PhD by Prior Published Work – A Case for Appropriation

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Abstract. Since the publication of The Unthinkable Doctorate in 2006, there has been considerable progress in the implementation of doctoral activity outside the conventional PhD framework. One such route that merits more attention in the fields of architecture, design and art is the PhD by Prior Published Work - a pathway that recognises a substantial body of research work completed before the PhD enrolment. A coherent subset of the prior output is selected as the basis of the PhD and is presented as a series of cognate published pieces drawn together by a substantial introduction and conclusion. The model is a general one, and the published research is required to meet the norms of the discipline.

This paper will identify a series of different outputs: previously published academic papers; book chapters; exhibitions; and built works, that form the basis of a proposed PhD by Prior Published Work in Architecture at University College Cork (UCC).

In bringing this proposal to CA2RE it is hoped that the process of peer-review will help to improve the quality of the emerging doctorate and to sharpen the focus of the selection of outputs and artefacts.

Keywords. Explicit knowledge; Tacit knowledge; *Cognate pieces.*

PART 1: The question of a doctorate in architecture

In 2005 the School of Architecture Sint-Lucas Brussels and NETHCA (Network for Theory and History of Architecture) hosted a conference titled *The Unthinkable Doctorate* examining the question of the doctorate in architecture, and particularly the more specific question of what might be a doctorate for architects who practice?
The call for contributions stated that – "The question may be formulated in at least two parts:

> Under what conditions might the design work of an architect, formalized and formatted by him- or herself, be recognized as a doctorate?
> How might doctoral work be configured so as to help ground and further the architectural work of the author?" (1)

The responses to this call were multiple and varied. The colloquium proceedings were published in book form in 2006 and many of the papers were subsequently further developed by their authors into other publications (2). In the history of the development of doctoral research in architecture the colloquim and the associated publication were significant landmarks, and the questions raised have been elaborated on in a number of publications since then.

One of the invited keynote papers from the Sint Lucas colloquim was titled *The 'thinkable' and the 'unthinkable' Doctorates - Three perspectives on Doctoral Scholarship in Architecture*, by Halina Dunin-Woyseth, of the Oslo School of Architecture. She established an overview and academic background to the question and opened up issues that are still pertinent today. Looking back, she charted the origins of the doctorate in the University of Bologna in the middle ages, and its development as the standard of research excellence in the University of Berlin in the nineteenth century, and the gradual adoption of this standard across the English speaking world through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She noted that doctorates in Architecture have a considerably shorter history than in other disciplines, beginning in the 1960s in both the USA and the UK with certain differences between the models –"the new generation

of doctoral programmes were called 'History, Theory and Criticism' (which often go under the acronym HTC), thus creating a specific field of architectural reflection" (in Dunin-Woyseth 2006).

She then went on to adumbrate the development of doctoral research in "practical aesthetic fields" in Australia since the late 1980s, notably the contribution of was Malcolm Gillies, a professor of music at The University of Queensland - "Gillies formulated three types of attitudes to the relationship between research and creative practice in practical-aesthetic professions. The **conservative** attitude is expressed by the short sentence "research is research". It is not possible to conduct research in the practical aesthetic fields as research means to objectively investigate 'problems'. This research is critical, analytical and historical in its character. Its results have to be published in a written, well documented form. These demands are most often contrary to the character of the practical-aesthetic fields. The **pragmatic** attitude, Gillies less elegantly termed "that awkward half-way house". Here the definition of research has been extended to include reflection and comments on aesthetic practice, often on the researcher's own production. That practice and its results are here being recognized as part of research process. This type of research needs, nevertheless, a substantial, textual work in a form that is similar to traditional academic research. The **liberal** attitude is based on the stance that creative practice and its products are recognized per se as research and they should be appropriately recognised as such" (in Dunin-Woyseth 2006). The distinction between these three approaches is a useful one to bear in mind in considering current models of doctorates in architecture.

Of the many new doctoral approaches that have emerged since the Sint Lucas colloquium, the recent PhD by practice developed by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) has received much attention especially due to its adoption by a number of European universities under the ADAPT-r programme. The methodology and approach is described in Richard Blythe's and Leon Von Shaik's essay *What if Design Practice Matters*? and elsewhere in a series of books by Von Shaik. The approach is essentially the liberal one outlined by Dunin-Woyseth above, and locates the knowledge in the work itself - Research is conducted through designing and the process of designing as a means of increasing knowledge. Candidates are supported and engaged in communities of practice where learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon; where knowledge is integrated in the life of these communities that share interests, ideas, discourses, ways of doing things and exploring the boundaries of design thinking.

Towards an integrated paradigm

At the heart of the Sint-Lucas conference proceedings was a core question about the practice of Architecture and the discipline of Architecture. The evolution of the field of architecture from a practice to a discipline had been the subject of an earlier conference in the University of Minnesota and the proceedings of this conference were published in book form as *The Discipline of Architecture* edited by Andrzej Piotrowski and Julia Williams Robinson. In an essay titled *Form and Structure of Architectural Knowledge*, Robinson charted a history of architectural training moving from apprenticeship to a master practitioner to formal professional degrees in universities. She noted that architecture is "an emerging discipline that involves professional practice, research, and teaching." She continues, "The character and effects of its products—disciplinary knowledge, the forms of disciplinary practices, architectural artefacts—are the responsibility of those within the field. Academics, researchers, and professional practitioners are thus jointly responsible to society and each other" (Robinson, 2001).
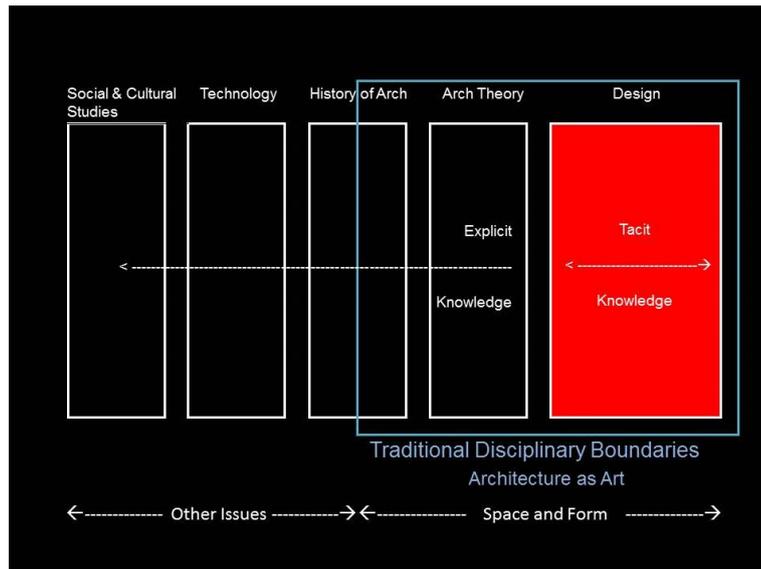
Figure 1
The Traditional boundaries (Robinson, 2001).

Following Perez-Gomez (8), she traced a split in thinking back to the French split between a scientific approach derived from engineering and the traditional approach. (Robinson, 2001). She distinguishes the two types of knowledge as – "..(1) the intellectual or explicit knowledge disseminated primarily in academia, and (2) the knowing embedded in the process of making architecture that is essential to design, what Poliani calls tacit knowledge that is learned by doing and that cannot be critical.. a conception of knowledge as a way of doing something." Teasing out the tensions between these two different conceptions, she went on to posit an *"Integrated Paradigm"* where the two approaches would be synthesised to their mutual benefit.
Robinson went on to argue for an approach that was more grounded in the social and technical realities in which it operates citing the infamous destruction of the Pruitt-Igoe social housing project is St Louis, Missouri in 1972 – "The critical questions that Pruitt-Igoe raised about the discipline of architecture could have served to expand its boundaries to include the social, economic, and political issue of understanding the needs of the poor. Instead, the discipline's boundaries remain the same, with such problems defined as outside its primary domain." (Robinson, 2001).

The integrated paradigm that Robinson proposed is further explored by Murray Fraser in his essay "A two-fold movement: Design research as dialectical critical practice" where he argues "..design research in architecture has to form its operations around a dialectical engagement between ideas and practices…..a very real task for design research is to act as a mechanism for a wider critique of architecture itself."(Fraser, 2013).

PhD by Prior Published Work – the case for Appropriation

The current interest in the RMIT PhD by Practice model demonstrates, despite its critical shortcomings, the need for a doctoral approach that can accommodate tacit knowledge alongside the explicit knowledge that universities traditionally recognise. An opportunity to do this already exists within most university doctoral programmes in the PhD by Prior Published Work. While the rules for this type of doctorate vary between different institutions, the principle remains that universities can recognise contributions to knowledge made through prior publications, where the work has already been completed and published prior to the registration period. It is presented in a format similar to existing publication-based thesis – i.e. a series of cognate published

pieces drawn together by a substantial introduction/conclusion, and the normal criteria still apply:

1: It must meet the normal admissions requirements (higher degree, language etc).
2: It must include a substantial body of published research output (as per disciplinary norms).
3: It must present a coherent sub-set of output that will form the basis of the PhD thesis.

The assumption is usually that the prior publications will be academic papers published in peer-reviewed journals however it is generally acknowledged that these are not the norm in the discipline of architecture, since they remain limited to the History, Theory and Criticism (HTC) sub-disciplines and do not engage with architecture as a whole. There also exist extensive publications of architectural projects in professional journals, books, exhibitions and catalogues and these are the most widespread ways of disseminating and recognising tacit knowledge in architecture, however the rigours of peer review don't always apply. A number of rigorous publications of architectural projects that have won peer-reviewed design awards do exist, and some of these even contain the jury's comments on the value of the work published. It is entirely reasonable to consider these as published research output since that form of review is normal to the discipline of architecture. Johan Verbeke articulated this in an essay titled "This is Research by Design" where he said – "What is common between research by design and scientific research is that their assessment is based on inter-subjective standards which are shared within a specific field; it is precisely this plane of reference that is established through the discourse of peers. And peer review has long since established itself within the field of architecture through the evaluation of design competitions, award juries, etc." (Verbeke, 2013). The unrealised potential of the Prior Published work route is the opportunity that it presents to incorporate designed artefacts and texts as "a dialectical critical practice" and so to construct the "integrated paradigm" identified by Robinson.

PART 2: Cognate Published Works:
Open House - McLaughlin House Glasthule 2006-13

This house was designed as a wooden framework for the life of my family. It was at the time that my children were born and was intended to be an adaptable structure that could change to meet the needs of our family as they grew. I was interested in the domestic architecture of Pierre de Koenig and Richard Neutra. A fundamental technical question was how to deploy the case-study language of architecture into the Irish climate where cold-bridges are punished by condensation. The solution was to use a timber structural frame with timber fenestration and cladding which allowed me to compensate for the heat loss through the windows by super-insulating the opaque panels. A solid stone floor with underfloor heating stabilises the thermal environment so that there is barely any temperature variation through the year. I also sought to give a temporal aspect through the treatment of the materials informed by Moshen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow's essay – *On Weathering*. This was captured in Ros Kavanagh's Photographs of the lived spaces which were commissioned a few years after the house had been occupied.

The design was recognised by an Architectural Association of Ireland Award for design excellence in 2015. The jury for the award was - Critic: Oliver Wainwright, Distinguished Non-architect: Amelia Stein (photographer), Foreign Assessor: Kevin Carmody, Returning Downes Medal Winner & Irish Assessor: Alastair Hall, Irish Assessor: Sarah Cremin.

Figure 2
McLaughlin House, Glasthule, Dublin. Photo by Ros Kavanagh.

The design was recognised by a high commendation in the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI) Awards for the best house in 2014. The jury for the award was: Des McMahon (Chair) Architect; Denis Byrne Architect; Emma Curley Architect; Emma Geoghegan Architect; Máire Henry, Head of Department of Architecture WIT; Stephen Best, Senior Lecturer at DIT.

The project was published in- O'Flaherty, M. (2015). *Belief and Bravery in Glasthule*, in, O'Connell, S. (ed),(2015). *Irish Architecture Volume 5, 2014/15*. Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland. Isbn: 978—0-9567493-4-5, and in -

McLaughlin, J. (2016). *Open House,* in Hayes, M. (ed) (2016): *Irish Architecture 2015*. Dublin. Architectural Association of Ireland. Isbn: 978-0-902345-02-7.

*Seeing Yourself Seeing***: Above Ground Gas Installation 2010 (with Martin Richman)**

I designed this project while I was working as principal architect with Dublin Docklands Development Authority. The development of an area of the docklands required a pressure reducing station for the gas network, to lower the pressure from the 19 bar pressure of the national network to the 4 bar pressure of an area network. The reduction is achieved through a series of valves that are taken above ground to disperse the small amount of gas that leaks out in the process. Since the gas is highly explosive this must take place in a ventilated concrete pillbox whose roof flies off in the event of combustion. The only possible location was in a linear park along the side of the river Liffey where it would be very conspicuous. As a response to this I made a design to dematerialise the pavilion. To do this I wrapped the pillbox with a layer of glass 600mm outside the concrete structure. The glass panels are held off the concrete structure by a

steel frame and a gap at the bottom allows air to pass into the space between the wrapper and the pillbox and to ventilate the pillbox through the slots in the concrete.
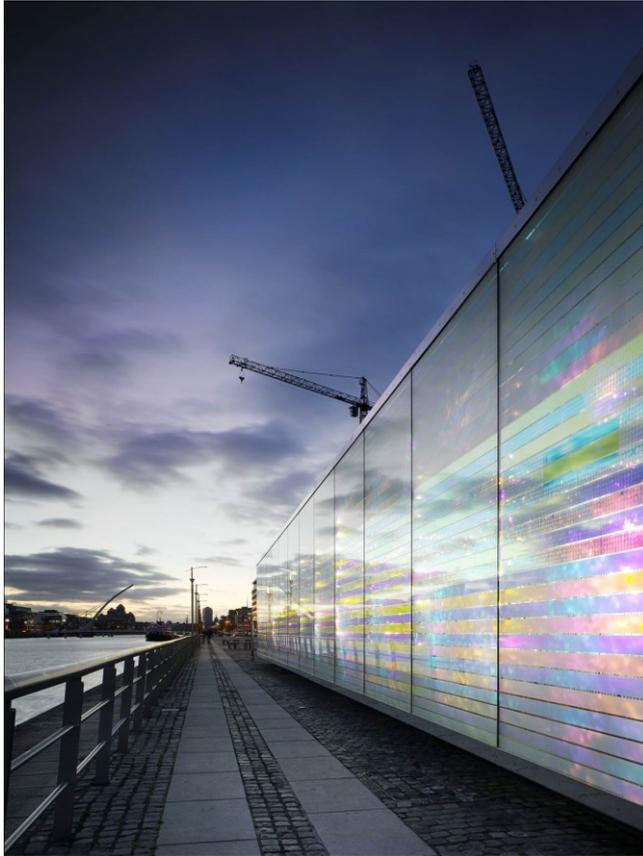

Figure 3
Bord Gais A.G.I. North Wall Quay,Dublin. Photo by Ros Kavanagh.

I invited the artist Martin Richman to collaborate with me on the treatment of the glass. In discussion we discovered a mutual interest in the work of Olafur Eliasson, particularly a piece called "Seeing yourself seeing" (Eliasson, 2002) which consisted of a sheet of glass with alternate strips of mirrored and transparency which created an effect of indeterminacy . Following our discussion, we decided to line the glass with alternating strips of dichroic and opal film and to cover the pillbox with small mirrored sequins that move in the flow of air causing the surface to shift like water. The visual effect is surprising and creates an effect of uncertain depth behind the glass visually dematerialising the pillbox. In this way the viewer is confronted with a situation where they have to heighten their own judgement and become more self-aware.

The design was recognised by an Architectural Association of Ireland Award for design excellence in 2011. The jury for the award was – Prof William JR Curtis, critic; Jo Taillieu, architect, De Vylder Vinck Taillieu Architects; Tony Fretton, architect; Merrit Bucholz, Bucholz McEvoy Architects; Prof of Architecture U.L.; Senator Ivana Bacik, distinguished non-architect.

It was also recognised by a commendation in the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI) Awards in 2010.

The project was published in-
Mc Laughlin J And Richman, M.(2011) *Bord Gais Above Ground Installation,* in
O'Regan, J. (ed) (2011): New Irish Architecture 26 – Kinsale. Gandon Editions,
ISBN: 978-0948037-870.
Wallpaper, (2014): *Wallpaper* City Guide Dublin 2014.* London. Phiadon Press,
ISBN: 978-071486643.

Shifting Ground: Pavilion of Ireland, Venice Architecture Biennale 2012 (with Heneghan Peng)

In 2011 I entered a competition to represent Ireland at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale as curator of the national pavilion. The call for proposals asked that they address three issues:

- A theme that is significant in an international context
- A theme that is both inspiring and analytical in the current culture in Ireland in the context of global circumstances.
- Current architectural thinking and issues relating to the built environment in Ireland.

My proposal was selected from a field of 25. It was originally titled *"Beyond National Architecture"* and addressed the consequences of global digital networks on the specificity of national architectural culture. The pavilion in Venice was titled *Shifting Ground* and embodied the instability of a globalised condition through an interactive installation referencing the work of Kazys Varnelis, Johnathan Hill, and Marc Augé. It also tacitly referenced the work of the Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa at the Palazzo Quirenale Stampalia. I invited Roisin Heneghan and Shih-Fu Peng to collaborate with me on the design of the pavilion and they developed the interlocking multi-pivot see-saw bench that was the centrepiece. Joe Swann, a young graduate developed a triptych of massive wall drawings digitally generated by a script.

Figure 4
Pavilion of Ireland, Venice Architecture Biennale 2012. Photo by Marie-Louise Halpenny.

The pavilion was well received by the architectural press and was singled out by Peter Cook in his review of the Biennale in the *Architectural Review*, amongst others. It was visited by 178,000 people and was published in –

McLaughlin, J. (2012) *Shifting Ground – Beyond National Architecture* in Chipperfield, D. (ed) (2012). *Common Ground, Catalogue of the 14th Venice International Architecture Biennale 2012*. Venice. Fondazione la Biennale di Venezia. Isbn 978-88-317-1366.
And in McLaughlin, J. (ed). (2013): *Shifting Ground* – Catalogue of the Irish Pavilion at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale. Dublin. Ireland at Venice Architecture Biennale. Isbn 978-0-9574843-0-6.

Infra-Eireann: Pavilion of Ireland, Venice Architecture Biennale 2014 (with Gary A. Boyd)

In 2013 I entered a competition to represent Ireland at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale as co-curator of the national pavilion with Dr Gary A. Boyd. The call for proposals asked that we address the theme of "Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014" selected by Rem Koolhaas, the director of the Biennale. Koolhaas went on to say that national cultures had absorbed modernity "as a boxer absorbs a blow" (Koolhaas, 2014) and he asked that national pavilions look at the "flattening of cultures" under modernity. Our proposal challenged this interpretation as being a fundamentally colonial position and proposed that we research the ways that Ireland had used modern infrastructures to remake its national identity after independence. We drew on the social history of Ireland by Terence Browne as well as the sociology of technology posited by Bruno Latour and Paul Edwards. We were selected for the Irish pavilion in 2014.

The development of the project involved extensive archival research and we invited a team of eight academics to join us, each researching a different infrastructure over a period of four months. The material generated was then curated into a matrix of ten times four images corresponding to the ten infrastructures spanning the century. The design of the pavilion was tacitly informed by the architecture represented most particularly by the school at Birr by Peter and Mary Doyle from 1979. On our return from Venice we were asked by the Arts Council of Ireland to develop the exhibition to serve as a part of their celebration of the centenary of the 1916 rising in 2016.

Figure 5
Pavilion of Ireland, Venice Architecture Biennale 2014. Photo by Ros Kavanagh

The project was well received in Venice and by the architectural press. It was singled out by Sarah Williams Goldhagen in her review of the Biennale in the *Architectural Record*, amongst others.
It was published in - Boyd, G.A. and McLaughlin, J. (2014): *Infra-Éireann – Making Ireland Modern*, in Koolhaas, R. (ed) (2014): *Fundamentals, Catalogue of the 14th*

Venice International Architecture Biennale 2014. Venice: Fondazione la Biennale di Venezia. Isbn 978-88-317-1869-1, And-

Boyd, G.A. and McLaughlin, J. (eds.) (2016): *No Fixed Form* – Catalogue of the Irish Pavilion at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale. Dublin. Ireland at Venice Architecture Biennale. Isbn 978-0-9574843-1-3.

Socialising Technology: Infrastructure and the Architectures of Modernity in Ireland 1916-2016 (with Gary A. Boyd) published by Ashgate/Routledge in 2015

In the light of the research undertaken for the Irish Pavilion for Venice in 2014, Gary Boyd and I decided to edit a book of history following the ways that the emerging Irish state had used modern infrastructures as a way to make Ireland modern over the course of a hundred years. We saw this history as an opportunity to recover a lost tradition of modernity in Irish architecture, and to articulate a certain position regarding modernity and technology.

It seemed to us that the architectural discourse in Ireland over the previous decades had been dominated by architectural form and an idealised idea of craft informed by the romanticism of John Ruskin and William Morris (13). We countered this tendency by arguing for the sociological dimensions of modern technology. We drew on the work of Bruno Latour, particularly his essay *Why has Critique Run Out of Steam? – From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern.*

At the formation of the new Republic of Ireland, the construction of new infrastructures was seen as an essential element in the building of the new nation, just as the adoption of international style modernism in architecture was perceived as a way to escape the colonial past. Accordingly, infrastructure became the physical manifestation, the concrete identity of these objectives and architecture formed an integral part of this narrative. Moving between scales and from artefact to context, Infrastructure and the Architectures of Modernity in Ireland 1916-2016 provides critical insights and narratives on what is a complex and hitherto overlooked landscape, one which is often as much international as it is Irish. In doing so, it explores the interaction between the universalising and globalising tendencies of modernisation on one hand and the textures of local architectures on the other.

The book shows how the nature of technology and infrastructure is inherently cosmopolitan. Beginning with the building of the heroic Shannon hydro-electric facility at Ardnacrusha by the German firm of Siemens-Schuckert in the first decade of independence, Ireland became a point of varying types of intersection between imported international expertise and local need. Meanwhile, at the other end of the century, by the year 2000, Ireland had become one of the most globalized countries in the world, site of the European headquarters of multinationals such as Google and Microsoft. Climatically and economically expedient to the storing and harvesting of data, Ireland has subsequently become a repository of digital information farmed in large, single-storey sheds absorbed into anonymous suburbs. In 2013, it became the preferred site for Intel to design and develop its new microprocessor chip: the Galileo.

The story of the decades in between, of shifts made manifest in architecture and infrastructure from the policies of economic protectionism, to the opening up of the country to direct foreign investment and the embracing of the EU, is one of the influx of technologies and cultural references into a small country on the edges of Europe as Ireland became both a launch-pad and testing ground for a series of aspects of designed modernity.

Our book was very favourably reviewed. Adrian Forty wrote: *"This is fresh research, and the book is a valuable new addition to the now growing number of alternative narratives of modernity"* (Forty, 2015).

CONCLUSION: Pavilions and Positions

This paper is an exploration of the question of a doctorate in architecture and the conclusion is to propose that a series of cognate research outputs could form the basis of a PhD by Prior Published Work. The intention is that these publications would include examples of tacit architectural knowledge in the form of buildings, and examples of explicit architectural knowledge in the form of texts, as well as designed pavilions that are a form of articulated critical knowledge where the architectural intentions are explicitly manifested through the pavilion designs. Writing in *The Pavilion and the Expanded Possibilities of Architecture*, Barry Bergdoll notes –"Born of fetes, festivals and balls, the pavilion has always been a space for the imagination: a space for architectural designers, for clients, and for visitors..... Lack of permanence has often been a trampoline for invention. It might thus be possible to trace a history of architecture's leaps into new tasks, new experiences, and new formal, spatial, and structural experiments, by following a meandering path of pavilions, much like the journeys of experience pavilions and follies staged in eighteenth and nineteenth century landscape gardens" (Bergdoll, 2009).

In titling this conclusion *Pavilions and Positions* I mean both words in their wider senses - pavilions as structures in physical landscapes, and as representations of a country in cultural landscapes at biennales and arts festivals. This second sense of the word allows them to function as embodied manifestoes – a designed form of critical practice. Finally, this paper itself is intended as a position in the disciplinary landscape of architectural knowledge. In bringing this proposal to the Conference for Artistic and Architectural (Doctoral) Research (CA2RE) it is hoped that it will benefit from peer review in the manner of a Practice Research Symposium. If this approach is successful, then I would hope to bring the subsequent phases of development to the following CA2RE conferences in Ljubljana and Aarhus.

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