

EDUCATION FOR ARCHITECTURE'S NEXT ECONOMY

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Education: A Charter for Change
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THE ARCHITECTURE SCHOOLS OF THE 21ST CENTURY MUST...

... abandon mono-vocationalism

After the collapse of the construction bubble, architecture schools must prepare their graduates to apply design thinking and architectural intelligence in sectors beyond just the property / construction sector.

... promote informed generalism

Invite as much knowledge as possible from other disciplines, such as economics, engineering, agriculture, politics, activism, geography, psychology, sociology, computing... Architecture is an amalgam of all these things.

... encourage students who want to openly debate what is happening.

Escapism is amoral at best, immoral at worst..

... realise that the game has changed.

Graduates must now leave with more than just a portfolio of beautifully drawn imaginary buildings, designed to take to interviews at Architecture firms.

... change the measures of success.

No more prizes for drawing trout farms on mars. There is more than one way to measure success.

... take responsibility.

Architecture is not art. Art is art. Design affects more than cultural discourse, and is more than social 'engagement'. Architecture is inextricably connected to social justice.

... teach an expanded view of architecture and design.

"No longer associated only with objects and appearances, design is increasingly understood as the human ability to plan and produce desired outcomes." – Bruce Mau

... let each student shape their own education.

The purpose of education is to find the work that fascinates and fulfils you, and help you turn it into your life's work, even if a job description doesn't exist for it yet. Schools ought to enable, respond and even structure their curricula around student initiatives, and provide on-request tutorials on learning skills such as coding or business planning.

... no longer assume their graduates will be employees.

From now on, the successful schools will be those whose graduates are just as likely to use their thesis projects to start an enterprise / initiative as they are to use it to seek employment from an existing company. Schools must help them prepare for this.

... act as incubators for designers, architects and ideas they produce.

Supporting people and projects after they have graduated.

... become fablabs and drop-in institutions.

Provide intellectual forums and workshop facilities for would-be designers, inventors and activists who wish to attend the school for 7 minutes, 7 hours, 7 weeks or 7 months – not just those who wish to attend for 7 years.

... open their students and the public to an understanding of architecture's economics and politics.

Not just its past and present practice.

... act as agents for positive change in their host cities.

Why do those who live next door to architecture schools never set foot inside them?

... see their role as producing not just each new generation of graduates

but also each new generation of ideas.

... become open clubs (peer to peer social networks) for their students and alumni.

A school is not really a building; it is a network of people. It should open doors for you and your ideas.

... seek to provide access to role models of all genders, races and backgrounds.

Architecture is still very male, white and middle-class, both in education and in practice. It's not your fault if you are one (or all) of those things, but imagine all the great designers you're not meeting and working with because of it. Imagine how much emptier design discourse is because they're not here. It shouldn't be like that, and it doesn't need to be.

... champion drop outs.

... actively encourage and promote those students with the bravery to change their mind. A good architecture school should help students do this, even if it's bad for the bottom-line. Isn't that the ultimate purpose of education?

... nurture an open sense of design's purpose in society and economy.

"Architecture is peripheral to the most important social aims. I wish it was less peripheral. That's why I'm an architect." – Cedric Price

... no longer see themselves as schools of architecture,

but as _____ ?

...
