Architecture without prelates, magistrates, and admirals; the R3build Pavilion (on the campus of the University of the West of England, Bristol)

Architects, much like diagnosticians of a body suffering from a malady are investigators of the state society is in. They examine the condition of culture to propose an adequate spatial response that does not only provides a solution to a problem (often lack of efficiently organized space) but offers delight of inhabitation as set out in their mind's eye. Following from this and similarly to a diagnosis of a body in distress the architecture for a society in unrest demands a consolidated yet soft definition of the ailment and baseline condition of the patient; a state that the architect can recognize. In a certain sense, the process of consolidating this diagnosis illuminates the bare structures with which we prop up the designer's confidence so they can cut into and rearrange the fleshy inter-connectivity of the flows that invigorate our society.

The analysis here focuses on a situation where three architects: Aine Moriarty, Andrew Bourne, and James Burch, worked to propose a design for a society in distress under the 2020 outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. The design in question here is the R3build pavilion that came as an initiative raised by the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment of The University of the West of England (UWE). The pavilion is an outside sheltered space that offers an opportunity to facilitate architectural education; the key in understanding the paradigm of its designers was the assumption that a safe space for the COVID-19 pandemic should remain permeable to incidental flows that allowed ventilation and rainwater runoff that could potentially dispense the particles within the structure back into nature where malignant microbes would be effectively made harmless to people. In allowing the design to be passive in this way the design rejected the commonly assumed notions of what an edifice for educating architects should be and assumed a different form, one that is less defensive against uncoordinated flows. In doing so and taking an opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic the project offered a chance to reflect upon the pre-conceptions relating to the role of organizing space in the act of coordinating flows of knowledge and social capital in an educational setting. In this way, the design of the pavilion deconstructed the setup of our Western cultural systems and architecture that follows. The

resulting deconstruction relates to the way we consider the role of the individual in society (as one which carries responsibility and depends on the wellbeing of the other) and their idiosyncratic and at times disorganised or unwitting part in sharing and propagating knowledge.

This paper analyses the R3Build using theories (describing flows of commodities and energies) developed by Georges Bataille - a man whose scholarly interests lead him to the study of the surplus of energy in situations where there is a defined system of exchange; these theories are described in detail in his publication *The Accursed Share* (first released in French under the title of *La Part Maudite* in 1967). The reason for using these theories is to allow us to examine the process of design, reflect on the old and defined typologies of architecture and reassess them under a different (non-anthropocentric) light.

The chapter is divided into four sections; the first outlines the theories and assumptions that the research for this chapter was set out with; the second describes the historical context of the pandemic and its spatial implications which the building responds to; the third presents the architecture and the design decisions which were made to facilitate the issues at hand; and the fourth, concluding remarks which summarises the chapter.

At the moment of writing this chapter, the global number of people infected with COVID-19 reached over 100 million people worldwide (and rising) while the cumulative and reported death toll (today) on 14th February 2021 reached over 2411865 people (IHME 2021).

The prelates, magistrates, and admirals

Much like a body that's blood and mucous need membranes to reach its farthest fragments in an orderly and efficient way architecture sets out similar strategies which allow opportunities for the cultural wealth of commodities and energy in society to be generously distributed and utilized to propagate civility as we understand it. Bataille published a short article entitled 'Architecture' in *Document no 2* in May 1929 (OC, 1:171) in which he describes what is the source of definition for these flows:

> Architecture is the expression of the very soul of societies, just as human physiognomy is the expression of the individuals' souls. It is, however, particularly to the physiognomies of official personages (prelate, magistrates, admirals) that this comparison pertains. In fact, it is

> only the ideal soul of society, that which has the authority to command and prohibit, that is expressed in architectural compositions properly speaking. Thus great monuments are erected like dikes, opposing the logic of the majesty of authority against all disturbing elements: it is in the form of cathedral or palace that Church or State speaks to the multitudes and imposes silence upon them.
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> (quoted in Hollier 1992: 46-47)

Following from his arguments and in line with this reasoning, it might be said that in the process of design the architect is drawing from the officiates of culture and it is through their analysis that any building can facilitate the hierarchies and organizations that the commissioners of the building (the officiates) condone. It might seem that the developments in the architectural scene of the early 2000s dissent from this top-down approach with new offices, individuals, and initiatives invigorating communities to come together and make a change. Examples of such include Alejandro Aravena's half house for low-income families; or CA.UK.IN., an architectural initiative that engages with community members during the development of architectural projects such as their Naidi Community Hall. Both allow us to see architecture from the perspective of the growing and idiosyncratic communities but if we look closely at the architectural outputs of such initiatives, we may often find that the organization of space and spatial definition which they propose is composed in line with old archetypes of inhabitation or action, repeating tested and proven typologies or strategies of organisation.

If then, architecture is the embodiment of this state of the 'ideal', the philosophical representation of what is developed through iteration and repetition acclaimed as right even if the officiates are not included in determining the form of the building, then architects should respond to specific criteria that are determined by the principles we define as common-sensical. The criteria should function as a basic and non-conceptual but intuitive understanding of the 'ideal' way of functioning in a society that is the result of and an initiator of the movement of goods and circulations of energy that we know and are used to. From the point of view of the architect and in the way that architecture is seen in the Western world (as the result of a Platonic a-priori – generated by an idea in the architect's imagination that is waiting to be actualized in reality), it might be the case; but these pre-philosophical ideas seem at times as inflexible when thinking of the different contexts in which they are deployed and different socio-cultural circumstances which arise. This does not

mean that all concepts envisioned by architects are the same – on the contrary, all designers will create their own - in line with the circumstances of their capacities, experience and education. Saying this, with repetition and time constraints on the design process of certain typologies architects are at the risk of developing certain habits that may constrict creative impulses that are bespoke to socio-political events they are to shelter. Bataille notices this relation between the ideal way of conducting the roles of officiates of culture (or a conceptual form) and architecture and proposes that it holds the risk of taking an abrasive and too restrictive tone. Bataille writes:

> A movement is produced on the surface of the globe that results from the circulation of energy at this point in the universe. The economic activity of men appropriates this movement, making use of the resulting possibilities for certain ends. But this movement has a pattern and laws with which, as a rule, those who use them and depend on them are unacquainted. Thus the question arises: Is the general determination of energy circulating in the biosphere altered by man's activity? (…) Humanity exploits given material resources, but by restricting them as it does to a resolution of the immediate difficulties it encounters (a resolution which it has hastily had to define as an ideal), it assigns to the forces it employs an end which they cannot have.
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> (Bataille 2019: 20-21)

In pointing to the haste of the definition of the 'ideal' Bataille questions the role of the 'unacquainted' man in the circulation of energies that humanity learned to depend on for survival (which includes production of ideas that fuel architecture). Bataille's understanding of this energy can be seen as stemming from the literal understanding of an ever-changing force that operates on a subatomic level; one that warms molecules, binds chemicals, and incites vibrations that later become vectors of movement. This energy eventually transpires in scale to dissipate; when (for a brief moment in time and when) we can witness and be part of its fluctuations; and when it can be made sense of as socio-political displacements or commodified transactions. This way of understanding Bataille's writing can be complemented by Jeremy England who, in his paper entitled *Statistical physics of self-replication* (on the conservation of the second law of thermodynamics which demands that entropy of energy always increases in an enclosed system), suggests that living systems (as temporary structures that arise as a result of the increase of entropy) thrive on and increase the dissipation of energy (2013). This rationalization of Bataille's take allows us to push his agenda in separating flows of energy and displacements from an anthropocentric understanding of the world and one which, in this case, does not need 'prelates',

‘magistrates’ or ‘admirals’. In doing this we can approach architecture without referring to old conceptualizations. This take also allows us to reconcile Bataille with the late-twentieth-century relational ontology where even the notion of relationality, spatial organisation, a stable identity or a human body was merely a composite of functioning parts (Deleuze and Guattari 1994); parts which are knowing and unwitting participants in the uncoordinated and escalating dispersion of energy. In this way, the energy to illuminate a lightbulb or act out socio-political events is the same as one that operates on a microbial level invigorating the evolution of viruses or bacteria. Bataille follows to reflect on the natural state of these energies at hand and warns:

> The living organism, in a situation determined by the play of energy on the surface of the globe, ordinarily receives more energy that is necessary for maintaining life; the excess energy (wealth) can be used for the growth of a system (e.g., an organism); if the system can no longer grow, or if the excess cannot be completely absorbed in its growth, it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically.
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> (2019: 21)

The growth, vibrations, and movements that result from the organic nature of this circulation of energy are not aimed at supporting life and not the illusionary nature of the structures that we called 'ideal'. What is more, since our officiates are not privileged by the circulation of this energy any system that may grow or benefit from this excess does not need to respect our ‘hasty ideal’. As such, the ‘glory’ of the system can allow for the energy to result in what we may define as a ‘catastrophic’ dissipation. In this situation, the excess will demand that we adjust our way of thinking about energy we invest in a social way and re-evaluate our approach to culture and architecture. With a simple change to accommodate for this ‘catastrophic’ excess of energy-flows, there will ultimately follow a whole set of interconnected spatial relations that were based on previous assumptions and which also need to be rearticulated. In this un-self-assured process of reconfiguration, we have an opportunity to explore different ways of evaluating relations that we linked with the definition of a ‘hasty ideal’.

In this way, all assemblages of the context, objects, and things including those that come to compose the cells, tissues, organs, citizens, communities, and countries should be considered as immanent and not pre-supposed by a stable organizational strategy or a permanent condition.

Conscious investments of given energies, bodies, or thought will in this way be bound by the abundances of energies in the imminent context requiring constant reconsideration and not the 'ideal' order of 'prelates', 'magistrates' and 'admirals'.

Catastrophic excess

The pace of change in the utilization of energy on the face of our planet is increasing, not least on an environmental level (by reducing the rate at which Earth loses heat which causes our global climates to warm) but also in a socio-political capacity. As such the solutions proposed by architects to represent today's officiates may not be enough for the challenges the world will face tomorrow. Worryingly, the proliferation of life in the excesses of energies at a time of rapid, global growth of populations and technological advancements resulted in the opportunities for economic markets to share ideas, goods, and resources that carried agents which corrupted the regulations of life that our culture was built on. In the final weeks of 2019, this took an unexpected turn that alarmed the epidemiologists around the world with a new virus that's characteristics allowed it to spread all too rapidly. The implications of this shock followed with a spatial consideration of how people should conduct themselves to slow down the spread of the disease. Following from there and at the beginning of 2020, the debate on this challenge (that's severity has not been seen for over a century) came to dominate the public-health discourse in the United Kingdom.

In the past, the history of epidemiology was tightly intertwined with spatial design and explicitly touched on urban planning. The interest in the built environment and its relation to the spread of disease referring to sanitation emerged as a suggestion for non-pharmacological interventions as a mitigation strategy. These came in the European context as a result of the 18th century bubonic plague, the cholera outbreaks in the 19th century, or the 20th century Spanish flu pandemic (Yan Lai et al 2020). One would have thought that with modern-day advancements in sanitation such microbial problems would not be an issue however the 21st century was confronted by the Ebola and SARS outbreaks proving otherwise (Salama 2020).

On 20th January, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention published an article in which they described a group of patients from Wuhan with pneumonia-like symptoms of unknown

origin (quoted in Salama 2020). Ten days later the World Health Organisation (WHO) has called for a public health emergency of great concern as more and more cases of similar nature were being recorded around the world. The disease was caused by a new type of Coronavirus and as such was identified by the fact that its outer layer was covered with glycogen spikes towering above the protein membrane like a crown (corona). The convention in naming was to also indicate the year in which the microbe was discovered and hence in the public eye the virus that caused the malady was called COVID-19.

The threat of the virus, as observed initially was in the way in which the expression of its symptoms was delayed and not explicit for the first few days (Rothe et al 2020 and Yaqian 2020). This meant that it could remain latent for up to a week or, in some cases run its course asymptomatically. This meant that people who might have thought they are uninfected and interacted with others on that basis might have been a vector for the virus spreading the illness to others. The seriousness of the illness came as a medical concern for mostly the elderly or those with pre-existing conditions including infringed respiratory systems. The virus also proved to affect the functioning of other internal organs on a cardio-vascular level (Hendren et al. 2020). As such any contact with other people in public might have potentially risked lives or enabled more opportunities for the virus to mutate into a more deadly strain.

Facing the little knowledge of the virus the key intent in the WHO's initial announcement was to slow the contagion of the disease to protect the health services around the world which would not be able to deal with a rapid spread of the virus with little prior preparation. By March the governance of the UK has put in place measures for a national 'lockdown' that would ensure social distancing (Beadsworth 2020). The key elements in this approach were of institutional and private nature where the buildings for public gatherings or meetings (such as schools, small businesses, or restaurants) were to remain closed. On an urban scale, the public was advised to minimize interaction between people; social gatherings of any kind were discouraged, and in many cases made illegal. The proximity between two people in public was incentivized to not fall short of 2m, masks were recommended to be worn in public, and any contact with a person exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms was strongly discouraged. The spread of the disease was hailed as being transmitted

most successfully via bodily liquids such as saliva, remnants of which could be found in aerosol in the breathed air, coughs, sneezes, and on unsensitised hands (Dietz et al 2020). Individuals were asked to take greater steps to ensure a hygienic lifestyle; this meant not touching one's face, washing hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, and using an alcohol-based sanitizer (Diets et al 2020).

In order to keep a semblance of the economy running the public was advised to work from home where possible. This strategy also incentivized connectivity via social media where people working from home would share their domestic spaces in a professional context. While uncomfortable and reportedly taxing on the mental wellbeing the changes in lifestyle suggested by the government seemed to have slowed the spread of the virus. The statistics of the National Health Service in the UK state that there was a gradual decrease in the numbers of diagnosed and reported infections per day between late April and early May where the numbers were at their highest (and the number of infections reached 6201 on 1st May) and July when the case numbers dropped dramatically (to 343 on 6th July) (2021). At the same time, the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation published a graph of the numbers of cases against time which (at its worst) estimated that the number of actual cases during what they identified as the first spike on the graph, on 30th March was just over 82 000 in the UK with an uncertainty between just over 44 300 and 134 000 infected people per day (2021). The more somber side of these statistics showed that during the first spike of the virus just over 1300 people died of COVID-19 on April 16th alone.

As such, in July, after the numbers of reported infections came down to what seemed to be a safe level and the UK started to ease the lockdown. In order to contain what looked like the last remains of undesirable pathogens the building managers of public institutions that were opened were advised to install hand sanitizers, introduce signs directing people's pathways (to avoid unwanted proximity between people), and open windows (Dietz et al 2020). Strict protocols were to be introduced to sanitise surfaces that were likely to be touched.

A key strategy to reduce the risk was appropriate ventilation; at the same time, it was reported that not all ventilation systems could manage an effective and safe mitigation technique (ibid.). Firstly, not all buildings were capable of increasing or even appropriately filtering airflow; secondly, not all

inlets of the ventilators were positioned in the right places; and thirdly – unless the airflow was constant there was a risk of the deposition of the virus on a surface (Horve et al 2020) and even its re-suspension in the air (Adams et al 2016). Humidity played a role in the capacity of the virus to remain air-born and deposit further in the throat while sunlight (as it was studied on other coronavirus pathogens) was theorised to decrease its half-life from 31.6min to 2.4min (Dietz et al 2020).

As the virus proliferated and evolved the normal rhythm in which the city breathes and usual strategies, we had to negotiate our place within it proved to be too indulgent. It would seem that in the competition for energy the virus had the upper hand as the way we lived and used spaces allowed it to draw its resources from our unwitting bodies. The energies that catalyzed our investment in social life in cities had to be redirected but in urban systems that have been developing for centuries, this proved to be difficult. It quickly turned out that the passageways and places to rest were too restrictive, places designed to attract attention, and inhabitation had to close. Spaces that afforded incidental meetings and accidental social relations which were not pre-planned and for which people could not brace themselves became risky. Our cities suddenly became a lot more intense (in a social way).

The new requirements of segregation of people in time demanded a heightened awareness of own liberties and respect to personal space. People with low-income jobs, limited access to information, or without internet provision were cut off from work and guidance on safe behavior which exasperated the inequalities of our 'ideal' systems. In this way, the pandemic put to question the sense of freedoms and basis of equalities that was the foundation stone of our democratic cultures. The pandemic asked for a reflection on the definition of the self as a free agent with rights and capacity for self-care was shaken to the core and with it the foundation of the virtues that were guiding the development of our cities. This was not only exemplified in a spatial way through the unanimated centers of towns that were designed for public presence but also the empty office buildings and banks that our institutions depended on.

This crisis of confidence as to how to responsibly use a shared space was not only a personal issue but transpired to the highest levels of governments and institutions. One might say that one of the

problems was that the 'prelates', 'magistrates' and 'admirals' were too preoccupied with conversing on the ideas of sovereign identity to timely supervene in accordance with the WHO guidance. It seemed like this was the effect of an indulgence in a lazy idea that political structures can be inflexibly developed and based on an ideology supporting a self-assurance that could be divorced from the wellbeing of the community that supports it. The result was an uncontrollable spread of the virus and death of thousands of people.

The workforces were trying to adapt to the new conditions. The academic bodies across the UK were torn between aiming to supply the best quality education in a situation where the mechanisms that they used to rely on (being the social contacts of the student body and the informal support mechanisms therein) were not in place anymore.

The Architectural response

The most contemporary space for an architecture school or a space that houses students who use high-spec computers, routers, both 2D and 3D printers, and laser-cutters in a fully equipped workshop demands stable conditions and a significant level of control over the internal environment. The space inside (if bespoke) is often modulated into studios for separate year groups, seminar rooms, and offices, divided on the assumption that students will be separated based on the level of their knowledge acquisition, skills, and developed attitudes to design following contemporary trends in higher education pedagogy (Vowles, Low, and Doron 2015). In addition to this, the early 2000s followed with a trend for newly-built architecture schools to becomes a beacon for a design that is capable of reducing carbon emissions that proudly exhibits efforts to make a space sustainable from an energy-consumption standpoint. This care for the conservation of energy here is palpable in the context of an enlightened environment of an academic institution. To follow suit the space for the department of the Architecture and the Built Environment (ABE) in UWE provided a building where the temperature, humidity, and ventilation were mechanically controlled, and all the systems coordinated – this was the R-block (following the alphabetical naming of buildings on campus). The building evoked a sense of completeness – a self-referential system of spaces that afforded all the contemporary functions that an architecture department would ask for. The idea for R-block was to maintain a steady internal environment

regardless of the conditions outside, which, in the climate in Bristol (South-West England) was less than stable. The core concept of the approach was to insulate the building strategically from the outside and instigate new, more controlled, and efficient energy streams using passive and mechanical means. The envelope of the building would periodically open individual windows if the temperature inside was over a set level and close them if it went below. This strategy provided a good environment for a dignified inhabitation until the COVID-19 pandemic struck and the rules of inhabiting space changed.

In addition to this the educational requirements of students of architecture, as a discipline that assumes an anthropocentric foundation ever since Marcus Vitruvius was in a particularly difficult position. Architecture is a discipline in which seeing opportunities for engaging in relations between people, taking part in actions and events is considered with respect to spatial arrangements. In a situation where gregariousness of any kind is discouraged, it is difficult to train the eye to see relations between people in an architectural light that is different from the convention. What is more, a larger-ontological problem put to question the role that architecture should play – are public spaces meant to offer opportunities for engagement between people or not? Following this, how should architecture be discussed and taught?

The department found it difficult to manage the discussions about all these problems via the provided, virtual platforms and decided that these issues should be addressed in person. The assumption was that a conversation on site would allow for a deeper connection between the students' and tutors' ideas and would offer a sense of reassurance, encouragement, and perceived value to the students.

Since the pandemic came with a relatively stable set of directives from the WHO that gave COVID-19 a spatial dimension the ABE department assumed that a good way forward would be to respond to the situation with architecture. A proposition emerged that one of the lecturing architects and two of the associate heads of department – Aine Moriarty, Andrew Bourne, and James Burch would put forward a solution that would allow for a safe inhabitation that would evade the worries of the risk of contagion indoors. In 2020 the best fighting method to avoid infection seemed to be meeting in small numbers outdoors and at a distance. Instead of inhibiting the

circulation of the virus by prohibiting social movement the main aim of the design the team proposed was to provide a space where students and tutors could meet safely, at a distance (2m apart) under the shelter of a roof and discuss an architectural project while any microbial contents of the aerosol in their breathed-out air could be disseminated further into the environment rendering it effectively harmless. In this way, the energies that were propagating the virus were allowed to spread safely. A site was chosen in a courtyard space next to R-block to maintain a close relationship with the architecture school.

The pavilion allowed for safe use during the COVID-19 pandemic and subverted the normative organization strategies in several ways that allow us to think of Bataille's circulation of energy (both social and microbial) in a less constrained way or without 'prelates', 'magistrates' and 'admirals' ideology inscribed in the design. The concept of organisation was based not on accumulated knowledge which, in traditional educational settings dictated which rooms the individual would be addressed in but on the idea of inclusivity and personal responsibility. The base-concept was to provide a framework for a roof to shelter from rain and sun and tables to allow sketching on and at the same time opening the interior to the elements to allow the natural energy-circulation to ventilate the interior and dispense the virus back into the ecology. In a sense, the whole design is passive in the way that it allows the external forces to sweep it clean. Instead of proposing a stable and controlled environment for computers and other sensitive equipment the pavilion was to house sketching and personal conversations between tutors and students. Even though the energetic balance of the environment was not steady or reduced to fit to expected institutional use the structure itself offered an opportunity to regulate one's actions to control the flows of social energies at hand including those that incited viral transmissions.

Fig 1. <NEAR HERE>

Fig 2. <NEAR HERE>

The circulation in the pavilion as well as the way in which it connects to its neighboring spaces meant that no flows around the structure had to be cut short by the introduction of the built form but could continue. The dimensions of the structure were based on the assumption that inhabitants

should take responsibility and be able to measure the rhythm of their circulation and distance from one another in the interior and immediate exterior. The transparency of the space allows for a high level of legibility and awareness of who is inside and where they are headed so no accidental or unplanned meetings should be an issue. The posts indicated a rough rhythm of 1m and 2m (see fig. 1) so that any distances measured against the structure could be scrutinised as complying or not with the WHO guidelines. The spaces around the tables allowed for more than 2m between edges to allow people sitting opposite to one another to inhabit the space at a safe distance. As there is no frontal or formal entrance and no strong border between the inside and outside (see fig. 2) the issue of encountering people in a narrow space as one enters or exits the interior is evaded. The surfaces which were expected to be touched most often were treated with several layers of glossy and easy to sanitize paint. The material of the roof was made transparent which allowed for UV radiation to penetrate the interior and reduce the half-life of any coronavirus.

Fig 3. <NEAR HERE>

The form of the building came across as incomplete – with few internal divisions, offering spatial continuity with its context as opposed to finishing at its frontiers. In this sense, the structure was, in a certain way bare and formless (a concept Bataille touched on in his *Dictionary; Maldonado* 2019); challenging ideas of classical beauty and by doing so affording a much greater allowance and accommodation of a free dissipation of energy that follows disorderly entropy in its spatial recomposition and subsequent systems redistribution.

This new spatial way of representing the new dynamic balance of social and ecological energies presented an opportunity for the architects to reflect on all the aspects of inclusion and exclusion from the event of education. The assumptions that fed into the design of the pavilion carried a significant change in the way we think of higher education in the fact that it opened up the debates that could be had to accidental passers-by who may not necessarily invest in the department in a controlled, institutional way. In this way the pavilion allowed us to think of the deeper meaning of the role of the individual in caring for their community and the opportunities that come from opening up the energy circulation to a less controlled environment.

Fig. 4. <NEAR HERE>

Concluding Remarks

Following Bataille the energy flows that allow our life on the planet gave rise to the 'prelates', 'magistrates' and 'admirals' that define the state of the 'ideal' in our society. Despite the energy being unstable the officiates' definition of the 'ideal' allows us to define social systems as permanent. They do so by setting out habits that architects ordain with a conceptual typology. Each architect devises their dictate for the most reasoned and common-sensical understanding that is pre-conceptual and pre-philosophical and gives rise to architectural solutions. The state of this conceptualization across the entire globe coming up to 2020 exposed us to a significant number of issues in the form of an uncontrolled or 'unacquainted' energy dissipation. These issues made us challenge the way we address the social compositions and the architecture that follows.

In 2020 the excesses of energy circulation gave rise to the COVID-19 pandemic which put in crisis ontological assumptions that dictated the development of culture and growth of architecture as well as urban planning in Western democratic states. The pandemic touched on the UK without warning and within the timeframe of four months ravaged the nation but did come with a set of rules that people were meant to follow to evade a catastrophe. Architecture at the time had little time to adapt and the way we lived our lives had to change radically. No 'prelates', 'magistrates', or 'admirals' could help as the flows of energies around the globe that we were used to and dictated our architectures suddenly became risky to partake in. The pandemic exposed and exasperated the issues in our society and these demanded a robust debate about the state of our 'ideal' as well as the state of architecture that ordains it.

The Architecture department at the UWE in Bristol proposed a solution. As a temporary remedy and opportunity to partake in an engaging debate the resident architects designed a pavilion called R3build where students and tutors could meet in a safe environment. The space did not allow for digital manufacturing, secured by a measured and stable energy use or a division of student groups according to the commonly accepted pedagogic practice but allowed for personal meetings, debates, and drawing in real-time. The design was based on WHO guidelines and was

segmented into frames one meter apart without explicit divisions, in addition to this it was passively ventilated and illuminated. As such it allowed for the dissipation of the social energies that the virus thrives on in a much too haphazard way and did not let it proliferate. Due to its open nature, it allowed for a continuity with the outside and an opportunity for a free and informal organization of teaching within.

Even though the structure cannot replace the R-block it gives us a chance to think about old typologies differently. Unsecured from theft of costly commodities, eavesdropping, or interruptions of conversations that carried intellectual property it allows for the potential for the energy represented by spatial concepts and acts to be shared and developed in an unplanned manner. The design offered an opportunity to reflect on its capacity to convey an architectural discussion without constraints that came from the old way of seeing academia and contemporary architecture that has become explicitly exclusive and hermetic. This uncontrolled environment stands as a beacon against the strictly regulated environment that flows from an assumption of the focus on the individual – access to space for which would require financial investments but little responsibility from the participants.

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