

The Global Free Unit



Building with students this summer in Nikola Lenivets, Russia

The **Global Free Unit (GFU)** is open to both BA and MArch architecture students. The focus this year is on designing a building for the Kent Refugee Action Network in Folkestone as well as having the opportunity to participate in our live project classrooms globally.

The Global Free Unit (GFU) helps students to generate and realise projects within a structured and supportive environment. Students are able to connect their actions to their own history, experience and ethical position rather than the more codified values of education, practice or a single unit. Many students see their time in the GFU as the first stage of their future practice rather than the last stage of their education and many practices have emerged from it. Self-initiated projects have included projects sited in the country where students originate from, ongoing design research projects or live projects with friends, clients or community groups.

In addition to independent projects over the past three years these principles of freedom have gone global as part of a new international network of academic partners and live project “classrooms”. This Global Free Unit Programme includes academic, NGO and community partners in the UK, South Africa, Sweden, Ireland, Russia and Korea.

In 2018/19, the GFU completed projects in Lesvos, Izmir, Russia, Bosnia, Seoul and in Wetherby young offender's institution in Yorkshire. These live project "classrooms" share a particular emphasis on issues of migration, social justice and cohesion, scarcity and identity, building on recent work within the current refugee crises

This coming year we have a project close to Brighton based in Folkestone where we will be working with the **Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN)** to help them define their needs and to design a new building. This project is within the wider context of an international research project that looks at the way displaced people are welcomed into and supported in urban environments. Over the next three year the building you design will be built.

Students in the free Unit are closely supported with us acting as partners in the project. In addition, Students are invited to identify project friends who support them. The unit has developed structures to support projects these include a contract generated by students describing their aims, a gift project and a series of drawing and making workshops. Being in the Free unit is being part of a community of practice where students share and cooperate as equals. Students will work with staff and students from across the GFU network and have access to a global network of project "friends" drawn from leading academics, engineers, politicians, architects and cultural practitioners

The Global Free Unit is currently exhibiting at the Oslo Architecture Triennial and students joining the GFU will exhibit at the Venice Architecture Biennale in May 2020 where Robert Mull is co-curator of the Korean Pavilion. Students joining the unit will also have the opportunity to attend other Global Free Unit classrooms during the year and during next summer.

Professor Robert Mull and Xenia Adjoubei

Robert Mull was born in Cambridge in 1960. He was educated at the Bartlett and the Architectural Association. An architect, educator, urbanist and activist, Prof Robert Mull was until 2016 Director of Architecture and Dean of the Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design (affectionately dubbed the Aldgate Bauhaus) in London. He has taught widely in the UK and internationally and held visiting professorships in Vienna and Innsbruck. In 2013, he co-founded a new school of architecture in Moscow. He was a founder member of the architecture collective NATO and has worked on urban projects in areas of social deprivation and political change in many contexts including India, China, Cuba, Korea, the US and Russia. Robert is Head of School and Professor of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton, visiting professor at Umeå University and Director of Innovation at the urban design consultancy Publica. Recently Robert was curator of the "Turncoats" series and the "Papers" festival at the Barbican and two shows on the Calais Jungle.

Xenia Adjoubei specialises in design and research in areas of culture, architecture and urbanism. She works between London and Moscow and leads an education and research centre in the largest Art Park in Europe, the Nikola-Lenivets Classroom, which is a centre for research and education on the new rural condition and collective craft practices. Xenia runs the Moscow office of Adjoubei Scott-Whitby Studio, an architecture practice with projects in culture, public realm and education. Her curatorial projects cover topics such as The Virtual Museum, Degrowth: Architecture Povera, The New Rural: designing a contemporary village and Art as Labour: physical labour and craft in a post-work future. Xenia helped found the Moscow School of Architecture, MARCH, where she was lead tutor for five years.

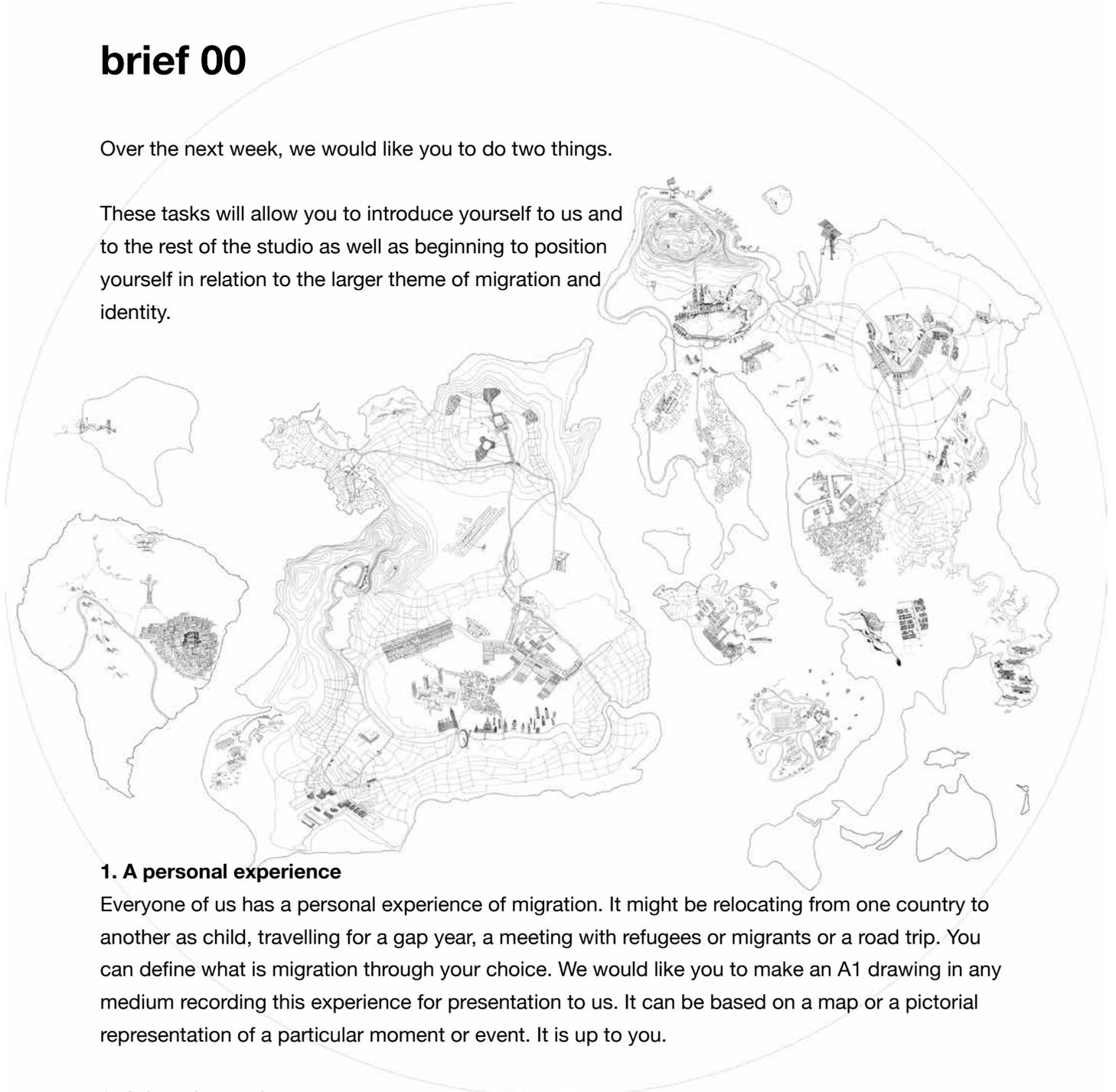
global free unit

03.10.2019

brief 00

Over the next week, we would like you to do two things.

These tasks will allow you to introduce yourself to us and to the rest of the studio as well as beginning to position yourself in relation to the larger theme of migration and identity.



1. A personal experience

Everyone of us has a personal experience of migration. It might be relocating from one country to another as child, travelling for a gap year, a meeting with refugees or migrants or a road trip. You can define what is migration through your choice. We would like you to make an A1 drawing in any medium recording this experience for presentation to us. It can be based on a map or a pictorial representation of a particular moment or event. It is up to you.

2. A found experience

At the same time as doing the drawing you should carry out a piece of research into an existing aspect of migration. It might be a particular migration or refugee route, it could be a disputed policy or a particular place. Again, the choice is yours. Please put together five-minute power point based on what you have found and present it to us.

Both tasks will be presented to us on Thursday 10th from 1.00pm

global free unit

10.10.2019

brief 01

From the 5th November you will be working on the KRAN project. A real site, real clients, cost constraints and of course difficult ethical, moral and communication issues.

The contract is an opportunity for you to explore and define your overall aims and ways of working in a more expansive way before addressing the reality of the KRAN brief.



So the contract has a number of purposes.

1. To explore your ethical, moral, architectural and emotional responses to the themes of migration and identity.
2. To begin to explore material, technical and professional responses to the themes of migration and identity.
3. To explore and explain your preferred methods of research and working.
4. And crucially to define your 10 friends, their roles and how you will use/ manage them.

The challenge is to make a contract that defines your hopes and ambitions without closing them down. The best contracts give structure to dynamic processes involving various protagonists set within clearly defined boundaries and values. Remember this is your final year project with an emphasis put on active research, exploration and ambition within the context of a fully resolved project. Resist the temptation to substitute lists and timelines for content and ambition.

Also think about how the form/format of the contract can reinforce its aims and content. Think how the document will be used and by whom. Is it for you to return to? Is it a briefing document for your friends? Is it something that becomes a part of the place you are working with? And more...?

And finally, please remember to provide 2 copies with spaces for you, us and two witnesses to sign.

To start the conversation about the nature and form of your contract can you bring next Thursday an existing contract by way of a prototype? This need not be related to our project. Think laterally about what constitutes a contract. The contract is a fascinating concept once you engage with it creatively.

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

brief 02

Following our visit to our partner charity, Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN), our potential project site and the locations where they hold events in Folkestone, you will now carry out a set of mapping exercises to analyse the greater geographic, geopolitical and urban context of the project.

Do not forget to think about your contract between yourself and the future project during this phase of analysis.

Arrival Maps

Sets of maps will be produced on the following subjects:

1. Arrival Infrastructure: borderscape
2. Arrival City: urban spaces

When you go to visit your sites, we will ask you to do some fieldwork for **Brief 03**:

Time-lapse photographic study

Time-lapse photographic studies for 3 locations

Recorded conversations

Conversations or interviews with passers by.
2-3 conversations per location.

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

group 01 : arrival infrastructure

1. Arrival Infrastructure: borderscape (3-4 people)

This will be a map of the county of Kent.

It will show the journey of underage refugees, from their point of arrival to the point of distribution in the houses where they stay, dispersed throughout the county.

The Arrival Infrastructure Map shows:

1. where, and perhaps how, refugees arrive; underneath lorries, in boats, how else?

2. where they are noticed and picked up by the police; on beaches at ports, check point etc., depending on each mode of arrival.

Who sees them first? Do they usually welcome being picked up or do they spend time hiding - where? Any other interesting questions and facts which you can uncover about this moment.

3. Dover where all (majority?) are taken to be screened.

What does the screening entail? How large is this facility and what does it look like? How long does the screening process take?

4. Millbank Reception Centre, where children refugees are taken to be registered and where they stay for up to 12 weeks.

Are there any alternative locations if Millbank gets too full? Is this a matter of when, not if?

5. where they live: show a rough representation of the distribution of houses where they live across the county. Where are there clusters / densities? What defines this? Is there a correlation between public spending / economic growth and the number of empty properties given over to refugees?

Note and represent carefully how close or far away they are from town centres.

6. Show Folkestone, as an important location, as that is where child refugees can get the vital support KRAN offers

Also highlight Ashford: with it's large concentration of refugees and KRAN pop-up and Canterbury, where refugees and migrants live, spend their time, and where KRAN's offices are located.

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

group 01 : arrival infrastructure

1. Arrival infrastructure: borderscape (3-4 people)

Investigate if there is a way to combine your arrival infrastructure map with a world map showing where the refugees have come from, which will give a cultural and lived experience layer to the mapping of the locations in Kent.

This is an example of how one might draw spatial instances and link them to a global context. Drawing by Suzanne M. Hall, Julia King and Robin Finlay for their *Envisioning migration: drawing the infrastructure of Stapleton Road, Bristol study*, LSE 2016.

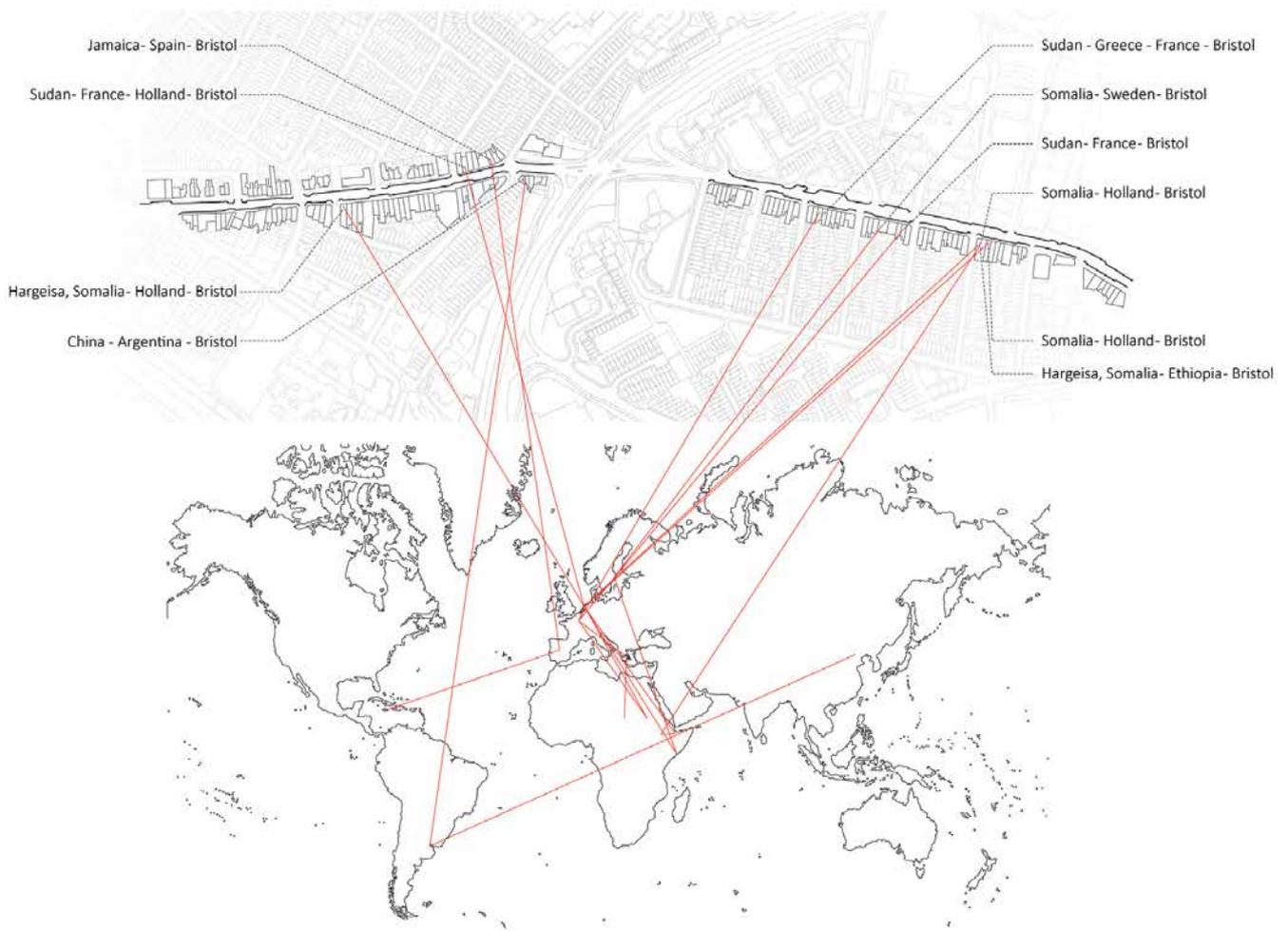


Figure 2: Multiple Journeys: A survey of proprietors on Stapleton Road and their multiple migratory routes (2015).

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

group 02 : arrival city

2. Arrival City: urban spaces (3-4 people)

Arrival City is a term coined by Doug Sanders in his eponymous book. Arrival cities perform vital functions in contexts of rapid change such as migration crises. They are often informal settlements such as shantytowns, favelas, urban villages and offer and enable economic and social mobility for new arrivals.

In our case we will investigate formal urban contexts in Kent, but we will nevertheless look for flexible, informal, makeshift and loose-fit infrastructure and architecture which can offer a foothold to new arrivals or migrants in urban environments.

Create a series of maps of urban environments where child refugees and other migrants spend their time, where they go to school, where they go to language classes, where they sit outside, where they are invited in (Sunflower House, Quarterhouse etc.) and where they are excluded, where they go to socialise or where they find solitude.

1. A series of maps, a minimum compilation would be Folkestone, Ashford, Canterbury.
2. Speak to KRAN to find out where key spaces are located in all three cities, make a list, locate them on a map.
3. Go to visit as many of the cities as possible and try to visit all of the locations mentioned. Record and represent the activities that go on in these locations and how child refugees and migrants are included in these processes (or excluded). Do not forget to include ethnic minority and migrant communities in your analysis, but note where there may be differences with the child refugees in how and where they spend their time.
4. Subvert your gaze and look for alternative urban environments you may not have considered relevant, such as playgrounds, piers, natural environment etc.

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

group 02 : arrival city

2. Arrival City: urban spaces (3-4 people)

5. Map the relationships child refugees and the spaces they occupy have with existing migrant communities, who may be established in these cities. Look at businesses owned by people belonging to ethnic minorities, cafes, shops etc.

How can the child refugees identify or be supported by these places or a particular multicultural feel of a high-street or square?

This is an example of how one might represent data about use of buildings and spaces. Drawing by Suzanne M. Hall, Julia King and Robin Finlay for their *Envisioning migration: drawing the infrastructure of Stapleton Road, Bristol study*, LSE 2016.

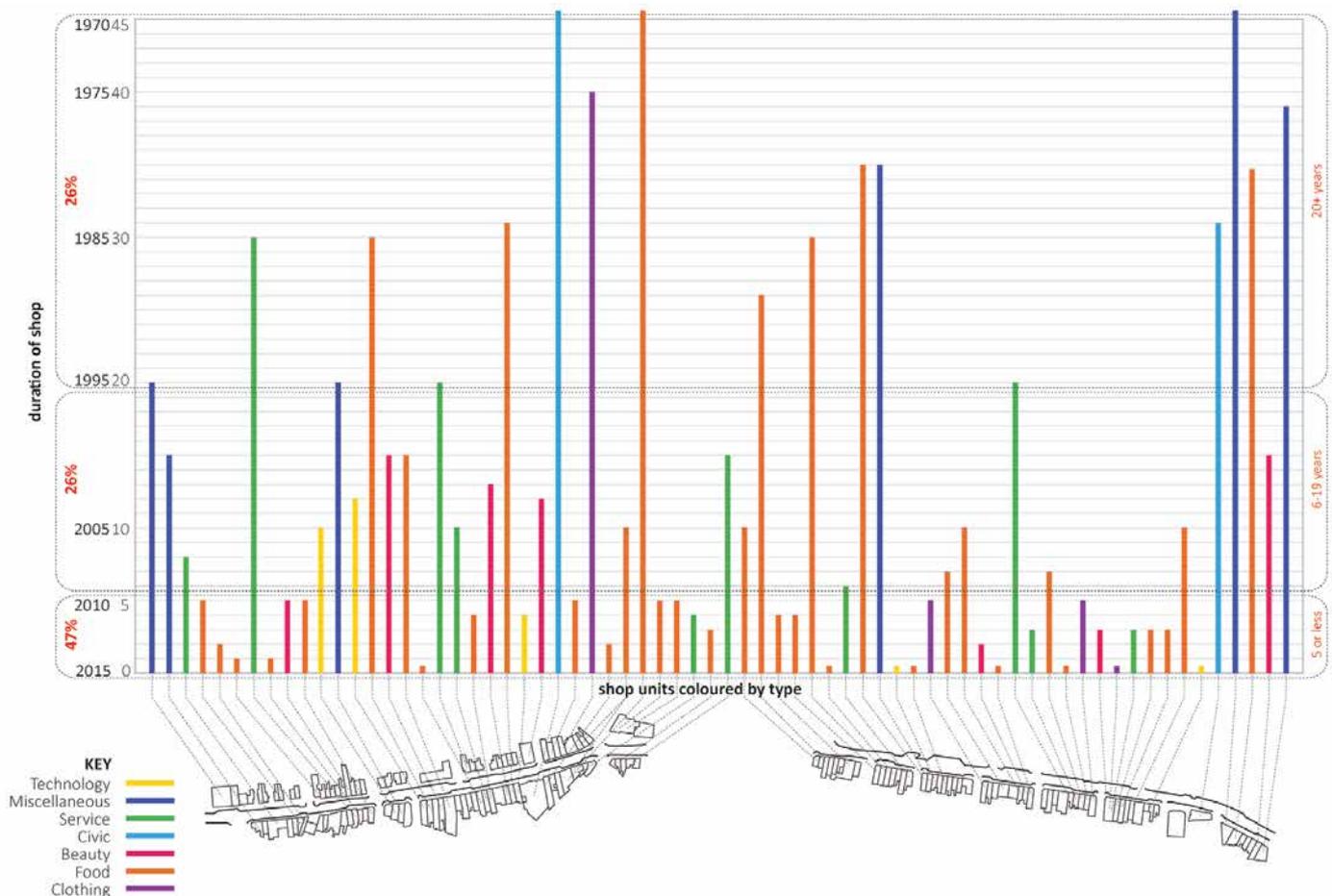


Figure 3: Diverse Uses: Rhythms of activity on Stapleton Road over time (2015).

global free unit : arrival maps

13.11.2019

group 02 : arrival city

2. Arrival City: urban spaces (3-4 people)

Investigate if there is a way to combine your arrival city maps with a mapping of these urban spaces as representations of the world at large. This can be done by showing the characteristics of which cultures are carried by / represented in each of the urban environments used by child refugees and migrant populations.

This is an example of how one might link an urban mapping to a global context. Drawing by Suzanne M. Hall, Julia King and Robin Finlay for their *Envisioning migration: drawing the infrastructure of Stapleton Road, Bristol* study, LSE 2016.



Figure 1: World to Street: A survey of proprietors on Stapleton Road by country of birth (2015).

brief 03: the free gift



Sliced White Pavilion, Nikola-Lenivets Classroom 2017.
Led by Robert Mull, Xenia Adjoubei, Thomas Randall-Page



Lantern and entrance porch, Nikola-Lenivets Classroom 2019. Led by Robert Mull, Xenia Adjoubei, Thomas Randall-Page

We would now like to propose a “gift” for our collaborators and clients, KRAN.

By gift we mean a fully resolved, part, fragment or element of your larger project.

The gift must be autonomous and capable of being understood, appreciated and, if appropriate, used without any additional instructions. The gift must be given to your friends in such a way that you receive feedback, which informs the main project and drives it forward.

01. Please design a physical part of the project which sits within the whole.

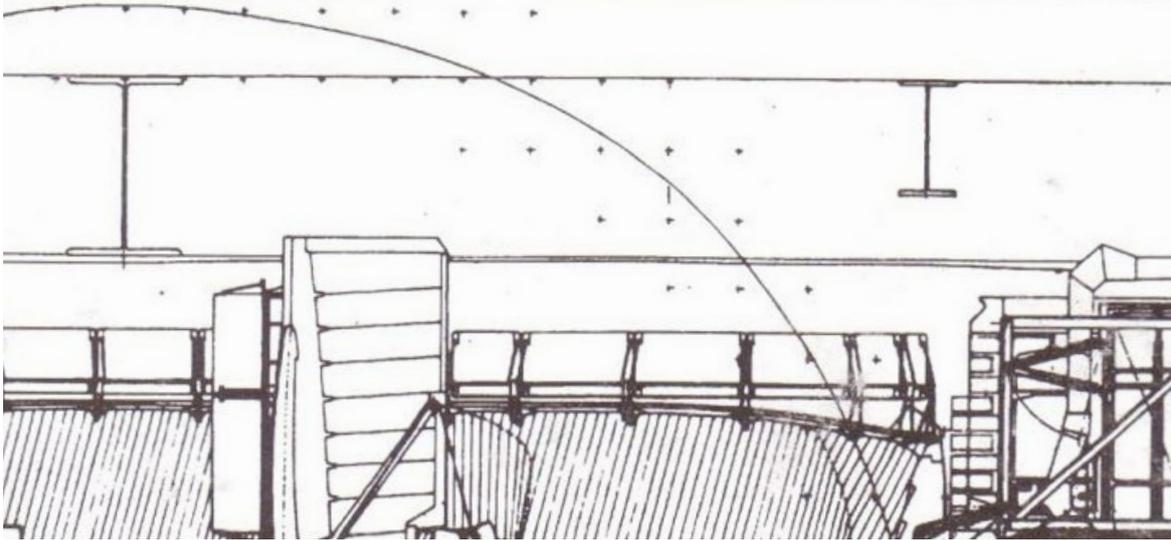
Please ensure that the gift pre-empts and contributes to your technical study.

02. Examples of a gift may include a combination of all of the below:

- A model, object or tool.
- A fully worked proposal for a part of your project, typically one building or one piece of infrastructure within the whole
 - A fully designed, structured and detailed event
 - A fully described material, environmental or structural condition that will be used in the project supported by details and prototypes
 - A resolved legal, social, managerial or financial mechanism that will be used in the project

The gifts should be ready to be given to KRAN during our next trip to Folkestone the second week of January 2020, when you will give the gift to our Friends and receive and record feedback which will define the next design decisions in the project.

brief 04: drawing workshop



Starting from a detail and moving upwards through the scales, you will begin to draw your project. The drawing workshop lasts for two full days and manifests your project through sectional drawings at a variety of scales; from the very detailed to the contextualised. Computers are not allowed. Please take this as a valuable opportunity to decide the majority of the design principals in your project, by following these rules:

01. a series of scales

you will draw at a carefully considered series of specific scales: 1:5, 1:20, 1:100, 1:500, 1:5000
There is a maximum of one hour per drawing. All scales must be drawn in the first day.

02. draw sections

you will draw only in section, starting with the 1:5 scale detail of your proposal and then 'zoom out' keeping that same element in the 'frame' and moving to the next scale 1:20. The initial element should always stay in the frame of every drawing as a reference point, throughout all scales.

03. hand drawing

you are to draw by hand, to scale, without using a ruler for straight edges, please draw using pencil and similar media (charcoal, for example). You should use a scale rule to measure but not to draw.

04. considered media pallet

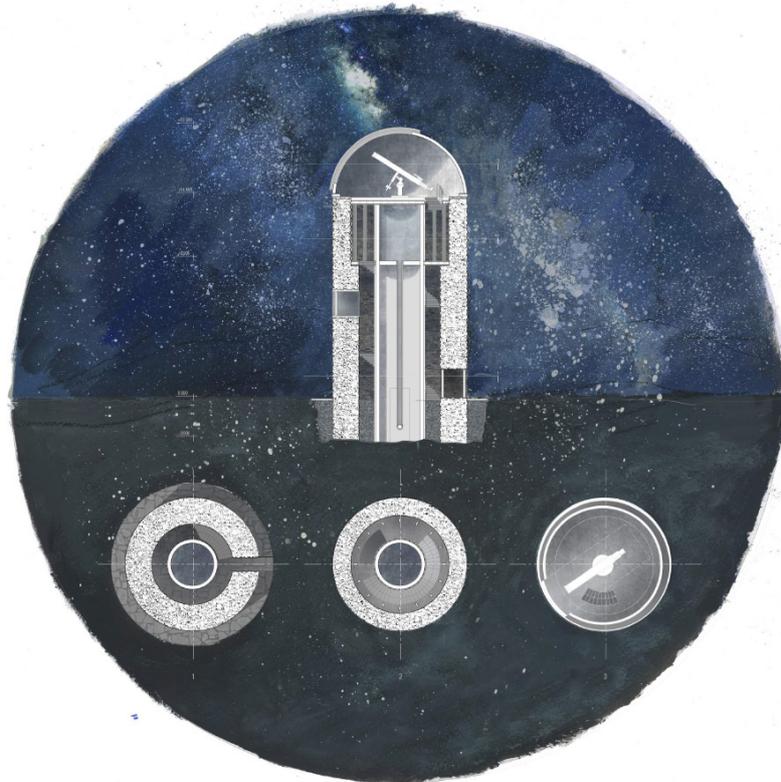
always consider the media (paper, pencil / charcoal, hand collage etc.) and the thickness of the line you are creating. Use your hand drawing as a language and consider how the thickness and character of each line will be read at each scale.

05. enjoy it!

this should be a beautiful, contemplative experience which crystallises the key principals of your project in your mind, enjoy this opportunity to draw without distraction!

If you follow these simple rules, by the end of the drawing workshop you will have drawn your project and the rest should be easy.

brief 05: designing KRAN



The drawing workshop allowed you to gain an understanding of the physics and metaphysics of your projects.

You drew the relationships between the proposal's inhabitants and the interior, the relationship between your interventions and the exterior environment, the relationship of the project to the site and to the '1:50mile' context: the sea, the UK borders, the world.

We will now build on this to draw these relationships more precisely in plan. To crystallise your projects by the Formative Portfolio hand-in on the 25th March, in 10 days time!

01. series of 5 sketch plans

you will draw sketch plans of the proposal you drew last week, at scales of: 1:20, 1:100, 1:500

Take one hour per drawing. Use pencil, do not use a ruler, consider your media pallet (see drawing workshop brief to refresh you memory on technique).

Go through the scale series in order, draw each one of the scales, then go back and do two drawings to a scale of your choice, which can include 1:5 or 1:5000.

You should produce 5 plans by Thursday, at the least.

02. keep drawing sections

You will need to sketch more sections, as you produce your plans. Please do so. They can be separate drawings or small sections in the corners of your plans. You can also choose to draw two sections instead of the extra 2 plans, if you feel something is left unsaid in plan. If so, they should be on A1, to scale, as per the instructions of the drawing workshop.

This work is submitted on Thursday 19th March before tutorials at 10am.

Please work in a quiet environment without distraction. Draw on an A1 sheet paper or trace.