

Summer School: Explorations in Architecture

Dates	Monday 27 September to Friday 1 October 2021
Times	10:30 – 16:30 daily; Friday 10:30-19:00
Location	Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre, British Library AND Clore Learning Centre, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Level	All levels, 18+
Class size	Maximum 16 participants

Course description

Immerse yourself in a week-long investigation of architecture and the built environment through unique access to the British Library and the RIBA collections. We will explore and develop a wide range of creative and critical skills to help us both understand and communicate our responses to architectural spaces.

The course includes practical workshops and creative activities that introduce mapping, drawing, photography, concrete poetry, zine-making and curation as tools for looking, thinking and creatively responding to architecture and the built environment. Daily show-and-tells from arts practitioners and curatorial staff at the RIBA and the British Library will further develop your insights and provide inspiration for the development of your own work.

Whether you are contemplating a career in architecture or art, are already working in these fields, or just want to engage imaginatively with architecture to develop your artistic approach and critical thinking skills, this course will enable you the time, resources and expert guidance to develop fresh perspectives on the built environment in London and beyond.

Programme

Day One, British Library: Mapping Architecture

The first day will introduce the course by focusing on how we may record and represent our encounters with architecture and the built environment through mapping. We will begin with a curator-led tour of the exhibition, *Paddington: The Story of a Bear*, keeping in mind the 'journeys' theme, and subsequently spend time recording our own journeys through it.

In the afternoon, we will move through the building and engage in hands-on activities to explore how maps may carry evidence to the contexts, preferences and agendas of their makers and influence the way we come to see the built environment and understand our place within it, curator Tom Harper will join us for an exclusive discussion of some of British Library's collection of more than 4.5 million maps.

The day will conclude with a review and discussion to collectively share ideas and further explore the creative potential of mapping within our own work.

Day Two, RIBA: Changing Perspectives - Architectural Drawing and Photography.

Day two will focus on the power and potential of linear perspective - fundamental to communicating 'viewpoint' in both architectural drawing and photography. We will start the day focusing on drawing. We will view examples from RIBA's extensive collection of early books on perspective drawing and introduce you to the skill of drawing in one- and two-point perspective before you apply what you have learnt by drawing aspects of the building from different viewpoints.

In the afternoon, curator Valeria Carullo will introduce us to RIBA's equally extensive photography collection. We will view and discuss examples of photographers, past and present, who have used perspective and personal viewpoint to interpret architecture, including its relationship to people and place. We will conclude by, again, exploring aspects of the building, this time using our cameras to test the potential of photographic perspective when representing place.

Day Three, British Library: From Architectural Photography to Architectural Narrative

On day three, we will continue our investigation of responding to the built environment through photography. Focusing on both representation and narrative, we will review our own work alongside examples from established photographers to draw inspiration and identify different approaches to storytelling through photography. A photography session at the neighboring Kings Cross and St Pancras station will allow you to create your own short photographic narrative of place.

The afternoon will be a dedicated studio session where we review the work produced and creatively explore how combining images through editing, sequencing and collage may be employed to develop ideas and/or emphasize the story you wish to tell. The day will conclude with the review of work produced to identify emerging interests, share personal approaches and ideas for future work.

Day Four, RIBA and British Library: Concrete Poetry

Day four will start with a visit to the Library at RIBA. We will view personal sketchbooks and journals from its collection to specifically consider the use of writing to capture facts, fleeting impressions or profound responses to the built environment. We will then walk to the British Library, sketching, photographing and writing along the way. As we walk, we'll immerse ourselves in the urban environment and develop our observational, contextual and conceptual skills by paying particular attention to how any thoughts and words that arise reflect the architectural structures and relationships we encounter.

In the afternoon, short and experimental activities will introduce you to forms of language games, concrete and visual poetry - where the style or form of the text mirrors its meaning or message. We will be joined by artist Alex Julyan who uses writing and wordplay extensively within her practice. Alex will share her ideas and support you in developing your own concrete and visual poetry by using text on its own or in combination with photography and/ or drawing.

Day Five, RIBA: Production and Presentation

Our final day will draw together the work and ideas produced during the week. We will work collectively to identify and select common themes, finalise individual works and produce both a zine and a curated display of works made throughout the week.

The work will be presented to invited friends and families during an intimate evening reception at the RIBA – allowing you to share and reflect on the week and the impact it may have on your future work and practice.

Please note that the programme may be subject to small changes throughout the week – any changes will be communicated to you with as much notice as possible.

Tutors

The course is led by **Marianne Holm Hansen**, an artist who works across media, including writing, drawing and photography. Her work most often centres upon how site-specific structures, methodologies and norms impacts on the way we experience and understand the world around us. She continuously collaborates with individuals across disciplines and has worked extensively with institutions such as the Barbican, Tate, the British Library and RIBA to deliver new works, workshops, participatory projects, installations and events.

Our practical sessions will be supported by daily talks and show-and-tells by RIBA and British Library curators, and activities with and artistic practitioners exploring the architectural design of RIBA and British Library buildings, and off-site visits to explore inspiring architecture nearby.

Previous experience

No previous experience is required to attend this course.

What you will gain

Whether you are contemplating a career in architecture or art, are already studying/working in these areas, or simply interested in developing your insight, skills and approach, this course will provide the opportunity to:

- Develop fresh perspectives on architecture and the built environment, in London and beyond.
- Develop a range of practical and creative skills, including in mapping, architectural drawing and photography, writing (concrete and visual poetry), zine-making and curation.
- Develop communication, critical and conceptual thinking skills, through the use of different media and daily group discussions.

- Gain exclusive insight and an understanding of how to access, use and interpret the collections and archives at both the RIBA and the British Library.
 - Have complimentary guided visits to British Library exhibitions *Paddington: The Story of a Bear*.
 - Develop new connections with peers and experts from the RIBA and the British Library.
 - Gain tailored advice and support from a range of curators, practitioners and artist Marianne Holm Hansen throughout the week.
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Equipment and materials

Please bring an A4 or larger cartridge paper sketchbook or sketchpad on which to work each session. We can provide a sketchbook for those purchasing a student or registered unemployed ticket and we will be in touch with you after booking.

On day two and three, please also bring a digital SLR camera (recommended) or camera phone. We are able to provide a couple of cameras if you do not have one.

All other materials will be provided.

Facilities

Please gather 15 minutes before the course start time in the Learning Centre at the designated venue that day.

Access

Please contact the British Library to discuss your access needs ahead of the course – adultlearning@bl.uk – and we will do our best to meet them.

Refreshments

Tea and coffee will be provided at the beginning of each session. Lunch will be provided. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements by emailing adultlearning@bl.uk as soon as you have booked onto the course.
