

# BUILDING INTERFACES

within, and on behalf of, the BAS building

Spring 2023

## NOTE:

Predominantly, the intention is to continue the master course within the frame set out in the fall, as it has been thought of and intended as a full year course.

With that said there will be some obvious variations, particularly based on where we will arrive by the end of the fall semester, and the various legacy/inheritance that we will aim to take with us, care for and evolve in the spring.

There may be more building activity than in the fall, and potentially more detail oriented work yet that is only speculation at this point.

Our study trip will focus on Brussels, Ghent and London.

We will also explore landscape ecology/gardening more actively on-site, to coincide with the seasonal affordance.

Lastly we have kept open the possibility that some activities, if relevant, could potentially continue over the summer.



Street elevation of the BAS site and building

The term interface often refers to the means by which interaction or communication is achieved. It can also be understood as a surface forming a common boundary of two entities, be it various bodies, spaces, or phases. An interface thus articulates both particular architectural qualities in the built as well as it speaks of certain kinds of activities. However, interfaces are more than built situations. Similar to building being both a noun and a verb – the act of building, interface also signifies the act of affiliating, associating, and combining spaces, materials, events, and people in order for a meaningful interaction to take place. In an even broader sense, building interfaces can be explored as a metaphor for architectural practice.

This course evolves from such a multisided understanding of building interfaces. The aim is to design and build new interfaces that will provide for new relations between the bodies, spaces, and phases working within, and on behalf of BAS. As an interconnected activity, the course will actively engage as a host within the school, taking on the role of organizing various collective activities that inform the design and build work throughout the school year and support The Big Wonderful Experiment (BWE), hosting-designing-building as cyclical events, which inform each other.

Following the theme of non-extractive architecture and its implication on what it would mean to design without depletion, the course adopts three interrelated but distinct terms to frame our thinking and making: material ecology, social infrastructure, and critical spatial practice. Whereas material ecology speaks of the impact that architecture has on other places beyond its built form, and the distribution of resources, social infrastructure point to the organizational aspects of building interaction and the logistics of responsibility needed in maintaining certain interfaces active and meaningful. Thus, care and the culture of caring are considered equally important parts of architecture, suggesting that architectural practice should be regarded as a critical spatial practice dealing with a complexity that transcends the architectural objects in the center of design. By enhancing the critical aspects of a design-build didactic we wish to sharpen the understanding of the politics enacted by architecture, and through making experience how critical forms of engagement can, as Jane Rendell puts it, "create a place and occasion for new kinds of relationships 'to function' between people" (in *Art and Architecture. A Place Between*, 2006).

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The course will depart from, and explore two distinct interfaces working within, and on behalf of the BAS building: a *café bar* and an *archive gallery*. The two interfaces are not to be considered a program in the conventional sense, they are architectural figures to be investigated through their material ecology and social infrastructure. Rather than to design for the transaction of a hot drink or the storage and exhibition of student work we ask you to explore – through reading, designing, building – their implications and social potentials.

The *café bar* is a micro space dependent on a vast landscape of production, with a political history that writes itself differently depending on geographical localization and whose liberation we are tracing. One can think of the *café bar* as an informal social space, a manifestation of material flows, an unequal distribution of resources, a free-space, or a civic generosity making place and occasion for a new kind of hospitality to occur.

The *archive gallery* has its own history particularly when traced within the biography of BAS. Combining the two indicates a living archive where the past is made visible through the present. The *archive gallery* could be understood as a pedagogical tool, an ecosystem of materials for re-use and student work exhibited and published. It is also an accumulation expressing a collective memory that also shapes a future understanding of what BAS is and could be. Both the *café bar* and *archive gallery* can and should be regarded as catalysts to unlock other potentials at BAS such as informing how we meet each other and our surroundings and presenting artifacts from the BAS archive through processes of reactivation and spatial dialogues.

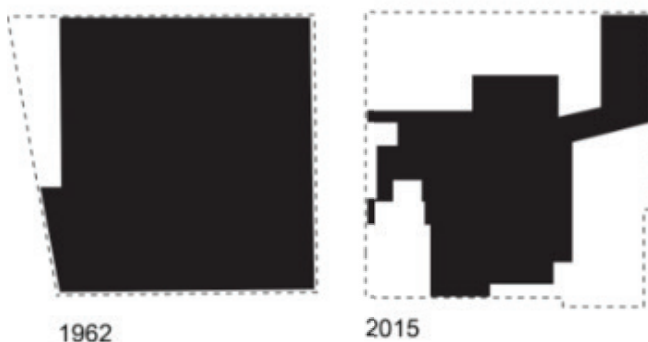
## Design-Build Didactics

A significant part of the course will be dedicated to the physical transformation and the construction of new interfaces within the building as well as between BAS and the surrounding outdoor spaces and extended neighborhood. However, focus will be on engaging through an architectural practice, which is less focused on self-building (there will be instances of self-building where appropriate) and more centered on drawing/writing/ experimenting (or ‘testing’) and its significance in the articulation of a design for construction by professional bodies.

Along the way a series of collaborators/consultants will be engaged to help inform and develop the design. This includes but is not limited to a structural engineer, urban ecologist, various builders, material suppliers, fire and code consultants, as well as several teacher- architects at BAS.

## Studio Practice

Students will work in smaller groups being responsible for various aspects of the design and building process. Groups can overlap and collaborate depending on design objectives and phases. During the course we will actively address this structure and its rhythms as part of learning. How to sit, work, discuss, where to store, hang up, test, who does what and when, all become part of the course activity. Through this



Negative space plan diagram showing the built-up transformation of the BAS hall from its inception to recent times - generated as part of a previous BAS design-build course.

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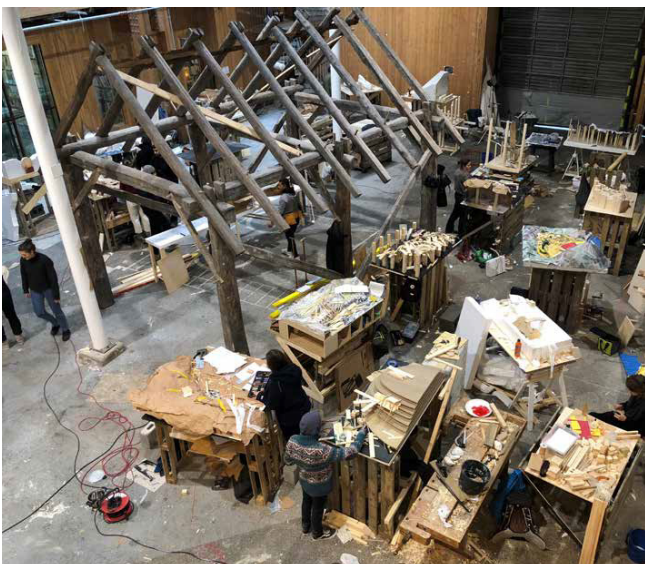
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process, the course studio will embody professional practice and work as a kind of atelier or architecture collective. The idea of building interfaces is thereby made present in the physical arrangement of all learning activities and used as a tool to understand the interaction between different professional 'bodies, spaces and phases'.

## Disciplinary Context and Learning Outcomes

The main objectives of the course and its primary learning outcomes are all strongly connected to design-build didactics and the development of a deeper understanding of design and building processes as part of professional practice. Furthermore, by situating the course within BAS and making it the host of activities related to the Big Wonderful Experiment a significant part of the discussions will be framed by the school's particular ethos, the role the building plays in the pedagogy of BAS, and its engagement with that which is outside of BAS. Readings of the building and the teaching of skills on how to interpret possible potentials will therefore be embedded in the particular setting of BAS as a school of architecture (partly understood in relation to other schools of architecture). More than a question of pedagogy as such, the course will focus on how ideals are manifested through architecture and frame the theoretical input by contextualizing the discussions around:

- BAS / building as non-extractive architecture
- BAS / building as a pedagogical tool
- BAS / building as a laboratory (ILAUD)
- BAS / building as civic generosity (Civilities)
- BAS / building as collective memory
- BAS / building as a witness
- BAS / building as shearing layers (How Buildings Learn)
- BAS / building as generative architecture (Lucien Kroll)
- BAS / building as free-space (Lacaton & Vassal)
- BAS / building as a host
- BAS / building as ....



First year students using the hall as their working studio next to a typical vernacular wood frame construction *grindverk* common along the west coast of Norway.

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## Specific conditions for all master courses at BAS

A master course is considered a formal exam at BAS. The only grading is Pass /Fail.

An external examiner will be present during the final review, and participate on the final grading of the student in collaboration with the teacher(s) in charge on the course.

If a student lacks the minimum level and attendance in order to be evaluated for the exam, the student shall receive written notice of this as soon as possible, and at the latest 2 weeks before the final review. Then this student will have failed the course. As a master course is based on the effort and work during a whole semester, this will be the basis for the approval for the exam.

Written notice/warning can be given throughout the semester if a candidate does not have the required progress or attendance. Then it is the student's responsibility to put in the extra effort and resources.

Even though a student does not receive a warning/notice from the teachers, the final result will be depending on an evaluation also by an external assessor, and the result can therefore not be guaranteed.

If a student has special needs and will need facilitation during the master course, the student must contact BAS before the course starts and inform the school about this. It is required to have documentation of a diagnosis in order to have facilitation. If you have had a process with this earlier in your study, you nevertheless have to contact adm. to inform and agree upon the specific needs for facilitation for the upcoming semester.

The final assessment will be made by the teacher(s) in charge of the course plus an external examiner during the final review, and will be based on:

1. The individual submission for the different stages of the project.
2. The level of participation and contribution to the collective/group work.
3. The assessment of the work/project as presented at the final review.

After the final review one will receive either a pass or fail. If there are minor weaknesses that could improve the project in order to pass, a candidate may be given supplementary work that is to be completed within 2 weeks after the final review. The supplementary work will be evaluated to either a pass or a fail by the teacher(s) in charge. If the weaknesses are not possible to overcome by doing supplementary work, the grade will be fail. This decision of giving supplementary work is solely up to the teacher and the external examiner.

## Specific requirements for design and build courses:

For design and build courses it is very important that the student participates on the collective work, as well reflect on one's own effort and learning outcome.

The final decision as to the performance of each student will be taken by the external examiner (sensor) on the basis of

- a) both group performance,
- b) the report on individual participation done by the teachers,
- c) and a portfolio made by the student showing the extent of individual and collective contributions to the studio.

## Portfolio

A student is expected to make a portfolio of all 3 master courses before diploma. This is to be submitted at the beginning of the diploma semester.

## Health

Maintaining a good, healthy study environment, be it physical, mental or otherwise, is important to us. We encourage an open and active dialogue between students, teachers and administration as a key approach to helping this process along. The class teacher, assistant teacher and administration are all available throughout the entire semester to listen and find the best possible ways to adapt and calibrate the study environment to both group and individual needs.

In individual circumstances where participation in the study is difficult or attendance is not possible due to health or other legitimate conditions, please make sure to communicate with us in a timely manner and we can happily discuss and find ways to accommodate alternatives to ensure a good study progression, digital or otherwise.

Please refer to the study regulations as well as the bas website for further information on study requirements, health and safety and other external resources and facilitations available as a bas student.

## Teaching Team

The teaching team consists of a number of professionals from various relevant backgrounds. We wish to challenge you in an environment of openness and differences to prepare the ground for free explorations in the work, to provide a set of inputs that help shape and give path towards a consequent architectural synthesis, rather than teaching a certain style.

Cristian Stefanescu APP  
Emma Nilson APP  
Vibeke Jensen DAV  
Andrea Spreafico DAV

Throughout the semester we will be joined by, or have inputs from a number of persons from various relevant fields to better inform our work.