

Studio 02: Coast/ settlement

Alex Arestis and Freddie Phillipson
with Ian Bailey

Studio introduction
University of Brighton 20/21





Overview

Studio 02 is a new undergraduate group co-taught by Alex Arestis and Freddie Phillipson.

We are interested in understanding place and making building proposals that relate to a specific landscape. We are intrigued by the architect's relationship to time - through design, the effort and duration of construction, the life of a building, and its position in the environment.

Studio 02 will be looking at architectural beginnings and strategies as well as buildings. How might you start inhabiting a site? How might we think about longer term proposals, states of incompleteness and fragments of imagined utopias, the tensions between initial acts of settling, the making of new enclosures and the potential maturity of a settlement?

We encourage students to look intensively at a site and its setting, studying and drawing what is there - structures, human and other life, orientation, history, materials, meaning and atmosphere. We will be asking you to explore how you, as a designer, can accommodate collective life, while thinking about the continuous changes and adaptations that have gone before us, and those that will come after. We want you to make informed decisions for change - understanding but not necessarily being overly reverential. By approaching your site in a considered way, we will see how placing something new or even alien can provide a catalyst for ongoing evolution.

Approach

This year we will imagine new futures in territories on the south coast of England. We will be based on sites that have a history of inhabitation over thousands of years, places with an enduring relationship to the tides, trade, history, borders, travel and weather.

Our design work will focus on the idea of settlement. We will learn from past the constructions and ordering of these places, the long surviving buildings, current conditions and patterns of use - in order to make proposals across the territories. We do not necessarily imagine your projects this year need to end with large numbers of buildings or densely inhabited places. Instead, we will be thinking about the act of settling a site: the many ways people might occupy a landscape, what building work we might propose first, how we can define territories within it, how to consider futures that may not be entirely in the architect's control. We imagine buildings shaped by an economy of means, which might tread 'lightly' on the site and ultimately could be absorbed into the landscape, or even the sea.

We will work with the technical tutors to investigate more 'benign' materials and environmental approaches for your designs, learning from the past to address some of the global issues we are facing today - climate change, the relationship of architecture to power and control, cultural identity in building, and the use of our increasingly scarce resources.





The year

We will begin by looking at Portchester. It is a site with multiple layers of settlement, transplanted cultures, building typologies, maritime, military and colonial history. Less than 90 minutes from Brighton, the best preserved Roman fort north of the Alps sits on the water's edge at the north end of Portsmouth Harbour.

We plan to visit Portchester as a group by train on October the 14th. We will start by analysing the buildings, spaces, materials and public uses within and around the fort, the peninsula and shoreline. In term one, each student will produce analytical work and then propose an architectural intervention that modifies the historic site to allow for new inhabitation.

In terms two and three, we will ask you to propose a new use, landscape and settlement strategy for an open coastal site, within reach of Brighton by public transport. Both 2nd and 3rd years will work on carefully locating and designing a building within your strategy.

2nd years will focus on a medium sized structure and more enclosed spaces for their main projects.

3rd years will investigate a larger building brief as well as a public space within their strategy and a connection out to the wider landscape for their final projects.

Weekly rhythm

In studio 02 we plan to teach through a mix of face to face tutorials and online in Teams. We will also visit sites as a group a few times in the year and expect you to go back to site independently. All this is subject to any changes in university guidelines for Covid-19.

In order to allow social distancing and give everyone fair use of the university facilities, each group of students has been given access to the studios for two days a week.

Studio 02 students will have access to the school building on Wednesdays and Fridays. Our week will follow this pattern:

Friday

- tutorial day
- in person contact with tutor most weeks/ some online
- students get to work in studio spaces
- students get to use the workshop in terms two and three

Wednesday

- students get to work in studio spaces
- online group meetings/ tutor check-in some weeks
- students get to use the workshop in terms two and three







Tutors

Studio 02 is co-taught by Freddie Phillipson and Alex Arestis

Alex has taught for several years on the architecture programme at Brighton. In previous years, Alex set up and co-ran Studio 01 with Dr Ben Sweeting, investigating context-led approaches to radical change and designs for new buildings in Rye, Alfriston, Winchelsea and Regent's Park. For the last term of 19/20 Alex was a design tutor in Studio 66. Alex was Urban Design Director at Publica until early 2020. He is now concentrating on his own practice after ten years working on urban research projects, mapping the city, working with architects to shape new developments and re-designing major public spaces.

Freddie is an experienced educator and architect practitioner. Freddie taught undergraduate design at Cambridge University for five years, and subsequently ran a second and third year architecture degree studio at London Met for four years until 2015. During that time he was Associate Director of Witherford Watson Mann Architects in London, where he was project architect on the Astley Castle project, which won the Stirling Prize. Freddie set up his own practice in 2018.

Technical studies in Studio 02 will be tutored by Ian Bailey in terms two and three. Ian has taught for several years at Brighton, including in studio 66 last year.



What inspires us

We want you to bring your creativity, passions and eye to your studio work. We are excited to work with students by sharing our views on places, building precedents, drawings and models together.

On the following pages we've laid out some images that catch our eye and precedents we love and refer to, along with a few examples of work by students in the undergraduate studios that we have taught previously.



Sir Thomas More: frontispiece from *Utopia*, 1516

































