

UMARELL

brick through a window

issue 01

Editor's Note

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the first issue of Umarell // Brick Through a Window, we are a new critical architectural newsletter based in Glasgow. Firstly, we want to thank everyone who submitted work and everyone who took the time to share our open call online or off, we would not have had such a fantastic first issue without you all, we are super pleased with how this has turned out.

This issue focuses on the theme of protest within architecture. Protest and political action are constantly at the centre of our architectural practice, whether that be on the side of help or hindrance and even whether we intend it to be or not. The practice of designing space is innately political and small choices can have monumental impacts on the population. In this way we are a very powerful profession, but it stands with us to utilise this influence in an effective manner. It is imperative that we organise to challenge those in positions of power to create more equitable spaces that work not only for a capitalist ruling class and regain autonomy over our cities.

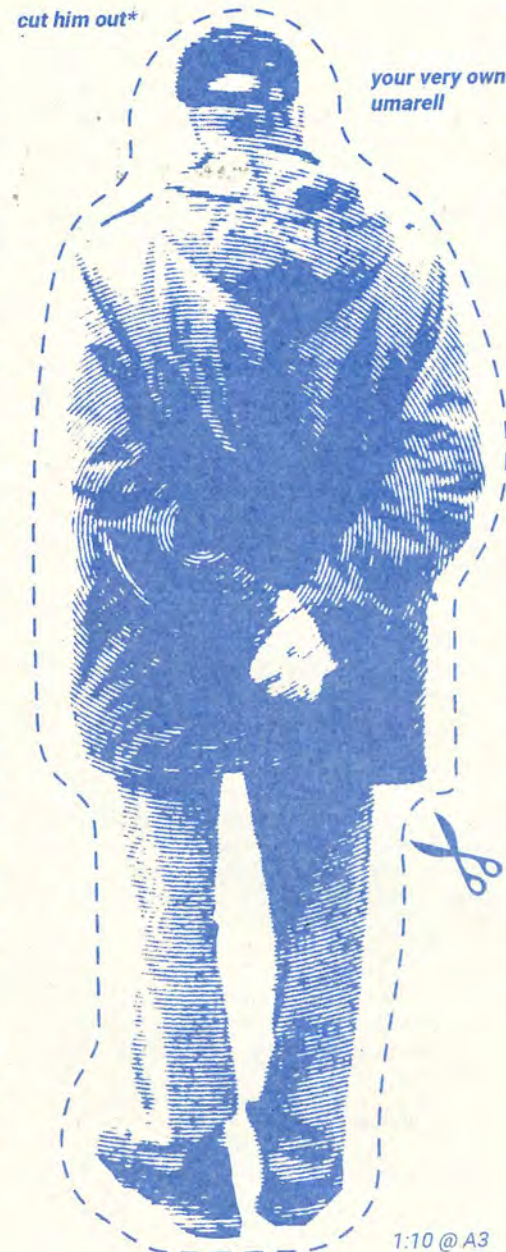
One question we found incredibly provocative was whether architecture itself could be considered a form of protest. Of course, it is a given that cities and the spaces created within them can affect protest and, conversely, protest is often in response to architectural decisions, but a piece of architecture being a protest itself is harder to come by. We are massively pleased then by some of the submissions that proved to us that architectural practice can be a form of protest and can challenge damaging political or social ideologies/conditions.

Once again, thank you to everyone who submitted work, we are blown away by the quality of your work and how many ways the theme has been tackled. Please enjoy everyone's work and keep an eye out for the next open call! Theme coming soon...

The Umarells x

Keep up with us on Instagram
@umarellnewsletter

cut him out*



your very own umarell

1:10 @ A3

*will ruin other side of newsletter

All work is a small abstract of larger pieces that can be found in our online publication, out now!

Hollywood Bowl

Keep in mind the colours: the octopus purr, blinking thoughts under skin as viewed from flagpole to shivering swim among crowds down George Square, then Trongate to step winter passes through as a fat worm crisping the trash with frost down Cathcart deathride Island Boys above engine song, and bins alight with Olympic Flame this is crushing time, another word for dreams, only it works better in the past before leading questions, before the unrivalled medicine god, before I caught sight of her, cutting coke with a library card neon doesn't work the way it used to, best to shout

Beware the pampered wife!

Beware Nan's roll-shop

Beware the bargains, the hot egg for a pound

Beware the vectored sea of cans

Can you even be sure it's fiction

Eva Gerretsen @evagrerrrrrrrr

Women in Destruction

After a strange phone call from our now landlord in February 2022, a series of meetings and exchange of documents and promises, our art collective 'On The Rag' were handed the keys of a four floor, all bells-and-whistles HSBC Bank, complete with kiosk and vault, on four-banks in Chorlton, Manchester. This was luckily free of rent due to our Community Interest Company status, alleviating the landlord of paying land tax and therefore his request for rent from us (which is not often given, so thanks Sunil).

Under the knowledge that in a year it will be gutted and turned into a wine bar we got cracking on our transformation process. This undertaking of turning an old bank, and before that a Chemist, into what is now RAG Gallery (Manchester) was exhausting, cathartic and hilarious.

Keep up with RAG Gallery through their instagram

@ontheragmcr

Written by Amy Platt, with thanks to Jasmine Skellern and Christina Purvis

Tin Can Apron



Jack Monroe (author of 'Cooking on a Bootstrap') explains the limitations to living in poverty and cooking entirely out of tin cans due to the measly amount of funding she received as a single mother on benefits. The tin can apron is an object of protest; it is both oppressive and restrictive to cook with, making the act of operating within the kitchen basically impossible. This intentionally highlights the oppressive food structures caused by a government who has abdicated any responsibility in providing affordable food for people who need it.

Rosie Park @ro_park

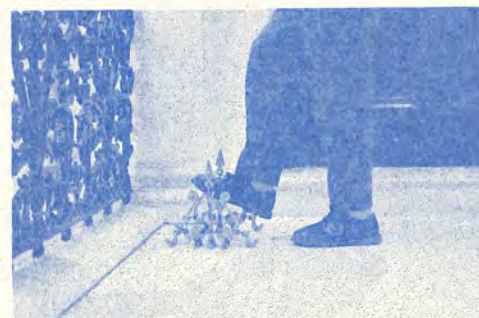
Architecture and Protest Under Capitalism

As a political tool, architecture has been used in many different ways. It has been used for war, pride and love shown through fortresses or strongholds, Louis XIV's Versailles, and the Taj Mahal respectively. With the emergence of modern societies, architecture's political use has become a vector of ideology, whether it be utilitarian

under communist regimes, for profit in capitalist countries or as an expression of power for a fascist leader. As capitalism progressively becomes hegemonic, the buildings we produce are driven by money and control. In Western Europe, this has been the case since the late 18th century. It started with company towns, where a rich industrialist owned a city focused on a factory, workers' homes within the fold of the city, spending their money in his shops, and enjoying their free time the way he intended. Then, as urbanisation grew during the 19th century, the same concerns reached city planning, and can still be seen today. An exemplar of this is Haussmann's plan for Paris following the Commune Revolt of 1871, which increased control over the city's population through its larger avenues, having seen copious investment from the Parisian bourgeoisie, the plan is still intact to this day.

Louis Ménia @eloimaunis

Disrupting Domesticity in the Political Sphere



Rose explores how ideals of maintenance and preservation in British politics are manifested architecturally, uncovering private domesticity in the political sphere. We are told that political decisions are taken in Westminster, yet a network of Member's Clubs and lobbying groups are hidden in Palladian villas and Georgian town houses.

Rose Miller @rosemiller6

Lynch's Broken Dream

In a city where the built history is threatened in a way that would bring to mind Constant's tabularasa *, the problems are destroyed without stopping first to see what caused them, creating an environment for repeated mistakes in a new way. An urban tautology. We cannot change our

mundane scenery anymore, but we can try to understand it. Before we rush to leave our mark in history, we should make sure there is one left to speak of.

*Antonino Saggio, Architettura e Modernità. Dal Bauhaus alla rivoluzione informatica, Carocci, Roma 2010



Endri Kicaj @bad_luck_kicaj

A Personal Protest

As a 21 year old American college student, I do not own a drivers license. Instead I rely on public transportation to travel around the city, from town to town, from state to state. This has become my personal protest against the disconnections caused by the car. The human has bowed down to the automobile. Across my window is a parking lot of 15 by 15 spots, a highway interchange ramp; and a parking garage 6 levels tall. For every tree I see there are 10+ cars. The sheer amount of space that these machines require for storage, let alone only use, is overpowering to the human. I believe that the prominence of the car is detrimental to the human experience.

Daniel Jones @lucien.phl

Bus Thoughts



Katy Hope @kt_hope
PTO

Pollok Free State

In 1939 John Stirling Maxwell brokered the first-ever conservation agreement for the National Trust Scotland that agreed his grounds of Pollok Country Park would remain open for the enhancement of the beauty of the neighbourhood as well as the citizens of Glasgow'. Maxwell gave Pollok Park to the people to help enrich the communities of the area by providing an essential re-connection with nature for its residents that is difficult to find in other such comparable ex-industrial cities around the country.

In 1974 the National Trust Scotland agreed to an extension of the nearby M77 motorway that would cut through the southwest side of Pollok Park, removing two conservation woodlands and cutting off direct access for the working-class communities of Pollok, Cokerhill and Mossbank to the space. The idea was that this extension would save travel time for those commuting between Ayrshire and Glasgow and reduce congestion in the more middle-class areas of Giffnock, Thornliebank and Newton Mearns.

Preliminary construction started in 1992 and was met with widespread opposition that argued the funding should go into more eco-friendly and community-oriented infrastructure, such as better public transport. This led to Colin MacLeod, AKA the birdman of Pollok, who grew up in the local estates setting up camp in a tree for 9 days to obstruct building work. This one-man spectacle led to others setting up their own encampments around the tree, birthing the Pollok Free State, a community-led, autonomous space that declared independence from the Tory-led government that enveloped it.

In the end, even though the development of the M77 ultimately went ahead, the legacy of Pollok Free State lives on not only in the history books but in the hearts and minds of the people of Glasgow and beyond.

Richard Fisher

Blank Slate - A Manifesto

I want to be a blank slate,
With no higher cause,
No view of actions and their weight,
No inhibitions nor laws.

I wish to start all over,

Want not to have a clue,
To see from the eyes of a new lover,
To wash myself anew.

I want to behold nothing of purpose,
To see things just for beauty,
To take all things in earnest,
To have no higher duty.

I want not to know off their growth,
To see them progress with haste,
I wish to see neither nor both,
Nor their enormous waste.

I wish to know not of use,
Forget all that I desired,
Care not for what I lose,
Let the world grow tired.

I want to learn the rules,
So I can pick and choose
Which ones are made by fools,
And which we cannot lose.

I wish to learn and learn and learn,
Season after season,
No propensity to earn,
No end goal, no reason.

I want my new amnesia,
To shape this life from base,
To discover at my own leisure,
Beauty, nature, space.

Nirali Jade @niralijade

The Red Sandcastles of Glasgow

Drifting through the narrow lanes and open avenues, it seems as if the city's buildings were carved out of one big chunk of sandstone. I can't help but think of the conditions that prevailed roughly 290 million years ago, when most of these building blocks came into being. Back when Scotland lay near the equator and had mountains as high as the Himalaya, when volcanoes were active and the climate was hot. Did one of the eight feet of an early arachnid touch the exact same location you are standing on, while you read this text?

crucial to the profession, but may be valuable to the everyday person in understanding how social constructs manifest as spatial phenomena.

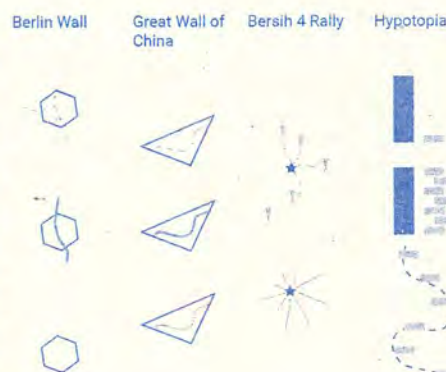
The images show the brick being thrown through the frames to act as a tethering object to these momentary phenomena. The brick is made an active participant of the story and is animated by the activities of the people within each frame.

Tristan Theron

Architecture + Politics

Authorities have historically played a significant role in shaping and manipulating our built environment. They have found countless ways to mitigate rebellion among the people. However, people have proven time and time again that they can rise above such occasions.

In an architectural sense, the very essence of it is the walls that are built up. The walls built are meant to act as protection. The question is: What does it really protect? The people or the privilege? In the context of protest, the walls play a role in either suppressing or liberating walls, boundary, causes or forces



Lissa Lai @lissal.ai

Collective Dwelling & Appropriation for Autonomy

Nathan explores unoccupied space in the BMO tower, Toronto, Canada, speculating what possibilities might exist for collective dwelling outside the confines of capitalist conceptions of property and state sanctioned development.

The central goal of the autonomous housing is

rooted in the idea that housing is a fundamental right of human beings, and that the commodification of housing has led to the use value of housing to be superseded by its value as real-estate.

The practice of squatting has set a precedent as a viable option for much needed housing and community space, and is a mode of reclaiming the use-value over exchange value. In his research, Nathan examined the process of European squatting that took place in London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Berlin, in the mid to late 20th century, as well as examples of informal housing. Finding that the act of squatting is simultaneously an act of rebellion and revolutionary activism as well as a space to procure humane housing and collective space. His project utilises squatting as a medium to gain access to the BMO tower and appropriate un-used office space with the eventual goal of permanent dwelling space and communal living.



Nathan Shakura @nathanshak

Protest Architecture: Resistance & Re-Invention

There has been an increasing rise in 'Lock-on' and 'Occupation' protesting, due to its resultant public disturbance meaning it cannot be ignored. Just Stop Oil recently occupied sections of the M25, and Extinction Rebellion famously brought Waterloo Bridge to a stand still for an entire week



Bianca Pedrina @piancabedrina

The Garden of Hedon

The solid nature of concrete so often juxtaposes the lucidity of its residents. You could dream of Piccadilly Gardens, and it wouldn't compete with its surreality. Commuters, consumers, dealers, under aged drinkers, all spiral around the harsh architecture in a centrifugal hypnosis, each completely numbed to the other, each gnawing at each other's subconscious. It's a jackhammer, piercing the heart of the city, its reverberations

Witness to Living



Witness to Suffering



Witness to Healing



back in 2019. One of the most famous and longest cases of 'Occupation' protesting, however, was the 'No M11 Link Road' protest 1994, where protesters stood their ground for 6 successive months.

Although the road had been proposed since the 1960s, large-scale road and transport construction has fallen out of favour massively with the public. Multiple houses in the local area of Leyton had been compulsory purchased by the local council. Due to its location, Claremont Road, required every single property along it to be demolished. As there were no recognised legal owners of these houses, the street quickly became occupied by protesters of the 'No M11' campaign.



Reece Oliver @rco_architecture

A Hostile Status Quo

Hostile architecture is becoming more widespread within our urban environments, additionally, perhaps more insidiously, it is also becoming more integrated into the fabric that forms these environments. For those who perhaps haven't been made aware of hostile architecture is the addition of elements onto architecture that prevent 'less desirable' groups of people accessing spaces (most commonly the homeless community). Think spikes on the floor outside a supermarket or arm rests strategically placed along a bench to prevent anyone lying on it. Whilst these design decisions are of course deplorable, they are honest with their intention. There is a type of hostile architecture that is becoming more prevalent within cities that is even more deceptive.

Firstly, we need to understand that a capitalist system has no reason to properly tackle the issue of homelessness, the existence of, and perceived risk of becoming homeless is vital to the exploitation of the working class. The immediate threat of homelessness to an individual can be used as a sword of Damocles, keeping them

echoing through the tramlines and the bus routes, trawling through the thick membrane of the city like snowpiercers.

Queen Victoria, the monarch of opium, finds herself commemorated in spiced brutal ramifications upon the psyche, as synthetic daydreamers lay wasted upon the steps of her monument. Police Tactical Aid Units (TAU's) lie waiting by out of place burger joints and Italian restaurant chains, gagging to be let off the leash. Protestors, sick of the hygienic conditions of the otherwise empty St Peter's Square's milquetoast rallies, descend upon the footfall as pigeons do, trying to rock a sinking boat, forever sinking. Covid truthers spit bile across yellow grass. College lovers hold each other under the trees. Builders, the midwives of the city, rest under the grey skies of Cafe Nero's outdoor dining experience.

Joseph Conway @j0keon / @noke0j

Brick Through a Glass Window / Brick as a Witness

The resultant urban fabric within a post-colonial South Africa is still made up of mechanisms that inform the way that informal settlements congregate and expand. This is due to the resultant spatial typologies and urban planning of the Group Areas Act, of which these spatial artifacts still remain.

In the present world, we as a collective have a greater understanding and sensitivity to the prevention of marginalization/segregation within social interactions. However the exact methodologies of how we are still haunted by these spatial ghosts, is gatekept by architects, held behind a wall of jargon. Information that is highly

subservient to a system which is successful only for those in the ruling class. Homelessness will never be solved under a system of capitalism, purely because a capitalist system has no self-serving reason to end it.

Rory Thomas @rthomas_design

Adverts of Activism

With a rise in digital marketing frames the public realm feels increasingly clustered with billboards and the like, displaying ads for big companies. Many using them as a platform to clean up their image, attempting to discounter from any controversy or questions people might have of them.

What is referred to by advertisers as 'out of home' advertising, is just a small part of the advertising industry, particularly compared to online adverts, which makes their large presence in public space seem even more of a waste.

But there is an alternative, 'Brandalism' an international collective of artists and activists, take on big corporations at their own game by replacing adverts in public spaces with interventions that use subversion to address social, political and environmental issues. In their own words they "steal this space (from capitalism) and give it back to you for free." Reclaiming advertising spots and re-using them to protest issues in the spaces that were intended to distract you from them.



Andrew Wilson @andrewwilson27

Thank you so much for reading, thanks again to all who submitted work also! See you soon

Check out the full version online! Email us with any questions you may have