

# DS(3)6: Design Studio Profile

Tom Raymont & Harry Paticas

## Introduction

DS(3)6 is run by Tom Raymont and Harry Paticas who are also co-directors of Arboreal Architecture, an East-London based practice specialising in ecologically responsive architecture. We met and trained at the Architectural Association and went on to work for a range of innovative practices in London, New York and Los Angeles.

We founded Arboreal Architecture 5 years ago and have developed a thriving practice whilst teaching previously at Central Saint Martins and Brighton University. Our design work is based on three key aims: to optimise technical performance, enrich spatial experience and re-connect us to the natural world. This is our first year at Westminster and we will be running the studio as equal partners. We can't wait to get started!

## Aims

If the human race is to survive for many more generations to come our material systems - and particularly our building systems - will have to evolve to co-operate with our planet's natural systems. DS(3)6 will investigate, pioneer and test new processes of co-operation.

- **Retrofit.** There is no such thing as "new build", every site has existing structures, systems, ecologies and histories already present. We need to understand them, respond to them and strategically enhance them.
- **Wood.** Building materials that can be grown are the only perpetually sustainable materials. Wood is also the only material that can meet all of architecture's physical needs: structure, insulation and waterproofing. As the engineer J.E. Gordon has said, "Trees have been so enormously successful and wood has become so familiar that we do not often appreciate what a sophisticated and ingenious material timber is."\*
- **Material flows.** The materials of architecture are not static. Every brick started in a seam of clay in the ground, every floorboard was sawn from a forest. And neither of them will remain forever in a building; they will degrade, be repaired, re-used, buried and decomposed. The practice of architecture is the skilful choreography of these material flows. We must understand where things come from so we can better direct where they should go.
- **Habitat.** We share our urban habitat with a vast range of other species that we sometimes conveniently summarise as Nature. As our population booms and our cities expand and densify our relationships with other species must be redefined. Whilst creating our own habitat, architecture also shapes those of other species and defines the boundaries of our interaction. Will we dominate to extinction or form mutually beneficial alliances?
- **Hybrid.** When two or more systems are successfully combined the resulting hybrid can exhibit qualities that are greater than either of its constituent parts. This is known as heterosis, or hybrid vigour. Can nature and architecture form such a powerful combination?



Self-seeded tree, London



Pinus Banksiana drawn by Franz Bauer, 1890



Bayan tree in Puerto de la Cruz adapts its root buttress to changing loads

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## Methods

Design may require imagination but architecture is about the real world and we invite you to get as close as you dare! Stop hiding behind Google and get out into the world to find out what is really going on and what architecture can do about it.

- **First-hand experience.** What you learn from your own experience is invaluable. If you have been there and seen it for yourself you will be able to respond both critically and intuitively. If it's just something you've read it is unlikely that your intuitive response will be relevant.
- **Operative information.** Anyone can gather information but can you make it useful? Can you make it vital to your project? We will teach you to qualify, quantify and visualise data so that your project can engage with it.
- **Tell good stories.** Architects usually rely on design concepts to communicate their ideas but actually nobody, other than other architects, gives a damn. Tell a good story however, and you'll have everyone behind you.
- **Working drawings.** The best drawings don't just represent information they put it to work. They are tools that allow you to investigate and manage information. They are processes whereby you know more at the end than you did when you started.
- **Collaboration.** We will learn more together than we can on our own. You will collaborate with each other, with us and with visiting specialists. We will build a library of knowledge together from which we will all benefit.
- **Fieldwork.** We will get out of the university to visit fabricators and makers, buildings and landscapes. We will expect you to come prepared: with the right questions, the right tools and a plan of attack.

## Sound bite

In DS(3)6 we will be getting our hands dirty\*\* unearthing new relationships between architecture and nature. We will be working with wood in all its forms: seed, tree, branch, log, beam, frame, firewood, rot. And we will be proposing new spaces that are strategically retrofitted into redundant parts of London's fabric.



Ernst Haeckel (left) and von Miklucho gathering specimens, 1866



David Nash and sculpture "Black Butt"

\**The Science of Structures and Materials*, J.E. Gordon, 1988

\*\**Get yourself inducted into the new wood/metal workshop by the end of Week 01*