

House of Many Cultures

The Other's Story

Curated by **Rahesh Ram + Rayan Elnayal**

Exhibitors

Rayan Elnayal

Peter E. Efe

Dhruv Gulanchande

Sachini Jayasena

Ahad Mahmood

Parisa Shahnooshi

Niraj S. Shah

George A. Williams

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House of Many Cultures: The Other's Story

By **Rahesh Ram**

In the light of the current debate on Brexit, the Black Life's Matter movement, the toppling of statues that celebrated slave traders, structural racism, and the notion of what it is to be British, a conversation about the multitude of different identities that make up the notion of Britishness should be aired.

As architecture is seen as a reflector of culture and society, I as an architect and educator, felt that there was a need to curate an exhibition that will enable this conversation. As a British person of Indian descent, I know how important this discussion is. My identity has influenced my architectural thinking and my pedagogic interests. This led me to the concept of the exhibition. The show would be an invitation to the public to explore some of the cultures described above by showing the creative cultural projects undertaken by the University of Greenwich alumni.

Specifically, the work chosen for the exhibition are by British architecture students that have hybrid identities (i.e., with diasporic backgrounds) that embedded their own heritage and culture into their graduate projects. By showcasing the work of this group of students; the intention was that it would offer an opportunity to learn and understand a British demographic that is sometimes seen as 'the other'.

I invited Rayan Elnayal, an ex-student, who has a similar interest in race, indemnity, and architecture, to curate this exhibition with me.

We are all generally aware of the factual and sometimes fictional stories about immigrants within the UK, especially the post war and Brexit narratives. Some of these immigrants have become British and now possess mixed identities. Immigrants have always had to navigate their way through the host's society norms in an attempt to fit in. There have been mixed reactions to them that sometimes end up in a polarising debate about their worth to the host's society. Adding to the frustration of hearing a debate about one's worth; it is compounded further by the questions about one's Britishness. Questions are still being asked about the Britishness of immigrants (and their descendants) with British nationality. For instance, 'Would you fight for Britain over the country of origin?', and "Would you support England in a Cricket game over your country of origin?".

These are but a few questions that have been aired. This questioning has inevitably led to the feeling of uneasiness by immigrants trying to fit in. It is an

impossible task to ask immigrants or their descendants to lose their original heritage and culture to fit in. We know the answers that people want to hear. The question is set up for a binary answer – you must be one or the other. The fact is that immigrants and their descendants evolve to have hybrid identities. They cannot be anything else. My standard answer is, an answer I have cultivated over the years as a retort, ‘if you fall in love and marry, you do not have to stop loving your mother or your father’. A statement made to highlight the fact that more than one type of profound relationship is possible.

My relationship with Britain is profound and meaningful and it’s the same relationship I have with my country of origin. It’s complex, interesting, joyful, perplexing, and troublesome and what brings all these elements together is a deep affection.

Considering the unease created, that I mentioned above, we the diasporic people of Britain must navigate the public spaces like chameleons. We reveal our culture and social customs and habits to people who we feel will appreciate our differences. With others, caution is applied for fear that the differences may distance us even further. This navigation is sometimes conscious and other times it is instinct after years of practice.

As an educator, and previously as a student, I have noticed how this navigation is played out in universities.

As a student I avoided projects that had anything to do with my culture and heritage. Looking back, it was an attempt not to highlight my differences. Then in my final year of the Master’s course, I let my other story out. It was liberating. I had to respond to disparaging comments such as my project was a cliché and that by doing that project it was easier for me. However, for that moment, I said this was unapologetically me and I took the risk. I am proud to this day of the risk I took.

I was no longer hiding who I was.

In my early years as a tutor, I was cautious about encouraging students to undertake projects that dealt with their heritage, culture, or their race. I had a fear that projects that did deal with these issues would be marginalised. This, however, I am happy to say, is changing, as you will see with these projects. Even when I do encourage students to undertake projects based on their culture and heritage; there is an initial reluctance. I had several conversations with students who initially felt uneasy for fear of what their colleagues would think and say and how the projects would be perceived.

However, the students, who were brave enough to undertake these kinds of projects, found it empowering and cathartic.

There are many reasons for undertaking projects like this, but I contend that the main reason is to acknowledge, with pride, the culture and heritage that one comes from and, also to learn about one's own identity.

One of the aspects of having a hybrid identity is that we do not see the world through a monocultural lens. We see our Britishness through the filter of our culture of origin. It is a different kind of Britishness. It is a Britishness that can be enjoyed and celebrated, if explored.

This exhibition is an offering to explore this kind Britishness. You will see works from students, of different origins, but who are also British.

We hope you enjoy their creative exploration that has enabled them to engage with who they fundamentally are. They will inevitably go on to influence British architecture and culture today and in the future.

The Curators

Rahesh Ram

Rahesh Ram is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Greenwich, UK and has been an educator for the last fifteen years and has run his successful design master unit for the past five years. He has many roles at the University, but his primary roles, include being part of the Architecture and the School of Design's Management Team, Programme Lead for Technology for Masters and BA, where he oversees all of the technology programmes and is also the Unit 12, Design Unit Lead.

He is also the Employability Lead for the School of Design.

Rahesh's students have won: **Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects Drawing Prize**, won by Petya Nikolova in 2013, **RIBA Bronze Medal Commendation** won by Samiur Rahman in 2016, and the **RIBA Bronze Serjeant Award** won by Lucian Mocanu in 2016.

Rayan Elnayal

Rayan Elnayal is a Sudanese-British artist/designer based in London. She uses the skills she obtained from her architecture background to visualise and speculate on fictional spaces. She is interested in how magic realist techniques can aid in the production of ethnocentric futurisms in Sudan, the SWANA (South West Asia and North Africa) region and its diaspora.

Her interest in magic realism and the idea of 'Afrabia' initially started as part of her architecture thesis project at the University of Greenwich and remains an on-going project. Since graduating Elnayal's work has been featured in several publications and exhibitions in Central London. Rayan also has experience working on architectural projects within the education sector and now works with a collective named Space Black who centre their works around inclusivity in design and the built environment industries.

Elnayal was born and raised in London as a result of her parent migrating to London during the 90s. Her parents' immediate families remained in Sudan, which meant that regular trips to Sudan became a necessity. Elnayal spent most of her summers in Sudan with extended family members inhabiting Sudanese architecture and Sudanese landscapes. It was this experience that stemmed her interest in architecture and design.

Exhibitors

Rayan Elnayal

British of Sudanese descent

Peter E. Efe

British of Nigerian descent

Dhruv Gulanchande

British of Indian descent

Sachini Jayasena

British of Sri Lankan descent

Ahad Mahmood

British of Pakistani descent

Parisa Shahnooshi

British of Iranian descent

Niraj Shilpa Shah

British of Indian descent

George Aboagye Williams

British of Ghanaian descent

“Where is home? Or even, what is home? Is there a home that is part of my identity, or is my identity just a collection of unique ad-hoc experiences? Wherever I am, I am perceived as ‘the other’.”

Niraj Shilpa Shah

“In retrospect, having a dual identity was never a way in which I would have labelled myself. ... It was only when I travelled to the UK that the notion of having a dual identity became apparent.”

Peter E. Efe

“It is a largely white-male dominated industry that often makes you feel like you must work twice as hard as your white colleagues. You also must be prepared to have your own culture questioned or explained back to you. This can be mentally draining”

Ahad Mahmood

“Growing up in a small English town where I was the only person of colour in my school experienced many challenges related to my identity. At first, my thought process was to change myself to fit into what seemed to be an insular British standard. I internalised the act of ‘othering’ by changing my name, my appearance and even my own way of thinking.”

Parisa Shahnooshi

Rayan Elnayal



About Rayan

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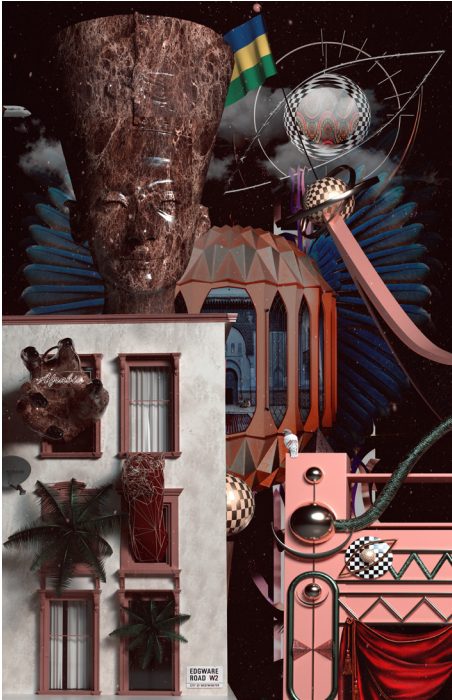
Elnayal was born and raised in London as a result of her parent migrating to London during the 1990s. Her parents' immediate families remained in Sudan, which meant that regular trips to Sudan became a necessity. Elnayal spent most of her summers in Sudan with extended family members inhabiting Sudanese architecture and Sudanese landscapes. It was this experience that stemmed her interest in architecture and design.



Project Brief: A Magic Realist Afrabia

The project explores ideas on multicultural identities, hybridity and the third space and how literary magic realism has been successfully used by novelists to tell unconventional narratives that magically explore everyday life in the 'third space'. It looks at Tayeb Salih's 'Season of migration to the North' a story that follows Mustafa's journey from Sudan to London and his struggle with his contradicting, convoluted and evolving ethnic identity. The works researches and translates magic realist techniques extracted from literature, art and photography into design techniques, and then combines this with existing Sudanese architecture to build a hybrid, urban, magic realist Afrabia. This 'Afrabia' utilises the existing hybrid qualities, Church street (Paddington), such as the multicultural market stalls, restaurants and the Alfie's antique store as a catalyst for the masterplan. These hybrid qualities are re-appropriated through magic realist techniques to create a fictional space that plays with ideas on Orientalism, hybridity and cultural authenticity.

TUTORS: **Rahesh Ram + Sam Coulton**



Peter E. Efe



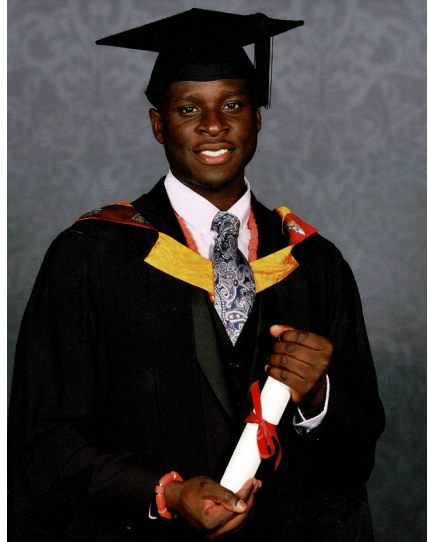
About Peter

Peter Efe is an architect-in-training with a flair and passion for Film, CGI and Architecture. He is the son of John and Rosabelle Efe, who are both his support and Inspiration. He is also a brother to four capable siblings Emmanuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Christabel (born in London). Life in Nigeria for them was challenging at times but fun, nonetheless. Living in less than desirable conditions, John (initially a fisherman) and Rosabelle (a teacher) worked hard to send their four boys to private school. So, from an early age, the notion of hard work was instilled into their children.

Rosabelle Efe is a British citizen who was born in London but moved to Nigeria at a very young age. In the year 2000, she relocated back to the UK to settle, in the process, she worked hard to bring her family to the UK the following year. In short, Peter moved to the UK with his father and his siblings on a memorable British Airways flight in 2001. In Nigeria, Peter and his family lived in an uncompleted building, so subconsciously, Peter has always been fascinated with the built environment and how to create better living spaces for his family and the local community. Since moving to the UK, he has been on a trajectory to become a qualified architect by undertaking art-related courses in his GCSEs and A levels.

At Christ the King Sixth form College, he studied Graphics design, where he was exposed to teachers and students who helped him in his decision to study architecture. He was also exposed to mixed media, 3d and photo editing software that will later help him in his university studies. At College, Peter was a focused student who achieved a 'Grade B' for both Art and Graphics. His grades enabled him to study architecture at the University of Greenwich. After failing his first year, he made a vow to himself that he will never fail again. Since then, Peter has been a high achiever in his academic years and has achieved a first-class degree in his MArch course.

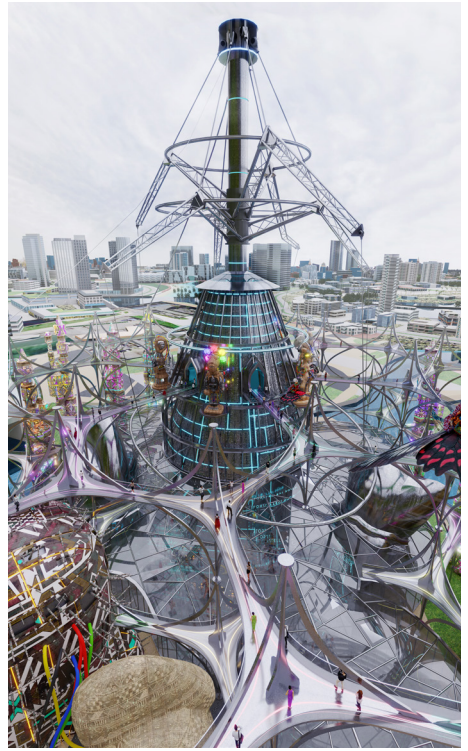
Studying at Greenwich broaden his view on architecture and the impact it has socially and across disciplines. This experience encouraged him to go into the world of freelancing as an architectural designer and take on exciting jobs in the fashion, film, and architecture industries. In his free time, he plays football, goes to the gym, socialises with friends, watches anime, and creates Architectures that criticise the stigmas of identity in Architecture.



Project Brief: The Institute of African Diaspora and African Futures

Due to the understudied nature of African futures, the United Nations of Africa (U.N.A) (clients) have proposed to build an institute that will immerse itself in the understanding and teaching of all things to do with Africa. The U.N.A is an African organisation founded in 2017. It's member states are the 54 countries that reside in Africa. They have the focused vision of uniting Africa by providing a forum for its member states to debate matters, in the hope of becoming a mechanism for governments to resolve and find areas of agreement together. The building will be a 'Bauhaus' type incubator of debate and creativity for the future of Africa. It will be known as the 'Institute of African Diaspora and African Futures' (I.A.D.A.F). The design will consist of an urban infrastructure strategy and a building proposal. The urban infrastructure is a structural framework that will allow buildings to sit within it. The main building will consist of a debate chamber, an auditorium, film - music - art workshops, exhibition space, event space, cinema/theatre, and accommodation for staff. The concept of this design proposal is that African countries can design buildings within the proposed urban infrastructure and over a period of time it will become a cluster of buildings that exhibit a clash of cultures. The initial design will see five well off African countries design architectures within this framework, such countries include Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria. The buildings will be funded by 'The Africa Fund'. A partnership organisation between African governments setup to raise and invest funds for African communities in need. Furthermore, other organisations grasp the idea of designing buildings that best represents their continent's architecture and decide to build their buildings in the vicinity of the infrastructure framework.

TUTORS: **Rahesh Ram + Sam Coulton**



Dhruv Gulabchande



About Dhruv

Dhruv's family currently happily reside in the centre of Bradford, West Yorkshire — though this certainly was not always the case. Three generations ago, his great-great-grandfather travelled from Diu, India to work as a tailor in Moçambique, East Africa, which at the time was under Portuguese rule. Although they led a relatively peaceful life, during the Moçambiquan War of Independence between 1964 and 1975, his father's family were forced to flee. As they had Portuguese citizenship they were treated as non-residential Indians and therefore required to pay additional city taxes. Dhruv's father then bullishly led the journey to the UK in an effort to financially help their family; traversing through Northern Europe to Lisbon, before eventually arriving at the docks of Liverpool to build a new chapter of life for their family.

Dhruv Gulabchande is a registered Chartered Architect and Associate Director at London-based practice HFM Architects with eight years of experience primarily in the retail and public realm sectors. Alongside practice activities he leads Narrative Practice, an architectural mentoring, design and research platform. As well as this, he is Undergraduate Studio Tutor of Studio 7 at the University of Sheffield.

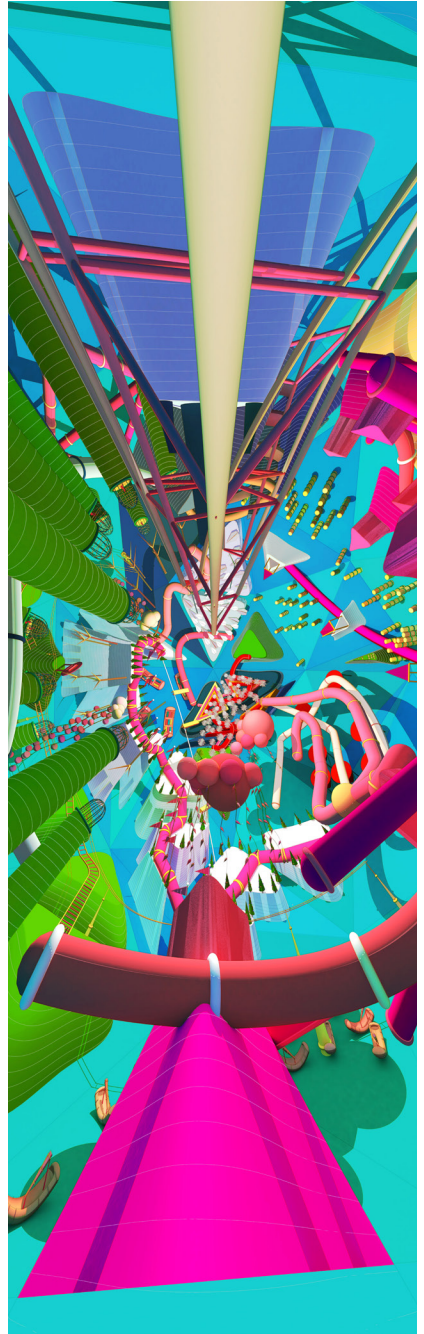
Project Brief: Jaides — A Virtual Memory Theatre: Curating Non-Linear Narrative in Architecture

The definition of narrative has become so diluted to be so commonplace as to evade the meaning entirely. The literary device, however, is much more integrated within our built environment than this of course; early doors with cave paintings, extending to folklore and through symbology in religious structures — however now seems to have become limited to an Instagram caption or a short TikTok video.

The project, therefore, aims to criticise the static narrative state of architecture through building of a fictional psycho-geographical and virtual lifeworld sustaining the transcribed memories of my father, Jaiman (Jai) Mugattal. Looking at the notion of digital semiotics with relation to a personal biography, the theory is applied to a building form through to an interior view to test the validity of a purely symbolic and narrative architectural form.

The set-up of the lifeworld revolves round a 9-tier polar grid where each 'island' has its own programme and method of setting out. Jai's journey lives in all these elements and is driven through the idea that "The event of storytelling is a symbolic, as well as a functional, method of characters performing a memory within a systematic place defined within a space." — translating to the shrine as an entry portal, the tower as the memory theatre to store the narrative and the lifeworld as an extension of the narrative driven tower.

TUTORS: **Melissa Clinch + Harry Bucknall**



Sachini Jayasena



About Sachini

Sachini Jayasena is a first-generation immigrant. Her parents immigrated from Sri Lanka in the late 1980's after deciding to study in the UK. Both of her parents are Sinhalese and practice Theravada Buddhism, they have raised her siblings and herself with these Buddhist teachings. The family settled in North London due to the small Sri Lankan community that existed there. The opportunity to move abroad was important to them due to the heavily territorial civil war that was ongoing in Sri Lanka at the time, this was between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities that live on the island. Although the war has come to an end, the country is still attempting to recover and overcome the pain and prejudices between communities, as well as many years of colonialism prior to the war.



Project Brief: The Elephant in the Room: The Sri Lankan British Town

This project examines the evolution of domestic space, post-colonial identity and religious practice of the Sri Lankan Buddhist community in Enfield, London. It begins with the evolution of worship spaces within the Sri Lankan Buddhist community, specifically looking at the case study of Abhayarama Enfield Buddhist Temple, a British home that has been converted into a temple and is open to the public. I explored the hybridity of domesticity and sacredness within the Home Temple and produced hybrid objects that would better reflect the aesthetics and function of the Home Temple, starting off with redesigning the front door.

My research then delves into the larger, speculative design of a future Sri Lankan British community within Enfield, London and how the town begins to adapt to accommodate the growing community and their festivities. The festival of Escala Perahera is an annual event that happens within the city of Kandy in Sri Lanka. The festival consists of dressed elephants that parade the streets carrying ancient Buddhist relics. This event must now happen within the constraints of Enfield Town. The festivities begin to merge with the British town, using an ad-hoc approach, the town starts to emulate the hybridity of the Sri Lankan British experience through material and spatial ideas.

TUTORS: Ifigenia Liangi + Daniel Wilkinson



Ahad Mahmood



About Ahad

Ahad Mahmood (he/him) is a British-Pakistani artist and Part II, qualified architectural designer. Born in Lahore in 1992, his family moved to Bedford in the UK in 1996 when he was three years old. He completed his BArch at Sheffield University in 2015 and his MArch at Greenwich University in 2020. He spent four years working at Model Projects between degrees - an architecture practice based in Brixton, London specialising in residential and new-build design. Post-graduation in 2020, Ahad has worked full-time as a freelance artist and architectural designer, founding 'designbyahad' and working under the artist alias 'wiresandtrees'. Ahad still regularly visits Lahore as often as he can.

The definition of narrative has become so diluted to such commonplace as to evade meaning entirely. The literary device however is much more integrated within our built environment than this of course; early doors with cave paintings, extending to folklore and through symbology in religious structures – however now seems to have become limited to an Instagram caption or a short TikTok video.

Project Brief: Of Robbers, Kites and Paper Gardens

This project is titled 'Of Robbers, Kites and Paper Gardens' and is set in the Changa Manga Forest on the outskirts of Lahore. The inspiration for the project comes from the mythological relationship between Lahore and the garden. From Mughal times (with links even before) to British rule, Lahore has maintained a strong connection with its garden and green spaces. The Changa Manga was a hiding place for legends; the robber's Changa and Manga (the forest named after them), the warrior and freedom fighter Malangi who fought the British and even Nizam Lohar - the hero for the poor. The site, in recent times, has suffered from vicious deforestation and risks becoming another part of Lahore's past.

Today, with the garden relationship physically breaking, a deeper mythological connection is at risk of being damaged. Generations of great Lahoris have taken inspiration from the gardens. As the city expands uncontrollably (from illegal settlements to empty housing societies), many of Lahore's great monuments and festivals (linked to its historic garden



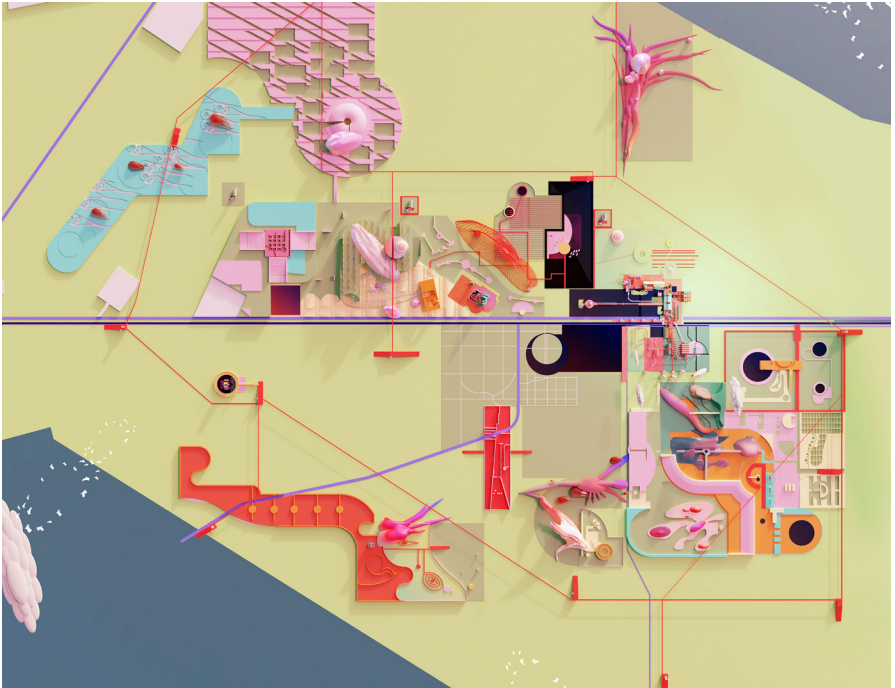
culture) have begun to disappear. Furthermore, pollution and poor air quality are rampant.

Inspired by Flora Annie Steels 'The Great Tales of Punjab', this project features 43 'gardens', which function as a series of walks, structures, and sculptures. Each garden is a re-telling or re-imagining of one of the 43 tales. These tales contain fables, surrealism, horror and love. There are talking mountains, princes turning into gold and even a chatty peahen. Within the gardens and sites are places for traditional but forgotten Lahori crafts and festivals to be re-born. Skills such as kite-making and paper pressing; festivals such as the Lohri (for winter solstice) are just some examples. The project combines historic myths with new permacultural solutions to explore the potential of new economies not reliant on detrimental expansion. The gardens make up exactly 12.6km² of the site (the same amount of green space the average housing society in Lahore loses due to inefficient planning). The gardens sit in the deforested regions of the forest.

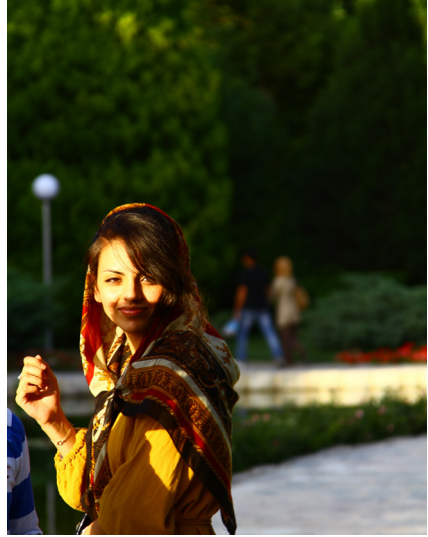
While many gardens and temples may not exist anymore or sit in ruin, I found that the stories and myths remained strong in peoples' memory when talking to Lahoris. Locals knew Changa and Manga's tale. Relatives still read the poems of great Punjabi authors like Bulleh Shah and Allama Iqbal. People could still tell me stories about great Mughal lords and miracles done by sages. Lahore is known as the 'City of Gardens' – a title which goes far beyond the physical. However, I believe that if more of Lahore's physical past deteriorates, eventually, so will the connection to its mythical past.

The visuals, created in Blender, take inspiration from the unique structures and rich colours found on the site and across Lahore. The goal of the model was to create a tactile world with its own style and rules.

TUTOR: Mike Aling



Parisa Shahnooshi



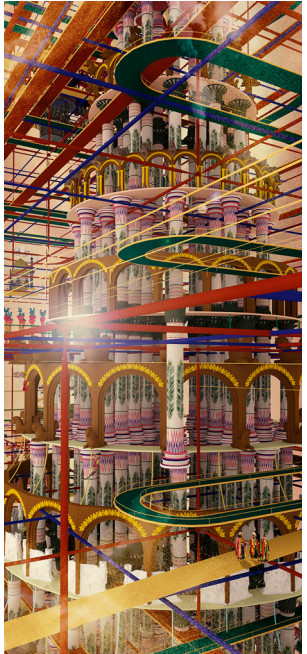
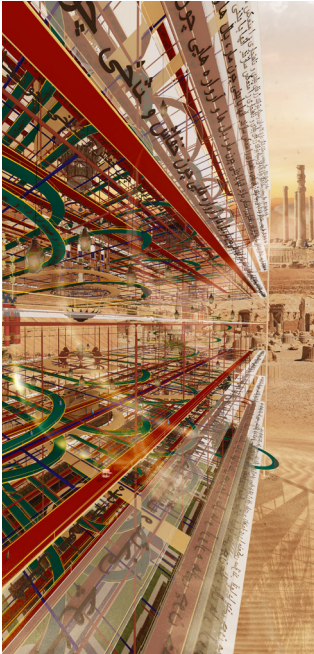
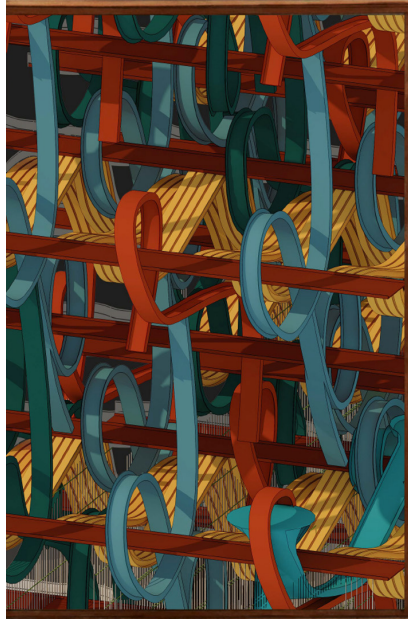
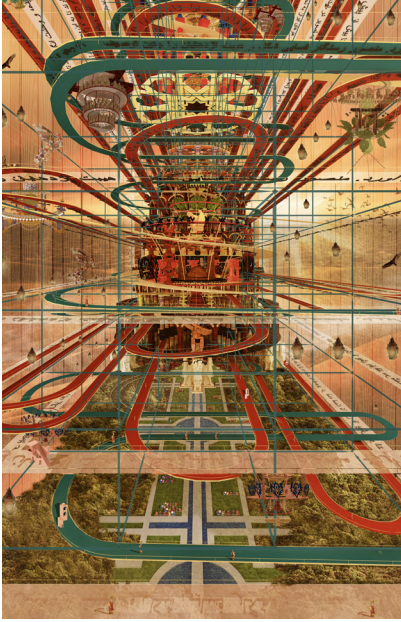
About Parisa

Parisa is a British-Iranian architecture assistant and mentor based in London. Born in Isfahan, Iran, she moved to the UK at the age of 10 with her sibling and mother to join her father who was already living in the UK. Initially, as a young student with limited English, she feels she had to overcome many obstacles and challenges especially with the idea of belonging in her adoptive country. Undertaking her project 'The Vertical Garden of Persia', at the University of Greenwich was a cathartic exercise and she is now preparing to show her work in back in Iran at a local University.

Project Brief: The Vertical Garden of Persia

Persia has been lost to history and is now talked about in mythological terms. This project is a search for Persia. The "Vertical Garden of Persia" is designed as a 3Dd habitable Persian carpet, made to the proportions and geometry of the Ardabil Carpet. It is sited between the ruined walls of Persepolis, the first city of Persia. The traveller, visiting Persepolis, can navigate the structure to discover the history, the culture and essence of Persian through symbols, motifs, decorations, and poems. The Persian carpet is an iconic identifier of this lost empire. After understanding the structure of the carpet from its colours, its motifs, its geometry, its weaving craftsmanship, their meaning, and its cultural importance it seemed appropriate to use this iconic cultural object to be the inspiration for the project. The structure was designed for people to find Persia but the project was undertaken to find me.

TUTORS: Raresh Ram + Sam Coulton



Niraj Shilpa Shah



About Niraj

Niraj is a British-Indian architectural designer born in London with a passion for fictioning, culture and politics. After undergraduate studies at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, in 2017, he left the country for 6 months to understand architecture, and its practice, in other parts of the world. The journey began at a local practice in Mumbai, India, and he went onto Melbourne, Australia. He returned to London and worked at Heatherwick Studio and KPF before starting MArch at the Greenwich School of Design. Since graduating, Niraj has returned to Heatherwick Studio as a Designer.

My family originates from Gujarat, in western India. Both my parents were born in small villages before moving to larger cities within Gujarat, but with backgrounds that couldn't contrast more.

My father's family came from a poor background where academia was considered to be "the way out", thus my grandfather became a doctor. As a gifted mind, he wanted more for his career; he moved the family to London in 1978, when my father was 13 years old.

On the other hand, my mother came from the wealthiest self-made family in Gujarat. To say she lived a full childhood is an understatement from the plethora of stories and fond memories. As is common in Indian tradition, my mother moved to London in 1994 following her arranged marriage at 25 years old, leaving her life of luxury behind to embark on an unexpectedly difficult journey away from home.

My earliest memories were of constant travel for my father's work, existing in a stereotypical Indian family environment, with heavily-prescribed gender roles. My little brother and I spent most of our time with our mother, growing up with strong traditional values and principles, and my father imparted strong western worldviews on us. Do I fit in somewhere in between? I don't think so... I am just very eastern, and very western.

Project Brief: The Coca-Colonisation of Varanasi

In this political satire, Coca-Cola rewrites Hindu mythology through the marketing conduit of temples. Coke sales dropped during India's farmers' protests. Their strategy? Deify the drink. Carved, story-laden temples are erected in Varanasi, India's holiest city, which are in fact bottling plants. Pilgrimage across the four temples mirrors Coke-production from holy Ganga water: Hindu devotees experience God through Coca-Cola. Sales soar.



This project explores fictioning as a method for imagining architecture. A specific socio-political quandary and speculate a response in a satirical fiction. Fictions are underpinned by: "the cultural logic of late capitalism"; orientalism; mythologies and worldmaking. The architect applies these theories to navigate socio-political quandary for their corporate client.

The objective is to demonstrate how the international architect can help justify Coca-Cola building a bottling plant on Varanasi's sacred waterfront, using it as a marketing strategy to improve public relations. By using the River Ganges's holy water in their drink, ritualising it as a conduit to worship God, they can subvert narratives from "drying land" to "becoming Hindu", thus increasing drink sales.

For the satire to demonstrate this, the quandary is understood through the lens of late capitalism, orientalism, and mythologies. They combine through worldmaking, proposing fictions provoking thoughts and desires of an imaginary building.

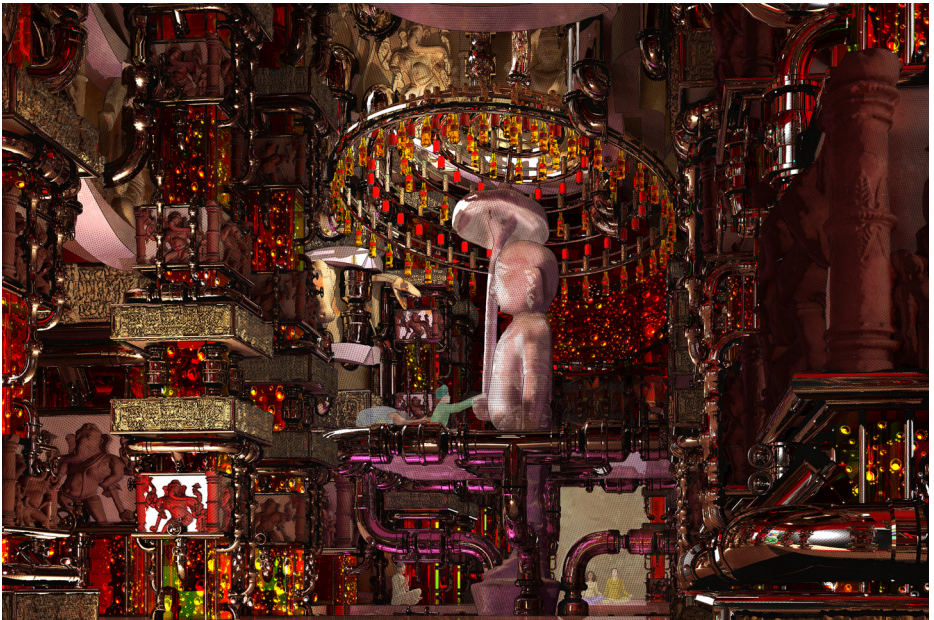
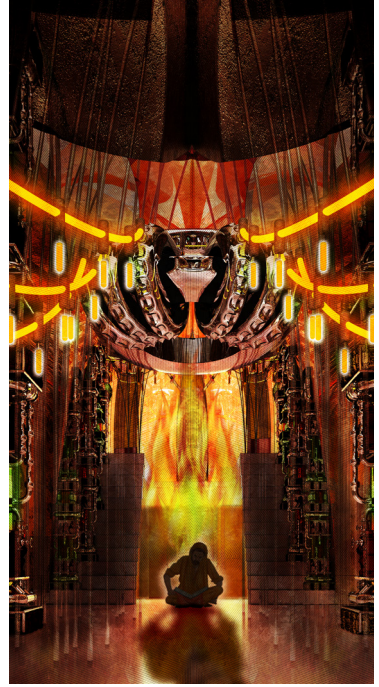
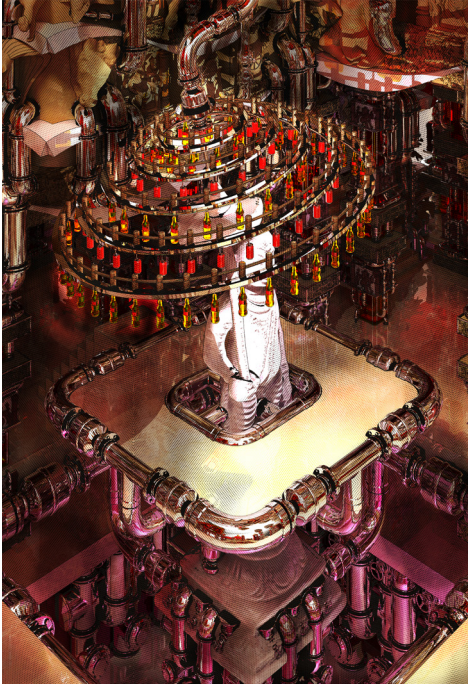
[In the introduction of Fiction as Method, two inseparable strands of fictions are described as method, 'those that reveal structures and gain agency in the construction of the everyday', and 'those that are deployed as holes to let in the "future"' (Shaw and Reeves-Evison, 2017, p8). This project aims to do both, revealing the structure of the quandary and fictioning an unideal future as a response which acts as said 'hole' or an 'invitation that we strategically extend to the radical unknowability of the future'.]

Thus, satirical fiction is deployed as the method for socio-political commentary about the overbearing power of global corporations and the international architect as an accomplice as per late capitalism's demands, all through the lens of socio-political quandary in Varanasi.

[Dora Garcia, writer, distinguishes operations of "what ifs" and "as ifs"; the former leads to 'satirical acts designed to unmask the workings of power', and the latter as 'more utopian, leading to forms of activism that, rather than demanding change, act "as if" change has already occurred'. This thesis, using satire, operates in the "what if" realm, but in fictioning, based on existing quandaries, it also operates in the "as if" realm, as if the quandary has already revealed the workings of power and greater activism is required.]

The reader, hopefully, feels the burdening possibility of these events occurring, thus is invited to question the status quo.

TUTORS: Rakesh Ram + + Martin Aberson



George Aboagye Williams



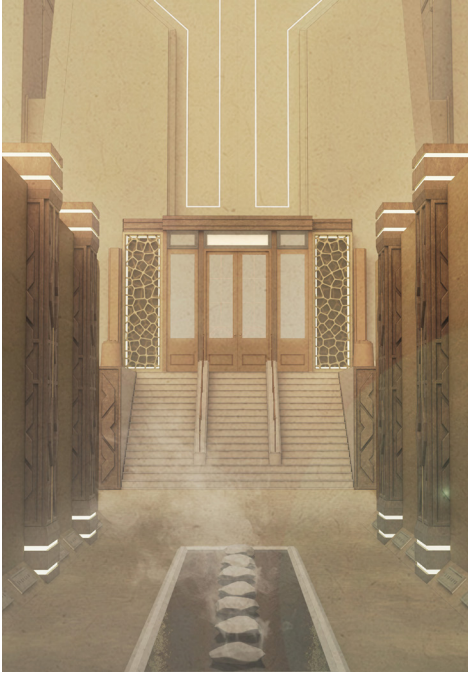
About George

George Aboagye (pronounced, Ab-Wah-Jih) Williams, British born Ghanaian. Born in London to parents, mother being born and raised in Kumasi and father born near Aburi and raised around Accra in Ghana. They moved to the UK in the 1980s partly moving between Oldham and West London eventually settling in West London. Having gained experience in Residential, Commercial and Health Care based architecture, these skills compliment the theoretical side of culture and identity in architectural practice.

Project Brief: Afrofuturism the Grounds of Discovery - A Case Study in Cultural Identity

The focus on the project was looking at the historical and contemporary context of Afrofuturism with architectural application. The themes found within Afrofuturism can be taken and used to inform design. The influence from science fiction has been commonly achieved through a western perspective which has propelled the genre forward in popularity. In this visual discussion, there was a focus on science fiction and architecture using and applying the theme of west African vernacular, bringing a new cultural lens to architectural design and how it gave me an opportunity to explore the perception of Afrofuturism and show how there is room to shape the architectural view of the continent. Furthermore, we will explore its ability to inhabit other spaces across the world with the language developed by breaking down and reconstructing Afrofuturism to fit with the architectural scope. Could the state of speculative architecture be envisioned with a lens that uses its own cultural identity without completely adhering to western standards? What can be taken from different parts of the world to inform design and what is intended to be one of Architectural/Urbanist response to the theme.

TUTORS: **Melissa Clinch + Harry Bucknall**



19th October - 12th November
Stephen Lawrence Gallery

Supporters

"I can't think of a better time, or better educators, to put these complex and important questions on the table. Raresh and Rayan (at the University of Greenwich) will not only do it justice, but they will also open up new territory for a generation of students whose contributions will enrich architectural culture in ways we're only now beginning to grasp"

Professor Lesley Lokko, Founder & Director, African Futures Institute, Accra.
RIBA Annie Spink Award for Excellence in Education 2020
Ada Louise Huxtable Prize for Contribution to Architecture 2021

"The intersectional nature of identity, particularly in Britain, is a subject well worth exploring, and the opportunity to increase our understanding of it through the ideas curated in an exhibition like this, very valuable. As the architecture profession moves towards becoming a more inclusive environment, I am sure the richness of diversity on display will form an important contribution to this."

Ramroop, RIBA Director of Inclusion & Diversity.

"The significance of this work at this time - work that troubles and deepens the concept of homeland, cannot be overstated. Expanding our notions of home to deeply engage territories and geographies through layered and plural understandings of the interconnectedness of our geographies; and the hybridities of our identities is not only more relevant than ever, but also holds potential for us to evolve our understandings of architecture's relationship to ground. The framing of different British histories, in itself generously invites us to imagine their potential, plural, diverse and different futures - new entry points and different questions to ask of our present world."

Sumayya Vally, Creative Director of Counterspace, Designer of the Serpentine Pavilion 2020/21

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