

Faculty of Architecture & Arts. Hasselt University - BE

# Global Perspectives

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Building on ten years of experience with joint design studios in the Global South (i.e. in Tanzania, Vietnam and South Africa), the Faculty of Architecture and Arts of Hasselt University (UH) in Belgium and the Faculty of Informatics and Design of Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in South Africa are finalising their third, fully reciprocal design studio 'Global Perspectives' in June 2024.

During one semester about 100 fourth year architecture students designed strategic projects to promote place-making through the concept of 'kanalah' (helping each other) and 'buurt maken' (creating a neighbourhood) in either District Six in Cape Town or Canal North-East in Brussels. Belgian and South African students have designed interventions for both cities, based on close interaction with their antipodes.

Throughout the years, we have developed and refined the studio's format, using online, on campus and on site activities, and ensuring equal opportunities for all participating students, irrespective of their financial capacities. All engage in an intercultural dialogue regarding spatial quality and sustainable development. The studio offers a valuable training environment to test and to grow designerly communication skills by conceiving and conveying an empathic architectural intervention in which each other's perspectives are included.

The overall ambition of studio 'Global Perspectives' is threefold. Firstly, for each individual student, there is the personal challenge of growth as a future architect by working in an international team. Hence, in this design studio, global citizenship competencies are built (Lenkaitis & Loranc, 2022).

Secondly, there is the academic purpose to generate positive, local interventions for global spatial challenges, with respect for the sites' human and ecological capital while reflecting on its identity and its global impact, by means

of a research-by-design methodology in the design studio (Devisch et al. 2019).

Thirdly, the societal goal is to inspire, to facilitate a dialogue and to bring hope to the community, its government and other stakeholders by communicating design proposals that show connectivity and inclusiveness and have regenerative and distributive qualities. Imaginative design stories become catalysts of change in line with the UN's SDG.

Working with freely available online platforms, we believe this format can be an added value to other design studios over the world. We would be proud to share it with many and thus build a network of empathic (future) designers and architects. This way we want to connect with the EAAE aim to promote excellence and innovation in teaching and to share good practices amongst teaching staff.

Our joint design studio methodology contributes to qualitatively outstanding and well-grounded architectural education and research and consequently a well-informed professional practice. In its most recent editions the joint design studio embraces the possibilities presented by blended models of teaching practice. At the same time, the studio maintains that architecture and architectural education is at the service of the societies it is embedded within and it recognizes the value of heritage, tradition and contemporary culture.

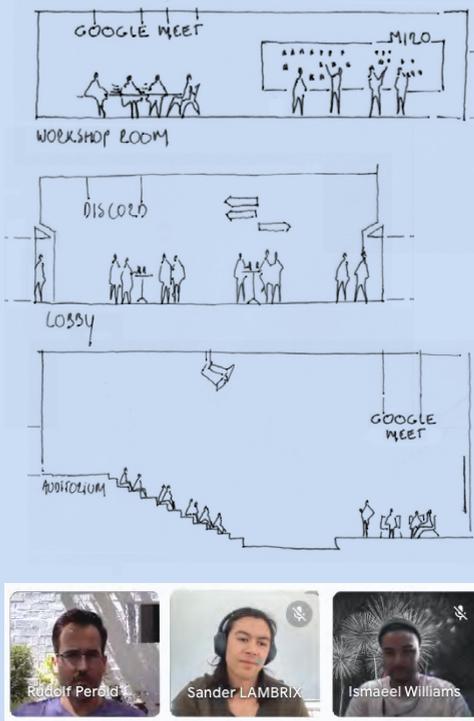
The joint studio provides students with a lens through which to critically reflect upon local, regional and global value systems of spatial production, as students from the two universities play the role of each other's client in the design process. In grappling with the complexity of their own home sites and the sites in the other city, students help each other to transpose complexity into a spatial concept. In exposing students to their peers from a very different cultural and geographical context, the joint design studio seeks to serve the needs of a diverse society, by being as diverse as the society it seeks to serve.



**1** map your home city

exchange information, come up with ideas and references during an **online brainstorm week** filled with presentations, lectures and workshops in mixed teams.

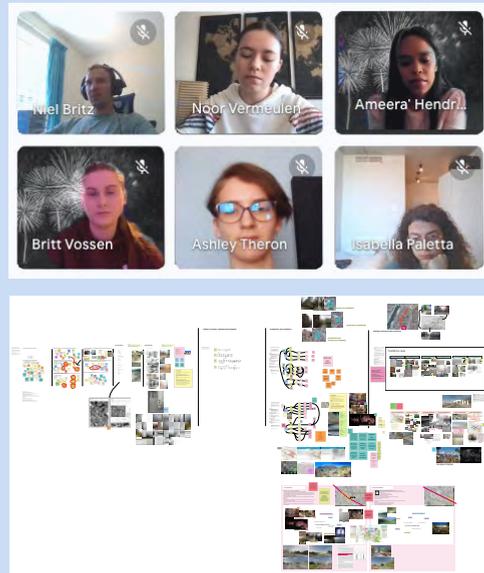
Freely accessible online platforms transform the workshop into a close-to-live setting



**3** define your **narrative** and architectural intervention



**4** discuss your project and comment your peers' projects in the **online project workshop week** with students, professors, stakeholders of Belgium and South-Africa



**5** refine your project for Brussels and Cape Town up till the architectural detail - communicate your vision in a project booklet and short movie



present your project and lessons learned to an **international jury**



share the narratives in **exhibitions** and a **website** to inspire others.

