

To My Former Students,

I expect you are surprised to hear from your old professor of architecture, may even be thinking, “What does he want?” or worse: “Is he still around?” Rest assured I am only writing to see how you are and how you are adapting to this strange new world we’re facing.

You who were my best and brightest and have gone on to great careers around the world—you’ll forgive me if I take a little pride in that—you are the ones I most want to ask about the impact of this pandemic on our profession. I confess the scale of what has happened and the scope of its disruption have given me moments of doubt. To see everything you thought you knew called into question by irreverent history is a bracing exercise. For that reason I’d like to hear your thoughts:

Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability? What traditions will we carry on and what will be replaced? What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

You are the people who will create the next iteration of the world. It’s what you trained to do, though perhaps you didn’t realize how urgently you’d be called upon to do it. Turning to you now is the only way I know to interrogate the future. I do hope to hear from each of you soon. Until then...

Once your teacher, now your student, always your friend,

Professor X

COVID STORIES FROM DESIGNERS AROUND THE GLOBE

SEPTEMBER 2020

A COLLABORATION WITH



BUILDING RESILIENCE BY LOOKING TO THE PAST

– Laurie Aznavoorian
– Rachael McCarthy

BATESSMART™



COMPLIANCE AND COMPLACENCY

Kahn Yoon

MMOSER ASSOCIATES 



NORDIC WORK LIFE – A COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION

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THREE WEEKS...

Kirsty Laing

**PUBLIC SECTOR CONSULTANT
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LOOKING TO OUR DEVICES

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ROLLING WITH DIVERSITY: LONDON

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WE BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS

We must begin with a confession and an apology. We lied, we have neither studied together nor is there an inquiring professor who sought our advice.

What is true is that we have all had unique experiences and agree the past six months have been:

/ CATAclySMIC

/ UNPRECEDENTED

/ STAGGERING

/ POIGNANT

/ PROVOCATIVE

and in many ways

/ MOTIVATING

The next apology is for the list of clichés to define recent events. It is true we've heard these words before, but find both the negative and positive connotations to be accurate reflections of the mixed bag of emotions we are going through.

The pandemic has presented us with experiences both good and bad. Life will never return to what we once considered normal and if we're honest, most of us don't want it to.

We like working from home... sometimes. And breathing fresher air on less crowded streets. Perhaps Covid-19 is the catalyst for rebirth, reinvention and a re-imagined notion of work along with the spaces that support it?

This brings us to the perplexing questions posed by our fictitious professor:

Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

What traditions will we carry on and what ones might be replaced?

What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

The authors of this collection are a small cabal of designers scattered

around the globe who've virtually assembled to debate these topics.

Our discussions were robust, undertaken in part from a sense of obligation. We all to some degree or another, make our livings designing workspaces and our clients, friends and family have turned to us for advice.

As experts who are 'supposedly' better informed on the topic, we are as informed as we can be given there has been no precedent in our lifetimes, and with years of experience between us, we are well positioned to wager a plausible guess.

Listening to each others' stories what became clear were the similarities, contrasted by stark differences in approach - manifestations of location, culture and government policy.

This document captures a tiny slice of our unique experiences in different locations around the globe. These along with our predictions for what might come next will we hope serve as prompts for necessary conversations required to answer the pressing question we are all asking...

Where to from here?



BUILDING RESILIENCE BY LOOKING TO THE PAST

FROM AUSTRALIA

Like many countries, Australia is dealing with the compounding impact of Covid-19 and its economic ramification, unique to this country is the timing of the pandemic, it comes on the heels of devastating bushfires.

Aboriginal people experienced the fires differently to non-indigenous Australians. We all felt horror, but the impact of its destruction to native food sources, ancestral and totemic plants and animals was beyond grasp for people whose cultural and spiritual identity is not linked to the land.

During the fires it became clear that decades of neglect and mismanagement, coupled with climate change, created an ideal environment for fire. In the disaster's aftermath the nation turned its focus to rebuilding communities and ecosystems, seeking advice from the continent's original occupants, tapping into their traditional ecological knowledge. Turning to first peoples is a step toward acknowledging the intimate relationship indigenous people have to the land and the importance of that wisdom to Australia's future.

The Corona virus may offer additional opportunities to draw on indigenous culture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a resilience that is integral to their survival, it has sustained them through catastrophic changes to both culture and land and offered strength to endure tragedies and natural disasters. Anchored in their beliefs and knowledge, this power is interconnected with the natural landscape and a strong sense of community. Traits modern Australians could use battling Covid-19, to sustain communities during the pandemic and rebuild a greener, healthier Australia in its wake.

Isolated in the Antipodes, we remain true to our nickname, Australia is the lucky country. Our response to the pandemic was swift, and some might say severe, considering the quantity of infections we had. These measures appear to have kept the virus at bay. Those privileged with the right kinds of jobs and houses benefited from working from home and the experience offered insight into the importance of togetherness. These are lessons indigenous people know well, the importance of community and benefit of belonging to something bigger and bolder than yourself.

Like Aboriginal communities we have grown to appreciate the sharing of resources and have developed a greater concern for the well-being of others. Trust, responsibility and community obligations are now a part of our repertoire and in time we may even

recognise that an individual's role in, and contribution to community, is more important than their personal gains. Perhaps the same can be said for the importance of our contribution to work and work communities.

As the days lengthen and Winter fades to Spring, Australians, especially those in Victoria, yearn to be outdoors for longer than the Covid-19 allocated one-hour restrictions permit. We have a new-found connection to place and worship the land and nature itself with greater allegiance. This may herald the beginnings of building greater resilience and a future that prioritises both people and the land.

We need it, Covid-19 is not over and the fire season beckons.





COMPLIANCE AND COMPLACENCY

FROM SINGAPORE

Hi Professor, you probably haven't seen too much in the news about COVID-19 in Singapore, we are a small country in the world stage.

Nevertheless, in the earlier months of the COVID-19 outbreak, Singapore was being praised internationally for its handling of the pandemic.

Even though the virus spread quickly as in other countries, it looked as it was being well contained.

Singapore was well placed to react rapidly due to several unique factors:

- 1) Our previous experience with SARS in 2003 prompted the medical infrastructure preparation for possible future pandemics.
- 2) Swift decision by the government, without the baggage of political debate, or cumbersome federal vs state jurisdiction that larger countries have.
- 3) Compliant citizens who followed the rules - such as the law that everyone must wear masks (complete with visa cancellation, and \$300/\$1,000 fine for non-compliance).

Singapore residents have been dutifully staying at home, staying 1 metre apart, wearing masks when going out, even in such hot and humid weather and always having the Tracing App turned on.

It is a stark contrast to America and other western countries where in addition to grappling with a shortage of test kits and masks people fight for their "freedom" to not wear masks.

As you taught us Professor, I have been thinking about the Covid problem/opportunity in depth, searching for meaning and connections. I can draw a parallel to how organisations should approach their own preparation, leadership direction, and choice/freedom of individuals to what our government has done, which was really a successful strategy & change management exercise in the end!

We felt quite proud of ourselves and a bit smug, but then the case numbers started to soar and the spotlight turned to Singapore's dirty laundry - the conditions of foreign workers, from countries like India and Bangladesh who provide cheap low-skilled labour. There are many web articles, mostly by foreign news channels, highlighting the poor living conditions in the purpose-built dormitories these workers live in. High density is thought to be the cause of a huge number of new confirmed Covid cases.

I am sorry to admit to you of all people, that even though I am in the design and construction industry,

along with many other foreign workers providing construction labour for interior office projects, I was guilty of complacency. Only realising conditions and infection rates for foreign workers were dire through the news.

As of now, Singapore still mandates we work from home unless there's a provable need to return to the workplace.

Ironically, foreign workers' homes are not where they can work, nor is it a safe place protected from the virus.

We are like many other countries; the virus has ripped open wounds exacerbating problems we already had in our communities.

Whilst we, the designers of "human-centric workplaces" contemplate what the future of the workplace is - for many of us in Singapore that is typically an air-conditioned office with amenities plentiful, it is an opportune time for us to think deeply about the workplaces of those who do not have the privilege to work at home and to consider how 'human-centric' the future HOME should be for many foreign workers in Singapore.

I can't help thinking about how my own home might be reconfigured to better support two adults and two teenagers - all working from home.



NORDIC WORK LIFE - A COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION

FROM DENMARK

Nordic work life and home life is underpinned by social welfare values that promote community fellowship and individual rights, whilst work environment legislation demands safe physical and psychological working environments for all.

So how has COVID-19 disrupted this successful society with its enviable work life balance?

Initially, the strategy of “Together Apart” was implemented by the Danish Prime Minister. Due to our highly digital society, a seamless shift to remote work, on-line teaching and virtual medical consultations occurred.

Less stress, higher productivity, greater connection to nature and family were reported. However, as the weeks passed, employees pushed to return to work and children begged to return to school. Everyone missed social interaction, stimulation and a sense of community and purpose.

Danes love their homes, and home life, but they also love to go to work; identifying with colleagues in very flat organisational structures, where lunch is eaten together in cool canteens and days are spent cooperating and co-creating with others. The opportunity to work from home has always existed for knowledge workers. And in most workplaces, there is a high level of trust, freedom and self-discipline.

Currently employers are in an evaluation mode. In a society characterised by democracy,

collaboration and dialogue it is necessary to consult employees to find out what to change as a result of COVID-19 and what is best for business long term.

Key dilemmas that shape the Danish debate and will inform the future of work include:

- / Social equality - there cannot be a new class of people free to work from home (due to their level of experience, profile etc.), while others have to turn up to get the job done (e.g. factory workers).
- / Work environment legislation covers working from home if you are home more than one day per week. This will intrude on people's personal domain, and put great responsibility on the employer.
- / Denmark is reliant on being a thought leader. Innovation, knowledge sharing, creative ideation and on boarding all suffer with a dispersed workforce.
- / The longer term impact and potential cost savings on real estate will be seen in the context of its impact on “arbejdsglaede” (work happiness).
- / Will individuals strike a balance between home life and family or is there a need for a collective set of playing rules to preserve Denmark's status as a great place to live, and setup businesses?

New skills are required in a unique workplace eco-system where flexibility, freedom and trust are key.

Working from home requires new skills and training in running virtual meetings and a need for a new form of leadership to guide a distributed workforce, beyond what we have seen with global teams reporting to line managers in other countries.

Denmark has a unique workplace eco-system that gives it some global advantages. With its well-supported, digitally immersed, design savvy workforce, it can create new hybrid workplace models that can be tested well within the cooperative, democratic and small-scale Danish society and cities.

Importantly, there are numerous platforms for sharing ideas through interests organisations, centres like BLOXHUB and internal work environment representatives within an organisation.

This open dialogue has the potential to lead to flexible, people-centric solutions that help individuals and society to thrive in an uncertain future.





THREE WEEKS...

FROM SCOTLAND

Did you know that it takes a cargo container ship approximately 20 minutes to come to a complete stop if its sailing in open water at its average speed?

20 whole minutes and that's just a boat! HOW do you stop a WHOLE country over a weekend? The whole world over a few months?

At 12.30pm on the 20th of March COVID-19 affected my small part of the world, 3 days before the official lockdown in the UK. I was not struck down with the virus or a front-line worker called upon to serve the country, but a working parent, collecting my children at the school gates, explaining to my son why he was not permitted to see his friends for his 10th birthday party scheduled the next day.

Spending time together as a family will be fun, I implored, it will be an adventure, we'll put your birthday back 3 weeks and it will be even better. I'll work from home, the dog will be happy. Think of the positives!

From then on everything ran in 3-week blocks...3 weeks of working from home full time, 3 weeks of home schooling, how hard can it be?

3 more weeks...We need to create work, school, life zones in the house. I am a designer and can do that standing on my head; after all, I've worked with some of the most reluctant people on the planet.

How hard can 2 kids, a spouse, my work commitments, and a dog as a brief be?

3 more weeks... wait 3 more weeks they said. Disparate messages on the news appeared, the British PM, the First Minister of Scotland. Neither views aligned, leaving the country wondering what to do. Can we do this for 3 more weeks?

3 more weeks... Juggling everyone and everything. Can you stop the workday to teach, have lunch if you have done times tables but neglected the skype call? Do sandwiches on the lounge carpet count as dinner for the children?

Scotland did well: we stayed indoors, abided by the rules, were considerate, celebrated and praised the amazing NHS, painted rainbows, clapped, shopped once a week – only for essentials and watched harrowing news reports that left us grieving for our European neighbours. Surely we could endure 3 more weeks. 3 more weeks to be safe.

I knew we could, but wondered if we had thought enough about the complications of home working at the scale and pace it was introduced? Did our home working kit really cut it? Is a 10 minute skype call with a manager, struggling just as much as we were, really helping?

I don't fear home schooling or worry about sq. ft. per person, what I worry about is the effect this will have on the mental health of the workforce.

Designers now debate the office of the future, technology, destination sites, spatial rationalisation, hubs, healthily and connected buildings and hundreds of exciting topics, but have we explored the emotional and mental impact of Covid-19 on people with the same vigour?

Some people went to 'work' to get away from something or someone, some share accommodation, some returned to childhood homes from major cities and some are completely alone.

What if work was not simply a place they went, but something different?

I have watched businesses handle home working, discussed company protocols and been party to amazing discussions on how work might change. But our visions of post Covid-19 work fluency still hit barriers in the public sector where I work. Even after sharing multiple 3 week intervals proved a change is possible.

I have also seen first-hand the trepidation to get involved with employee's mental health. It is a paralysing fear, do they say something, or stay quiet to avoid repercussions?

FEAR. I never thought that word would be mentioned in conjunction with the workplace, but by not addressing our fears, my fear is that people will suffer.



LOOKING TO OUR DEVICES

FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The San Francisco Bay Area was the first region in the U.S. to lock down, and for the first months of the pandemic it kept its case counts low.

As the virus spread nationally however and economic pressures prompted state and local governments to reopen sectors of their economy despite growing rates of infection, California's early gains were lost.

Now we're one of the worst-hit states in the worst-hit country in the world.

The challenge in San Francisco has been to find in this narrative some plausible reason for hope.

We think technology may be one. No surprise that the area where many of the world's tech giants are headquartered would look to its devices to mitigate the pandemic's impact. If tech was the lifeboat into which the privileged working class scrambled, the Bay Area felt relieved that the boat at least proved seaworthy. It was, after all, our boat. How it performs over a longer term and what value it brings to less privileged workers is still to be learned. We discovered design can happen as a strictly virtual exercise, but after seven months we know it's not our favourite way of meeting with clients, exchanging ideas, getting things built.

Indeed the lesson here on America's eternally forward-looking West Coast is that a post-pandemic workplace is going to be shaped equally by what we missed during the lockdown and our newfound determination to make meaningful change. We are already planning new typologies for the return to the office. We're looking at outdoor areas tailored for work; enhanced communications spaces for glitch-free collaboration across time zones; new ways to make work and workstations mobile, new synergies between companies and their local neighbourhoods.

All of these developments are continuations of trends that were emerging in workplace design before the pandemic made them essential. All speak to a movement toward greater agency for individual workers and a deeper appreciation for the value of community however it's wired.

During this crisis we have observed what might be called the "humanity" of tech both in its practical applications—keeping the lights on literally and economically—and in its no less important role of keeping the lights on in our hearts and minds.

Think about it.

How do we see the faces of our loved ones far away? How are our children learning? How are we staying connected to the arts and stories that enrich our lives? Most of the most important things we do now do online.

If the virus drove us behind closed doors, technology reassembled the world we had to quit on our desks and kitchen tables. Our virtual world will hold the real world for us until we can go back to it. And when we do this dress rehearsal for working together, keeping the lights on, nurturing hope will serve us well as the workplace that emerges prepares for what comes next.

Still there, climate change?





Tamara Segal

ROLLING WITH DIVERSITY: LONDON

FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

London – or at least settlement of some form around the River Thames – pre-dates the arrival of the Romans by some 5,000 years.

In this time, it's survived plagues, fires, invasions and the social upheaval associated with each. It's given shelter to notorious renegades and radicals, and gifted the world music, literature and art. It can lay plausible claim to be the world's financial capital. It may even be the world's capital.

Yet London is a series of villages knitted together by roads, pathways and railways. There are the traditional: the City of London (banking), the West End (retail and apparel) and Soho (media – and more niche pursuits). And the regenerated – Farringdon (design and interiors), Shoreditch (technology), Kings Cross (creative and 'big tech') and Paddington (corporate).

Its main commuter routes are essentially radial, all ending at a station with buffers. At least until the long-promised Crossrail opens. Yet these are now being challenged by a re-invigorated trend for environmentally responsible live/work community, particularly in the

eastern end of the city, bordering the financial district with its vibrant start-up scene. We can pass in minutes on a single-gear bicycle from the stomp of the glass and steel leviathan to vegan self-sufficiency.

The pandemic is merely another of the pauses that have punctuated its long and rambling life. We're waiting for it to blow through like an Autumn storm. Its history and arrangement make it ideally suited to emergence from Covid-19 with a new purpose. This is, after all, another regeneration. Cultural and spiritual rather than physical, inevitably with physical to follow as that is the natural order of things. Its essential character – resilient, creative, confident and resourceful – will help drive trends already in motion:

- / Sustainable communities – taking into account the whole urban environment, not simply the workplace;
- / Personalised transport – walking, cycling, scooting (when it's legal, but that hasn't deterred many);
- / Life over work – "always off" the new default;
- / Levelling up – a greater commitment to help the less fortunate or able; and
- / A challenge to the hegemony of growth at all costs.

London has coped with far worse than Covid-19 and emerged renewed. But it won't let an opportunity for a better world of work pass it by.





We confess, we didn't answer our professor's questions (after all we made him up) but as was stated at the onset, as design professionals we feel an obligation to offer ideas.

Alongside each author's prediction is an image, not of themselves, but the professor or mentor they have drawn inspiration from.

This continuum, from learning, to living in a country to offering thoughts on what may come we hope will form a social snapshot of life during Covid.

Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?



WHO INSPIRED ME? FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche was a German philosopher, essayist, and cultural critic. His writings on truth, morality, language, aesthetics, cultural theory, history, nihilism, power, consciousness, and the meaning of existence have exerted an enormous influence on Western philosophy and intellectual history.

NEIL

/ Has what I taught you all so many years remained relevant in this time of instability?

What you taught me was to ask questions, explore, challenge everything, build networks and to think for myself. I did all those things, which is why I'm now almost unemployable.

It's made me all the better prepared for instability.

But it's always been unstable. Uncertainty is what makes great things possible. Now is another such opportunity. No-one's going to fix it for us, it's up to us. So, what you taught me will come in very handy.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

We'll still have working days and the weekend.

We'll still have working hours from around 8am to 6pm, or part of. But... We'll dress as we wish, whatever we're doing.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

The workplace will become places of work. Not a singular entity, but many, of which 'the workplace' will be just one. And not always the most important one. Within this array, we will learn to understand how digital and physical places of work naturally mesh.

The once seemingly unstoppable drive to consolidation will be reversed. We will see far greater distribution of people and places of work.

We will see the physical places of work as part of a holistic urban environment, rejecting their tendency to isolate and exclude. Buildings will blend with their surroundings in the Deleuzian "fold".

And a bonus – within this new world of work and place, every day of the week will be special. Quite probably, especially Friday.



WHO INSPIRED ME? PROFESSOR JUDITH CHAFEE THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Chafee was an unrepentant modernist on the forefront of sustainable design. Her architecture shows great sensitivity to place, especially the desert landscapes of Arizona. Chafee was also a social justice advocate and a highly respected woman in a male-dominated profession. In addition to her architectural legacy, her decades of teaching helped shape a generation of architects. I feel blessed to have been one of them.

LAURIE

/ Has what I taught you all so many years remained relevant in this time of instability?

The importance of context is a point you drove into us. In the workplace, context is an appreciation of the complexity of a problem and bigger picture: the business, brand, culture and potential disruptions an organisation might face. Connection to purpose and meaning is especially critical during instability. It is our guiding light.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

As social beings, humans want to be together. Aggregating in a place that facilitates connections to others, collaborative activities and learning is a tradition that will remain - people will go to work. But we will abandon the temporal constructs of work we once held; when, where and how work occurs will take on new patterns in time and space.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

The workplace won't be about 'work' it will be about exchange of ideas, access to technology and specialised equipment and connection to a larger entity. This will drive the demand for a new mix of spaces geared to groups rather than individuals.

Confidence in institutions has eroded during Covid; in order to gain back trust, employees will be given greater say in how space serves them and the communities they are a part of. This will result in 24/7 buildings that blend commercial and social ambitions and bring to the fore tangible demonstrations of an organisations social responsibility.

We will enter a period of 'undesigned' where workplace acts as stage set, spaces will have the infrastructure and systemic logic to rapidly adapt to the needs and desires of users. Facility managers and corporate standards will only exist to serve space users and offer a playbook for self management and evolution.



WHO INSPIRED ME? SHIGERU BAN

Shigeru Ban is a Japanese architect that has inspired many as a role model for an architect with a higher purpose. Ban focused on developing innovative paper and cardboard tubing as a building material to provide a low cost, low-tech and recyclable architecture. He has applied his innovation to humanitarianism and ecological architecture, designing emergency shelters made from cardboard tubes for the refugees of war and natural disasters, such as Rwanda and Kobe earthquake.



WHO INSPIRED ME? HARRY STEPHENS FDIATHE UNIVERSITY OF NSW

Stephens' most significant contribution to interior design was arguably establishing the first Interior Architecture degree course in Australia. I was lucky enough to be part of the first graduating cohort of this course at the University of New South Wales in 1996. Trained as an architect, he realised his life-long interest in interior design early in his career and his contribution to the profession focussed on addressing the whole human condition, comprising body, mind and spirit in a manner that promotes human dignity and social responsibility.

KAHN

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

You taught us to continuously question ourselves on how architects can and should enhance people's lives - to be first cognisant of, then solve problems both macro and micro which exist within communities and individuals, to tackle the bigger picture, but not forget the details. Not only is it relevant to this period, it has shaped my approach to work and life.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

Our behaviours are still largely driven by convenience and experience within the bounds of social acceptance. Social acceptance boundaries have shifted through the pandemic. It remains to be seen which traditions will survive, all physical behaviours will be reassessed by weighing up convenience vs. experience, and replaced when convenience of online activity wins over experience of physical activity.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

The future workplace will consist of a central office, home and decentralised offices that will become destinations to experience a sense of belonging to a work community. Footprints will reduce in the central location with satellite offices in co-working spaces catering to community-centric employees. In time, like-minded organisations with mutual opportunities may set up space sharing schemes across different locations.

Whilst physical offices will still provide a gathering space for the tactile human interaction, technology will develop at a fast pace replicating the experience of physical interactions at affordable costs and greater sophistication. Adhoc collaboration involving both physical and online will be developed to manage the side effects in the office.

Someone tweeted that Coronavirus is the earth's vaccine to fight the virus (=humans). It's a wake-up call instigating a paradigm shift to demand and implement workplaces with reduced carbon footprint with net positive impact to the environment, and with a strong focus on wellness and safety of employees.

RACHAEL

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

Yes. Your mantra that great design is a response to the world around us is no more relevant than now. We need to challenge ourselves to re-think what great design means.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

New work traditions will emerge in parallel with a new leadership style that leverages the trust learned from the generally positive shift to remote and flexible work. People will be measured on their outcomes, not presenteeism; recruited on their talent, not limited by geographic proximity; teams and individuals will have autonomy to solve for themselves where they work to get great outcomes.

Workplaces will remain a critical place in the ecosystem of places we work. They will adopt new levels of adaptability to shape-shift with the changing needs of teams & will host new rituals to drive connection, culture and wellbeing as key indicators of performance.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

Great design will matter more, not less. Evidence based, outcomes driven design decisions will be enabled by the rise in data availability and collection and will define a new class of smart, high performing workplaces.

New metrics will be needed to reflect changing ways of working and measuring value – beyond 'bums-on-seat' efficiency. Measures of agility, wellbeing, innovation, collaboration, socialising, team building and learning are all on the cards.

Future workspace will be designed to optimise face to face interactions and this will need careful management to succeed. Social engineering, experience concierge and community managers to recalibrate space, interactions and experiences will be key.



WHO INSPIRED ME? LAURIE AZNAVOORIAN

There are so many people who have inspired me over the years. Inspiration comes from people who ask *Why* and *Why not?*, those who turn things on their head, who challenge and investigate perceived boundaries. The person who inspires me to change the world for the better is Laurie Aznavoorian. One of the few Designers who doesn't worry about asking *Why* repeatedly. Challenging briefs, pushing the possibilities of *What if* and always willing to look deeper into the challenges of design to provide the best possible solution. If you get a chance, ask her about the Kimono option.



WHO INSPIRED ME? PROF. STEPHEN MACCRACKEN SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

Steve introduced me to the idea of storytelling in design. We watched the movie "My Dinner with Andre," in his design concepts class, which is basically two guys talking over dinner. Steve's assignment was to design a space for these two based on their conversation. It taught me that design in its early stages is about understanding the end user and that the concept has to grow out of something meaningful to the people who use the space.

KIRSTY

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

Yes. You taught us to truly listen, to watch for what was not said, to gently encourage rather than demand compliance with our grand vision for a better workplace. You empowered us to question the brief, the culture, the business rational and most importantly how to engage with the people within the workplace not just the Board. After all, we design places for people not people for places.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

I hope the world continues to share knowledge, support each other and actively pursue connection. As advanced as we have become technology wise, our fundamental need for connection, community and communication has never changed. The traditional thoughts on work and workplace could evolve, but only if we maintain our curiosity around the 'what if we try mentality.' We must be prepared to experiment and potentially adapt our vision as things progress. There is a risk of running back to the familiar, the 'normal', if leaders are not prepared to try new ways.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

I plan to deviate from the question slightly by suggesting a *What if?* What if we started from scratch, assume we have an opportunity to create the future not just predict it. Look at things differently, look at all the dots rather than just the workplace dots? Can we join the dots and design a better community, a better way of living and working? I think we can, we just need to be a Brave.

There is a phenomenal opportunity for governments and public sector bodies to align and create a well-designed future that would benefit all aspects of life. Hub working has been discussed over the last few years in the UK but no one seems to have fully championed it, is this fear perhaps?

A hub could be so much more than a workplace, connected to schools or universities to aid future talent with career choices and knowledge sharing, on site restaurants could be open to the elderly to encourage social interaction, local coffee shops providing overflow meeting space to encourage small businesses back on to the on the high street. Empty sites could become publicly funded collaboration spaces supporting start ups with sections hired out to private companies as co working spaces. Green spaces transformed into urban gardens or wellness areas, empty shops mindful retreats.

PRIMO

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

I think it's more relevant than ever. As we're working on post-pandemic offices we're discovering it's all about the experience of the space—how is this going to feel, what can we do to make it less stressful? Space as experience was an early design lesson. This crisis has reminded us of the impact our profession has on daily life and of our responsibility to design these spaces with loving care.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

I think there's going to be a strong urge to carry on as before. We're seeing that in the way people are resuming old habits at the beach, in restaurants, in parks. What will be replaced I hope is the idea that we can do these things without thought to their larger consequences. It's incumbent on designers to help a population eager to "get back to normal" rethink that normal in healthier terms.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

Closer relationships between workplaces and their neighbourhoods: more neighbourly access, more community outreach. We have missed each other. A generally happier work environment. I think a lot of us have a new understanding of where work fits in our lives and how we want it to fit. Will employers agree? Individually-wrapped pretzels. Gummi bears in compostable jackets. A new age of health-friendly packaging for snacks.



SHARON

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

Absolutely. The process of examining the relationship between human and environment remains just as relevant. You taught us to have an awareness of social and temporal conditions, and that a sensitivity to societal changes can allow us to positively contribute to the world as designers. This is crucial during a time of instability.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

The fundamental human need to connect and belong will not change anytime soon. Physical spaces for community engagement will still be critical. The office will still be a place where people gather, as will restaurants and bars. Many indoor spaces will be replaced by outdoor space, which will become reimaged in these typologies.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

The future workplace will be viewed through a healthcare lens. From the implementation of touchless technologies and cleaning protocols, to generating spaces of respite, environmental psychology will influence many of these strategies in the future. There will be a compelling argument for wellness-driven design.

Organizations will give employees the power to decide where, how and when they work. One size does not fit all, and flexibility in experiences will be important in providing a variety of spaces where everyone can feel comfortable, safe, and productive.

With the acceptance of remote work, formally rigid work environments will evolve into hybrid work models. There will be specific reasons to go into the office, whether it is a celebration, brainstorming session, or creative collaboration. This paradigm shift will cause new spaces and typologies to emerge.

WHO INSPIRED ME? DR. OLIVIA HAMILTON RMIT UNIVERSITY'

Olivia Hamilton is a researcher and academic at RMIT in Interior Design, School of Architecture and Urban Design. Her interest is in how 'commoning' (the social and psychological processes that people go through to work together) can foster meaningful collaborations, inclusivity and care-taking attitudes through engagement with creative projects. Her praxis involves working across disciplines and design pedagogy to initiate socially engaged creative works situated in public space and maintained or developed through commoning processes and values.



PAULETTE

/ Has what I taught you all so many years ago remained relevant in this time of instability?

Complex problems where people and environments interact require creative and holistic solutions. In these times of instability, we have the professional skills to conceive and create new frameworks for work. People can relate to the environments we create, have reactions and opinions. So, YES, our knowledge and skills are relevant; vital in fact.

/ What traditions will we carry on and what ones would be replaced?

We will continue to prioritise the relationship building and interactions in physical space. We will preserve, and even amplify organisational culture and the unique selling points of each organisation and its workplace.

Leadership determining the framework for how its employees work, when it comes to individual, self-directed work tasks, will be replaced with freedom of choice to deliver wherever, and to some degree whenever. This will host new rituals to drive connection, culture and wellbeing as key indicators of performance.

/ What are three predictions you have for the future workplace?

In societies like Scandinavia, there will be a focus on the preservation of the social welfare model and its equality and unified workforce – make the new opportunities available to everyone

Corporate office buildings will be redefined and new hybrids created that appeal to younger generations, extend the patterns of work they develop at school and university, and give purpose and motivation in life

New alternative designs and concepts for home offices and homeworking (Danish design is a global trademark so I hope for great new ideas for both the physical & psychological for work at home).

WHO INSPIRED ME? PETER GEYER

Peter has taught me how to conceive, present and write about ideas in a compelling and human-centric way. He also taught me that design is relevant to everything we do and every decision that leaders make.

THANK-YOU