

Cities News

Cities Programme newsletter issue 24
Summer Term 2019

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In 2018-19, our Studio focused on the history and changing realities of national urban institutions and how this influences the planned redevelopment of the Holloway Prison Site in the London Borough of Islington. Islington is home to around 225,000 people and is the most densely populated local authority in the country. Similar to other London boroughs, it is set to meet a high housing target with at least fifty percent expected to be 'affordable'. Until 2016 Holloway Prison functioned as a women's prison with important historical and social meanings.

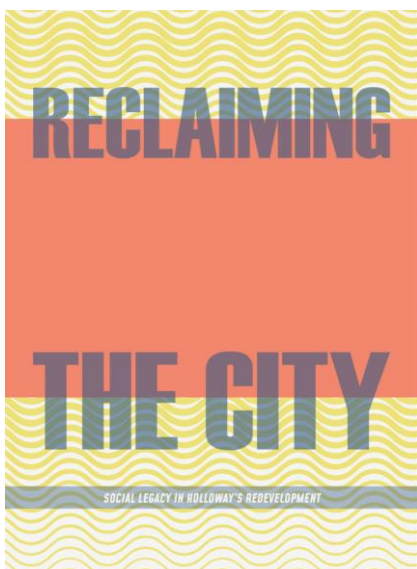
Over the course of our studio, the sale of the site was being negotiated by the Ministry of Justice as part of their national programme of prison reform. Our students have responded to the complex and often competing ambitions for this inner-city site by engaging with the varied perspectives of former inmates, residents, activist groups, the Council, the GLA, and the Ministry of Defence.

Their publication showcases the work of five groups, each focusing on approaches to development by thinking through questions of social justice, spatial distribution and alternative approaches to viability as the dominant measure of value.



Reclaiming the City
Photo: Carlos Reyes

MSc Student News



We are very pleased to announce the student-led studio publication of 'Reclaiming the Holloway Prison Site' designed by **Laura Múnera Mejía** and **Carlos Reyes**.

Alumni News



RUINED SKYLINES

*Aesthetics, Politics and
London's Towering Cityscape*

GÜNTER GASSNER

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Günter Gassner (LSE Cities PhD 2013) has written a book with the title *Ruined Skylines: Aesthetics, Politics and London's Towering Cityscape*, in which he explores the skyline as a space for radical urban politics.

Developing a critique of the construction of more and more speculative towers as well as a critique of the suggestion that these towers ruin the historic cityscape, Günter makes a case for reanimating urban politics as an art of the possible. The book will be published in September and is available to [preorder now](#).

Günter also recently published an article "Thinking against Heritage: speculative development and emancipatory politics in the City of London" in the *Journal of Urbanism*.

Lastly, Günter (together with Julian Brigstocke) organised the symposium *Spaces and Politics of Aesthetics* at Cardiff University on 10 and 11 June.

The symposium explored the sensory grounds of politics; the role of aesthetics in relation to (in)human subjectivity; and the material sites, spaces, and landscapes of political aesthetics.

The symposium was the second Annual Social and Cultural Geography Research Group event in the School of Geography and Planning.

Dr. Susan Parham (LSE Cities PhD 2008) has recently become an Associate Professor at the University of Hertfordshire where she directs the University of Hertfordshire Urbanism Unit (UHUU) which was launched recently.

Susan is continuing her role as Academic Director of the International Garden Cities Institute through which she is taking part in a large scale EU funded international 'Edible City Solutions' research project over the next four years.

Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia (LSE Cities PhD, 2010) is a founding co-editor of the new international open-access Radical Housing Journal.



[The Radical Housing Journal \(RHJ\)](#) seeks to critically intervene in pre and post-crisis housing experiences and activist strategies from around the world without being confined to the strict dogmatism of academic knowledge production.

The Journal is defined by how it approaches matters of 'housing', 'home', 'homelessness', 'eviction',

'intersectionality,' and the likes, and by its capacity to generate thought and action around those areas of

concern, recognising the systemic inequalities in how our housing environments are produced and reproduced.

Structured as a non-hierarchical collective, it speaks both to academic and non-academic, grassroots activists, practitioners and policy-makers concerned with housing injustices globally and active in responding to such a concern.

They invite contributions that involve theoretical and methodological reflections on critical housing issues, insights on how contextual housing movements are organised worldwide, and hands-on strategies for action. Please see their latest call for Issues 2.1 and 2.2 [here](#).

Follow them on Twitter:
@Radical_Housing.

Catarina de Almeida Brito (2013) is producer of *Landscape Healing*, a cinematic documentary film exploring the spaces and themes of the largest restoration project in Norwegian history by BAFTA-nominated film director Richard John Seymour.



Filmmaker Richard John Seymour on shooting session in Finnmark.
Photo: Catarina de Almeida Brito

The film will be premiered at the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2019 on September 29th at 16:00 at DOGA Hallen in Oslo. This year's festival focuses on the theme of 'Degrowth'.

The restoration, or rewilding, project has been part of a shift in the Norwegian national consciousness towards valuing, reserving and restoring 'wilderness' areas in the country.

Catarina is carrying out this work as part of 3RW arkitekter, who have been involved in the restoration project as consultants for the built environment since the early 2000s.



Screenshot from teaser for Landscape Healing
Photo: Richard John Seymour

Monica Castañeda and **Diego Cuesy** (2018) would like to organize a get-together with all the Mexican Cities alumni to connect with each other. They are open to suggestions of date and location for the reunion.

If you are keen to participate please [email them](#).

In January 2019 **Giacomo Biraghi** (2011) was appointed as Innovation Manager of Confindustria Bergamo, the association of medium / large manufacturing companies of the area.

Maria Vitale (2011) joined Arup's City Economics team in Bristol as a Senior City Economics Consultant after six years working in Public Sector Programme Leadership for Deloitte UK, specialising in programme benefits management.

In her new role with Arup, she develops business cases and advises on city and regional economic development issues and strategies for the west of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Serena Girani (2014) working at Arup Italia has been involved in the coordination and masterplanning of a carbon-neutral social housing development project in Italy, recently awarded first place in the C40's Reinventing Cities competition in Milan.

L'Innesto is the first zero-carbon social housing development in Italy. The six-acre site, a former freight terminal, will connect the mixed-use historical neighborhood of Precotto and the former industrial area of Bicocca, with more than 70% of the former railway yard area redesigned as public park and a pedestrian-only centre. It will transform the previously abandoned land into a green and sustainable community that aims to be carbon neutral within 30 years.

Sarah Ichioka (2003) has recently been appointed curator for the 2020 [International Architecture Biennial of Rotterdam](#).

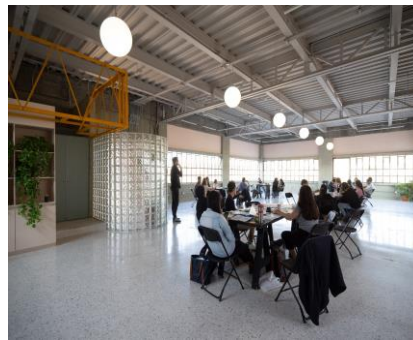
Peter A. Staub (2008), Professor of Architectural Design and Theory, is currently serving as President ad interim of the University of Liechtenstein. He was appointed in 2018 and will return to his role as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning when his term ends in October 2019.

Cara Doherty (2018) has been accepted to present research into housing in Thamesmead – produced with fellow class-mates and co-authors **Andrea Shortell**, **Gregor Ranft**, **Monica Castaneda**, and **Rohan Patankar** (all class 2017/18), at the '2019 Liveable Cities Conference' in Adelaide, Australia.

This group research paper was produced as part of the City Design Research Studio and will address access to housing - dissolving perceptions of territorial stigma through communicating the value of social anchors. The conference will focus on leadership in healthy and connected global communities, and it will explore the progress and implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The conference takes place over 12-13th August 2019. For more information and to view the research abstract please click [here](#).

BEMA (co-founded by **Ximena Ocampo**, class of 2012) is a space in Querétaro, México, presented as a platform that will allow the transcendence of cultural and artistic projects to rethink the City.



Workshop: measuring public space, in Bema facilities
Photo: Ricardo Fernández

These projects, headed not only by artists and/or government entities, but also by organizations, professionals and citizens in general, will promote the creation and permanence of an active urban scenario with impact inside and outside the city.

BEMA, a non-profit cultural project, is operated by Fundación Multitud; in order to raise awareness about their objectives and line of work, as well as to raise funds to begin operating, they have launched a funding campaign, which will allow them to: open the space regularly so that people can visit at more established and constant times, organize activities such as lectures, roundtables, film screenings and workshops related to urban issues, and start a residency program for artists and professionals to engage with the space (we'll keep you updated about this!)

Please do [contribute](#) and follow BEMA on social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/bema.space/>
https://www.instagram.com/bema_space/
https://twitter.com/BEMA_space



The view from BEMA to the aqueduct of Querétaro, built in 1735
Photo: Ximena Ocampo

Justin Peter Steil (2004) and Ingrid Gould Ellen have edited the book [The Dream Revisited: Contemporary Debates About Housing, Segregation, and Opportunity](#)

A half century after the Fair Housing Act, despite ongoing transformations of the geography of privilege and poverty, residential segregation by race and income continues to shape urban and suburban neighborhoods in the United States. Why do people live where they do? What explains segregation's persistence? And why is addressing segregation so complicated? A probing examination of a deeply rooted problem, *The Dream Revisited* offers pressing insights into the changing face of urban inequality.

Peter Griffiths (2014) has joined ING Media as their City Strategist. ING is the leading communications agency for the built environment and Peter increases the team's capacity to provide strategic support for local government clients. This includes launching [Europe's Most Talked About Cities](#), part of a global series tracking the digital visibility of cities across social media and online news.

Peter was previously Managing Editor at LSE Cities.



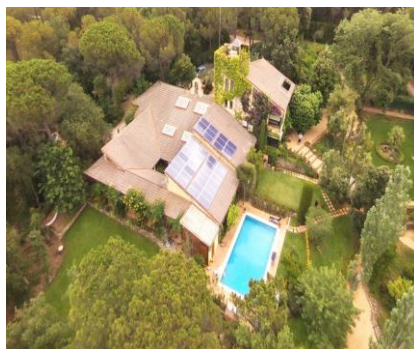
Peter Griffiths
Photo: ING Media

After 12 years of large scale sustainability-driven urban plans, and city governance strategies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, **Mike Duff** (2003) moved to Catalonia in 2015.



Mike and Michelle with daughter Frances.
Photo: La Bruguera de Púbol

He and his wife, Michelle Wilson (MSc Social Policy & Planning, 2004) have spent the last four years re-developing a three hectare country estate there, into a centre for retreats, events and workshops for groups in the creative arts, design, environmental, sports and well-being markets. Mike says the strategic and trans-disciplinary thinking he learned at LSE was a massive confidence-boost for undertaking the project, called La Bruguera de Púbol.



An aerial view of La Bruguera de Púbol.
Photo: La Bruguera de Púbol

In 2019, Mike was elected a councillor in the local government, overseeing Citizen Participation and Urbanism, and has started teaching urban sustainability strategy in the Architecture department of the University of Girona.

Mike was a Cities Programme Guest Practitioner in 2009-2011.

You can read more about the project [here](#).

Mary Jane Rooney (2000) was amongst the first Cities Programme cohort.

Shortly after graduation she took over as Head of Architecture and Design at London South Bank University.

She is now Professor of Architecture at Heriot Watt University in Dubai developing a new school of Architecture in a place where a radically different kind of world is emerging.

She is very happy to reconnect with Alumni or welcome field trips to Dubai.

Faculty News

Huda Tayob and **Suzanne Hall** have designed a curriculum on 'Race, Space and Architecture' as an intervention to address the absence of this scope of thinking in architecture and planning schools. In thinking further over shared modes of scholarship and exploration, they will be developing the website for this open-access curriculum in partnership with the

GSA University of Johannesburg. The idea is that this curriculum is a shared resource, and you are welcome to use it and adapt as you need to. The LSE link is [here](#).

Dr David Madden recently published two invited pieces. One of them, "The Names of Dispossession" in the journal *Urban Geography*, is a concluding commentary to a special issue on naming rights and place branding. He also published "[City Talk](#)" as part of the "Spotlight on Language and the City" feature on the website of the International Journal of Urban and Regional Research.

David's research has been profiled recently on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, TV3 in Spain, and the *Globe and Mail*.

In July, David published an article in the *Guardian* titled "[The fight for fair housing is finally shifting power from landlords to residents.](#)"

He also recently spoke at public events in London, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Málaga, and Vancouver. A video of his lecture in Vancouver is available [online](#), and there is a podcast of the [event](#) in London at LSE.

LSE Cities News

Urban Age Task Force

'National Transport Policy and Cities' paper launched at International Transport Forum Summit

Philipp Rode and **Catarina Heeckt** launched their [new paper](#) 'National Transport Policy and Cities: Key policy interventions to drive compact and connected urban growth' at the International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit in Leipzig, Germany at the end of May.

Read further details about the [ITF summit](#) and the [paper's findings](#) in two blog posts by Catarina Heeckt.

Launch of the Metropolitan indicator database

Metropolis has launched a new [online database](#) of 58 metropolitan territories around the globe based on LSE Cities' research. Led by **Nuno F. da Cruz** at the LSE Cities the key objective of the [Metropolitan Indicators](#) project, was to develop a system of indicators that can effectively generate new empirical insights, comparable across jurisdictions. The project established a set of 38 metropolitan indicators – including new and existing metrics – and collected the corresponding data for 58 metropolitan areas around the globe.

LSE Cities will shortly publish a working paper summarising the research which will be available via the [project webpage](#).

Towards an Urban Age Task Force

Since its inception in 2006, the Urban Age Programme has primarily been a vehicle for joining up urban research, policy and practice; enabling critical reflection; facilitating cross-disciplinary exchange; and establishing a comparative information base. Its principal means of engagement have been high-level conferences informed by research, public events and publications.

Working with local experts the task forces will develop interdisciplinary research-informed proposals for the issues being faced in cities experiencing rapid growth or significant urban change, support capacity building and optimise impact of urbanisation on the lives of citizens.

The first task force, which will take place in Addis Ababa, will be officially launched in autumn 2019.

LSE Cities Events

In September LSE Cities will announce its autumn public lecture and research seminar programmes. Speakers will include the Mayor of Tirana; Marisa Lago,

New York's Director of City Planning; artist and psycho-geographer Laura Grace Ford; and London's first chief digital officer Theo Blackwell. Research seminars will take place from 12.30-14.00 every other Thursday.

To keep up-to-date with LSE Cities' news and events, please join our [mailing list](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Ricky Burdett has been made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Art and is a jury member of the design competition to upgrade Grosvenor Square in London.