Figure: Still from *Celebrating the History of UWE Bristol*, https://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/history/historyofuwefilm.aspx, accessed February 02, 2019.

Space to Learn/Think/Work: The Contested Architectures of Higher Education
Call for Papers for a themed issue of *Architecture and Culture*
Vol. 9, Issue no. 1, March 2021
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Deprived of welfare state support, Higher education has changed markedly since the mid 1960s, mainly due to its privatisation. The neoliberal university has taken hold in many developed countries so that nowadays the imperatives of Higher Education have moved away from a liberal, openly accessible, broadly based education to one that will "commercialise scientific research, launch entrepreneurial degree programs, establish industry partnerships, and build entrepreneurial cultures and ecosystems".[1] This shift manifests itself in an anti-intellectual criticism of the university (often framed in terms of spatial metaphors of ivory towers, echo chambers, halls of mirrors, cloisters, and silos) as well as in ambitious real-estate developments, opening of overseas campuses, and expansion of property portfolios with new buildings in which one finds an excess of 'spaces for collaboration', 'vibrant meeting points' and multi-coloured, office-style soft furniture. Because the university has been characterised as being cut off from real-world concerns of the office workplace, many Higher Education institutions now use business strategies to incorporate real-world experience within education.

This issue of *Architecture and Culture* entitled 'Space to Learn/Think/Work: The Contested Architectures of Higher Education' invites submissions that directly address the realities of Higher Education and neoliberalism worldwide, whether from areas that have embraced new, overtly market-driven educational models or from those which have actively resisted change. Can educators and architects redefine the role of the university in society in the West and the East to avoid *The University in Ruins*?[2] If so, how?

How does the discipline of architecture respond to the changing reconfigurations of learning, which are spatial as much as political and economic? In architectures that overtly serve the needs of the market more than pedagogy, critical theorist Douglas Spencer writes that "lecturers are not provided with private or fixed office space, but required to locate and use available space in open-plan offices on an ad hoc bases. Students are subjected to the same freedoms, having to find for themselves areas in which to study. The negotiation of space is itself an education in creativity, a skill to become practised in. Students are to behave as 'intelligent nomads'".[3] Where what is prescribed for the university are learning landscapes,[4] informal learning environments, marketplaces of exchange, hubs of innovation, incubators of new talent and even virtual platforms for delivery of teaching, there is an urgency to question whether space for thought and criticality has disappeared, and to assert where pedagogy takes place.

As space-saving exercises lead to contestations of 'the studio' and other spaces for creative and critical thought, Architecture Schools that abandon the studio, it is claimed, can become more relevant to the workplace by occupying co-working spaces, cultural institutions, or architectural practices, or by undertaking live projects.[5] How do these approaches challenge or become complicit with the agendas of real estate and further activity that aligns the university with business and the market? Are academics and students being pushed out into the 'real world' through limited studio and teaching spaces, whilst the incubator and business hub take up space in the university?[6]

Is the discipline of architecture as an exemplary creative practice far too amenable to the imperatives of neoliberal economics, turning both students and academics into innovative, creative, self-motivated, flexible and ultimately exploitable entrepreneurial subjects? And if educators have acquiesced in Higher Education's managerialism and corporatisation, what are the consequences for the bodies of academics and students?

Alison Mountz et. al. have called for a temporal resistance to the compression of time frames and expectations of high productivity in the university.[7] How might we specify spaces for slow scholarship, make room for critical thought, and manifest a spatial resistance to the imperatives of (economically) productive collaborative encounter, engineered serendipity, and nomadic expertise?

This issue of *Architecture and Culture* invites critical analysis of the neoliberal university and its spatial practices in the here and now. We invite contributions from academics and practitioners in architecture, cultural theory, interiors, and related spatial practices, in philosophy, and other [disciplinary] areas.

Contributions might address, but are not limited to, the following themes:
- The architectures of education
- The academic-industrial complex
- Spatial practices of resistance
- The incubator (Entrepreneurs in the University)
- The Live Project (Academics in the Real World)
- Studio practice and the competitive workplace
- Academic labour, administration and performance review

- The Managerial University and the Corporation
- Real estate, the university brand and signature campus buildings
- The new University of Excellence and commercially driven market forces
- The University Establishment, class/gender/race and social mobility
- Picket lines and teach-outs
- The spatial forms of 'slow scholarship'

Production schedule

Call for Papers issued 04 February 2019

Submissions accepted until 01 July 2019

Issue publication (online and print): late March 2021

For author instructions, please go to 'Instructions for Authors' at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rfac20&page=instructions

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Claudia Dutson holds a PhD in Architecture from the Royal College of Art, and has trained in both architecture and media studies. In the 1990s she worked in new media consultancy at the height of the dotcom boom–and subsequent bust–and has returned to the topic of Silicon Valley with her current research into the architecture and spatial tactics of Facebook, Apple and Google. Her practice is interdisciplinary, combining architectural techniques of drawing and model-making with performance, video and virtual reality. She has taught architecture, experimental design and interaction design and is a tutor on the Design Products MA and in Critical Historical Studies in the School of Communication, Royal College of Art.

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[1] Enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation – the entrepreneurial university from concept to action.
< http://ncee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/From-Concept-To-Action.pdf>
[2] Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[3] Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2016), 137.
[4] 'Learning landscapes in Higher Education,' authored by DEGW founder John Worthington, is a report on space in the higher education sector. It argues that lessons from the impact of technology on the workplaces of the

commercial sector should be applied to the university, including the sharing of space with non-academic partners, the use of 'flexi space' on short leases, and 'just-in-time' space as part of a catalyst for collaborative innovation with some core space allocated to meet the specialised needs of the institution. See also Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism,* 133-137.

[5] "From the rise of live projects and collaborative studios that engage with real development sites, to practice-based models of education that do away with the school all together, how can architectural education evolve to remain relevant?" Oliver Wainright's polemic opening of the debate on 'Learning' at the CSM Fundamentals debate series, <http://www.arts.ac.uk/csm/courses/our-programmes/spatial-practices-programme/lecture-series-/>

[6] "Of course, some universities are speaking on a worldwide level, but they do also need to speak on a local level. Encouraging students to become part of the community beyond its grounds is a sound approach. Universities are, after all, creating the entrepreneurs and employers of the future. There is little sense in graduating them into a community they've been cloistered from since Fresher's Week." Philip Watson, Atkins Global, quoted in <https://universitybusiness.co.uk/Article/the-changing-face-of-educational-buildings-and-their-potenti>

[7] Mountz, Alison, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu, Risa Whitson, Roberta Hawkins, Trina Hamilton, and Winifred Curran. 'For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University.' *ACME: an International E-Journal for Critical Geographies 14*, no. 4 (2015): 1235-59.

[8] Troiani, I. "Academic Capitalism in Architecture Schools: A feminist critique of employability, 24/7 work and entrepreneurship", in H. Frichot, C. Gabrielsson, H. Runting eds. 2017, *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies*, in the Series: *Critiques*. Critical Studies in Architectural Humanities, Series Editor, Jonathan Hale, Routledge: London, 170-180.