

There are five main modes which shape our choreographic pedagogy: the body's role and development as a performative and implicative force in making; the discursive, graphic<sup>8</sup> and diagrammatic development of positions/issues through mappings of matters of concern; inventions of bodies and materials and constructions in live situations; preparation and discussions of readings aligned to the matters of concern; and the speculative imaginings and dreams of possibilities in projective designs.

Each mode is both singular and plural in that it can find boundaries and limits but is always delimited in relation to the others. And each mode can be understood as partaking of Lepecki's fusion of the political and aesthetics through his 'constitutive qualities' of dance referred to above: ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring and performativity. We often refer to the array of practices that emerge from these five modes as 'landscapes of actions', which we use to

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<sup>8</sup> Although we are writing 'graphic', what we mean is 'related to the image in its full sense'.

emphasize the performative, multiple and transformational dimensions of our work, but also to question and challenge the illusion of ‘wholeness’ that the words ‘design’, or even ‘building’, normally evoke in architectural contexts. The question is often formulated as: “*so, where is the design? (where is the building?)*” to which we would like to answer “*...design? what do you mean by design? What you see here is an account of a complex landscape of actions aiming at transforming the world through the articulation and enactment of material, discursive and non-discursive re-arrangements, and their effects in and of the world...what requires, sometimes, a degree of planning and design, but that occurs often also as a result of unexpected encounters and emerging affinities, all informed by our will and capacities to ‘architect’.*”

The modes of our teaching include *the body’s participation* in explorations of and engagement with the urban and the world, attending to the values that we have referred to above such as immediacy, mattering and bodying, vulnerability, fragility, improvisation, performance, movement, multiplicity and becoming. The role of the body is scored through, for instance, an exercise that we like to call “*take an object for a walk*” and that aims at exploring the possibilities of ‘shifting agency’ and the power of ‘techniques of things’. Students are asked to choose domestic objects and to encounter them as they present themselves, so that they become ‘theoretical objects’, or things which do theory without us imposing it on them. By walking with these things in the city in particular ways, students engage in processes of inquiry, experimentation and questioning that are driven by the ‘score’ of the thing - not primarily by their own desires - and in doing so, they make space in different ways.

But also in other modalities of urban exploration in which students, as we have suggested above, are asked to locate the cranes in the city – understood as indexes of ongoing urban transformations and as markers of their sites – and then find ways to approach and ‘hug’ them. These practices of hugging, with their implication of care and love and bodies, require and engagement with the difficulties – or easiness – of situations, and the exploration of the conditions that allow (or do not) a safe approach to the cranes, through official or tacit permission from those in the sites or responsible for them, through a process of understanding and situated analysis of the complexities surrounding the cranes and their ecologies. Such bodily interactions highlight the entanglement of material, discursive and non discursive dimensions, and the power of our fragile bodies to enact and interrogate those entanglements. *"If we start by moving, by thinking through moving, and by living through moving, we'll arrive to that disturbing vision: that the predicament of dance is to be an art of erasure. Dance always vanishes in front of our eyes in order to create a new past. The dance exists ultimately as a mnemonic ghost of what had just lived there."* (Lepecki, 1996)

Our *Matters of Concern*, (or MoC’s), as combinations of words related by the slash (/), are capable of revealing certain preoccupations and predilections as well as of leaving spaces and gaps for their development in uncertain, sometimes complementary directions. They are currently: Body/Apparatus, Critical/Relational, Agency/Structure, The Other/Difference, The Other/Coexistence, Performative/Things, Transversals/Micropolitics, Aesthetics/Politics, Affordance/Gift, Diffraction/Representation, Discourse/Event, Documentation/Judgement and Making/Sense. These matters of concern are not only tools for mapping, or for exploring and delineating agendas and positions but are also very concrete instances of thought. They indicate realms of perception, thought and action, but they are open enough to allow the production of the unexpected, the exploration of the uncertain and the joy of speculative play. And: they are damn serious. They are ways of approaching crucial questions, things that genuinely matter, and are learning apparatuses that invite us to work our way(s) through them and with them, exploring, discussing, speculating and testing as we go about proposing what they could be. We use them as dimensions of our research and in some occasions, for instance, we ask students to take them as



descriptors of aspects of the city and its sites, and combine them with their intuitions, interests and understandings in a mapping, research and intervention project. In this exercise, the students' intuitions and interests must be understood as a function of "the other/coexistence" – our main matter of concern in the corresponding term – to produce a research question, and a selection of the matters of concern must be understood as a function of a location (for instance Umeå) to produce a set of maps. Just as in  $f(x)=y$  and in  $f(y)=y'$ . The explorations and findings of these processes of production of 'multi-dimensional maps' are combined to both 'make sites' and to precisely locate/identify points of/for intervention. Through these 'functions', we are setting the score for a strand of interactions and exploration, and the students inhabit and perform them differently, as they think and feel serves their agendas and intuitions. This technique allows us to focus on the processual, as it reinvents itself in the unfolding of its practice, and shifts from the programmatic structures of so much architectural pedagogy and production to the realm of '*catalytic event conditioning*', a perhaps more modest and respectful setting of the starting conditions for responsible and curiosity-driven engagements with the world.

Another mode is the *work around a set of texts related to the MoC's*. We select readings that we dedicate to one of the matters of concern, which students are asked to interrogate, present and discuss. They are asked to bring in examples of situations and experiences that relate to the texts, and speculate about their possible uses in the context of our on-going engagements, situations, interventions and projects. In the seminars, Kropotkin might meet Donna Haraway, and Connolly might help us approach very recent engagements of Butler with the politics of bodies in the street to think about the role of our body in the construction and establishment of something common.

*Intraventions in live situations* are our main form of engagement. We take part, from the inside, in the construction and articulation of 'sites' – expanded conditions, ecologies, locations and actors of a phenomenon – in which we operate 'architecting' as responsibly as possible. These are sometimes relatively quick and relatively small actions and/or events which yield a certain breed of effects, and sometimes longer processes through which material re-arrangements include the making of full-scale architectural constructions, the staging and curation of events, and generally the establishment of intense and enduring relations with various actors, institutions, apparatuses and other things.

Our engagements in worlding practices feed, and are fed by, critical fictions, dreams and speculations about how the world could be and how it ought to be, and a constant questioning of official discourses about public space, the city and the territory and about the ways in which the world is being made: *our projective speculations*. How are our intraventions capable of generating previously nonexistent possibilities or ideas? How is the city re-wired through our intraventions? How do they foster new 'dreams' about public, or rather, shared space? How could they incorporate and enable communities of practice and collaborative ownership? How can architectural projections become tools for the engagement in the actual transformation of the world? And to what extent can they be tools for thinking as well as for the articulation, interrogation and challenging of discourse?

These modes are choreographed in a dance/writing sense, by combining very strict and accurate articulations of the corresponding scores, with gaps and spaces for improvisation and the incorporation of the quotidian and the unexpected. As a moving practice requires, action never stops and what we usually refer to as 'performative projects', whilst taking place throughout a term without clear-cut interruptions, are a series of transitions. This duration of works is introduced and triggered through a moment of encounter with our 'terms of engagement', which sets certain conditions and provides a framework at the beginning of each term. It is punctuated by reading seminars through which we explore diverse 'methodologies of enagement' in moments of heightened thinking attention and tension, and the scores and scripts of specialized workshops and lectures, as well as the moments of shared physical and bodily intensities in the

enactments of constructions, activities and inhabitations.

In our reading, Forsythe's model of the choreographic object in its seeming simplicity captures the complexity of our pedagogical practice as/is choreography. The transitions to which he refers and the refusal to consider objects as static or stationary reflects a pedagogy of learning and making in movement and the transitory. It is precise in its location of specific situations and our engagements in and of them, in its rendering of singularities, whilst at the same time it engages in the immanent potential of a multiplicity of unknowns. It works to keep us attentive, entangled and engaged in the world; to be aware of our own power in moving things and people performatively; and to understand the need for a caring responsibility which should inhere in our practices of the making, speculating and dreaming.

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# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

UMA Spatial Encounters Vertical Workshop  
2014 · Kulturhus, Umeå (Sweden)

Duration 1 week  
Area variable  
Budget 0 SEK

**Team:**  
Alberto Altés + Josep Garriga + Sergi Serrat  
+  
students and faculty at Umeå School of Architecture

**Photography:**  
Josep Garriga

Umeå School of Architecture started the 2014-2015 academic year with a vertical workshop in which all students joined Umeå's Kulturhus in the process of occupation of the building and construction of a common house.

Several small interventions were built in order to satisfy their needs in relation to the improvement of the comfort conditions (thermal, acoustic, access, storage...) and as a consolidation of the building infrastructure(s) and facilities to keep Kulturhus alive.

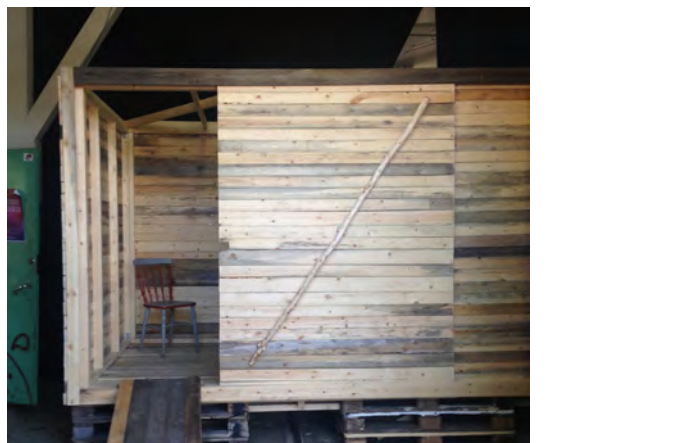
The whole school was divided in 10 teams of 20 students each (mixed from different units and years) with five different proposals suggested by Kulturhus members.

A source of timber battens left from a nearby sawmill that recently closed down was up-cycled during the workshop. The main materials used were harvested, collected and transported by students themselves, making the material costs of the workshop almost inexistent.

The workshop demonstrated how architecture could be about encounters in space, sensitive material tectonics and social-urban exploration, engagement and transformation.



LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention



# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

## Apberget Workshop

2014 · Rådhusplanaden, Umeå (Sweden)

Duration 1 week  
Area variable  
Budget 10.000 SEK

### Team:

Alberto Altés + Josep Garriga

+

students at the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

### Collaborators:

Francesco Apuzzo + Axel Timm (Raumlabor Berlin)

### Photography:

Francesco Apuzzo

Alberto Altés

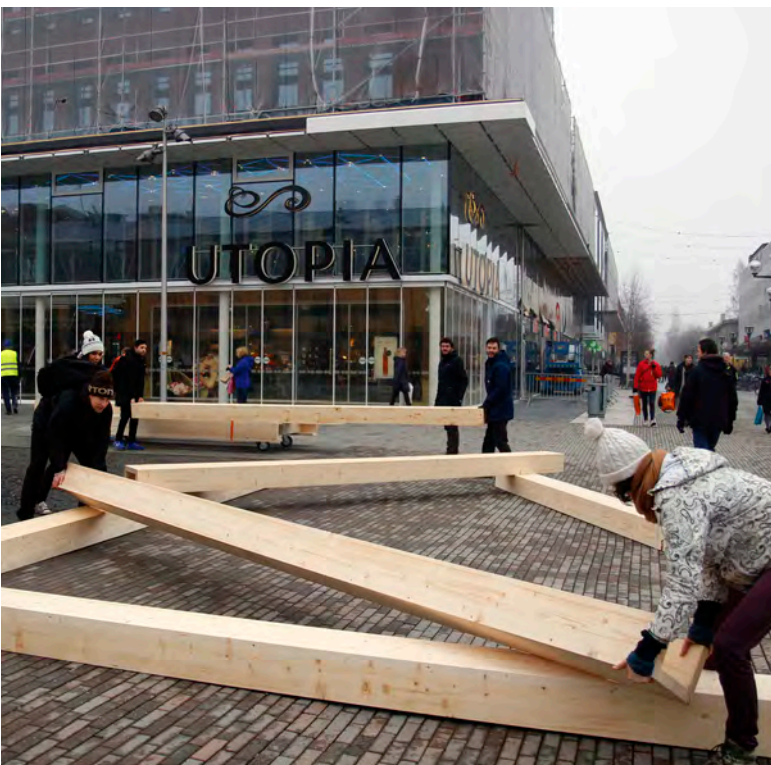
Josep Garriga

Apberget was a set of public steps and speaker's podium located in the city center of Umeå. Being the most alive public space used mainly for demonstrations and gatherings, the reasons for its demolition last September 2014 caused much discussion and struggle among the citizens.

Municipal strategies were contested here with transdisciplinary collaborative practices in which architecture, urbanism, art, pedagogy and other disciplines are both combined and suspended in and through the actions of the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention (LiAi).

Students built a series of U-section wood beams that could be stacked and reassembled depending on user's demands. The intervention was conceived as a friendly flexible version of the Apberget; students engaged with Umeå's inhabitants on the debating who was making the city while rearranging the configuration of the stands.





# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

## Silent Room Construction Workshop

2014 · Umeå School of Architecture (Sweden)

Duration	2 weeks
Area	30 m <sup>2</sup>
Budget	40.000 SEK

### Team:

Alberto Altés + Josep Garriga

+

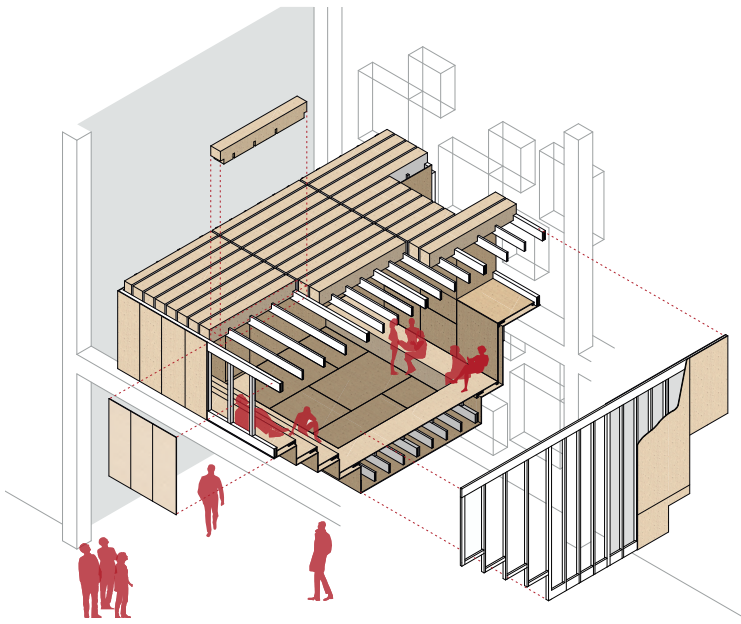
students at the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

### Collaborators:

Claudi Aguiló + Roger Tudó + Eugen Schuler

### Photography:

Alberto Altés



The Master's Program LiAi (students+faculty) conceived the design and construction of the 'Silent Room', a floating and quiet addition to Umeå School Architecture.

Alberto Altés and Josep Garriga were the coordinators of 2 Technology and Design workshops where the LiAi students developed a small room of about 30 m<sup>2</sup> that doesn't occupy the existing floor areas of the school's building but "float", hanging from the existing steel beams in one of the double-height spaces of the school. The room was thought to afford an atmosphere of silence/intimacy that could host reading seminars. And apart from the obvious requirements of structural stability, the challenge was also to work within the limits of a very restricted budget and combine acoustic performance with a comfortable temperature and adequate air renewal rates.

The project has been developed as a structural and acoustic experiment that explores the possibilities of wood construction and classroom architectures, and aims at improving the school's environment with a 'floating quiet gift' that is initially conceived as a temporary addition to the school.

The final design includes 2,7m<sup>3</sup> of GLULAM, about 90 plywood boards, 8.000 board screws, 200 WT-T construction screws, and a few other materials, adding up to around 2800 Kg.







# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

## A Dinner Set Experience Workshop

2014 · Ume älv, Umeå (Sweden)

Duration	4 days
Area	24m <sup>2</sup>
Budget	5,000 SEK

### Team:

Josep Garriga

+

Tobias Westerlund + Ibrahim Mahmood + Joshua Taylor + Rafaela Taylor  
as students at the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

### Photography:

Josep Garriga

Rafaela Taylor

An exclusive dinner set along Ume älv's riverside outside Umeå was designed and built within 4 days by a reduced number of LiAi students and faculty when they were requested for organizing a special event.

The dinner was conceived a gift from an IT consultant's company to its best client: the main real-state agent and property owner in town.

Students design the complete dinner set: from its furniture (a movable kitchen counter on wheels with a cooking place and a water sink + a wooden floor + a wood table + wood benches) to the dinner's menu (a selection of international dishes cooked by the students themselves) to the selection of the specific location outside town.

Students and faculty took the opportunity of having the board-members of the real state agency on the table to engage with a debate on how the city of Umeå was evolving and which opportunities were emerging on it, a debate that otherwise won't have happened in another context.





# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

## Flipping Sauna

2014 · Sandhornoya (Norway)

Duration 3 days  
Developer Salt Art Festival  
Area 8 m<sup>2</sup>  
Budget 2,000 SEK

### Team:

Alberto Altés + Sami Rintala + Joar Nango  
+ Roger Mullin + Håvard Arnhoff

### Photography:

Alberto Altés





# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

SALT SIIDA Nomadic Shelter Workshop  
2014 · Sandhornoya (Norway)

Duration	10 days
Developer	Salt Art Festival
Area	60 m <sup>3</sup>
Budget	8.000 SEK

**Team:**

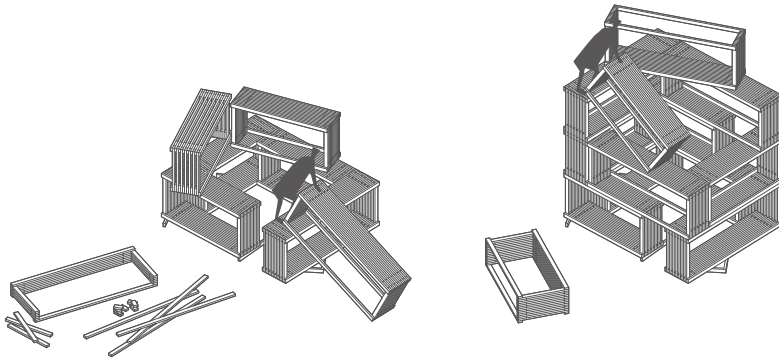
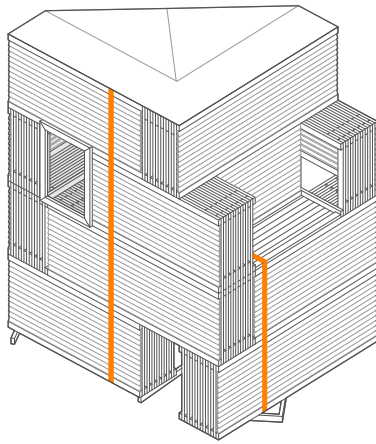
Josep Garriga + Benny Kwok + Mihai Mardare + Piotr Paczkowski

**Mentors:**

Alberto Altés, Sami Rintala, Joar Nango, Roger Mullin,  
Håvard Arnhoff

**Photography:**

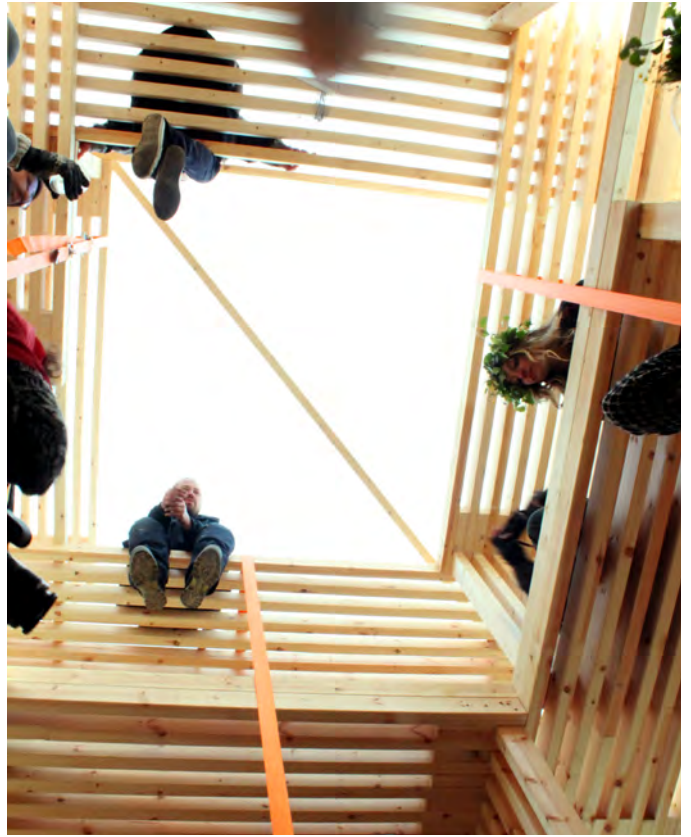
Piotr Paczkowski  
Josep Garriga



These two words: nomadic and shelter, reflect the very needs of the people from Nordic traditions. The intervention is to create a very basic shelter for fire, sleep and meetings. A sequence of functional spaces is created using the module of an inhabitable wooden box. Using a staggered screwing pattern at each layer creates the finger joints of each module. Using the same assembly sequence, 15 joints are formed at the corners to create one module. These wooden boxes, designed to the dimensions of a comfortable area for sleeping and seating, are stacked around the fire as a sleeping shelter, opening new possibilities of gathering and living.

Through combining different box sizes the interior space becomes vivid and appropriable, yet some of the levels are more suitable to serve as benches or chairs. The stackable shelter connects to the astonishing Norwegian landscape with windows framing the Norwegian Sea and the mountains, a very unique viewpoint towards the midnight sun. The fire defines the natural reason to meet with others, triggering conversations across various levels of the building, while the building is meant to be temporary, easy to transport, expand or mass produce, not only hosting nomads, but being nomadic itself.





# LiAi · Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

2 Movable Saunas Construction Workshop  
2015 · Umeå School of Architecture (Sweden)

Duration 1 week  
Area 7m<sup>2</sup> + 7,5m<sup>2</sup>  
Budget 30.000 SEK

**Team:**

Alberto Altés + Josep Garriga

+

students at the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention

**Collaborators:**

Sami Rintala

**Photography:**

Sergi Serrat

Josep Garriga

These two saunas have been built by students and faculty of the Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention at Umeå School of Architecture and are conceived as public infrastructures of encounter to be used by anyone from the school, the city of Umeå or its visitors.

Once conceived as true public spaces and even as part of a city's common infrastructures, the presence of saunas has been reduced to gyms, pools, bathhouses and private apartments, transforming entirely their ability to host conversations, discussions, meetings, unexpected encounters and other forms of coexistence. What do they do/give to the city as they are? What would it be like to build a (truly) public sauna for the city again?

After a brief design session brainstorming ideas on how a movable sauna could look, students were divided in two groups of 5 students each; one developing a vertical sauna and the second one working on a horizontal one. The construction took place the 3 last days of the week.

The final design includes structural wood, rockwool insulation, tarp paper and wood planks as the finishing layer, making the saunas proper wood constructions that could keep the heat under extreme weather conditions.





