

2019 Dulux Study Tour Report

Ben Peake

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Copenhagen

London

Lisbon

2019 Dulux Study Tour Post Tour Report

2019 Australian Institute of Architects Dulux Study Tour Prize

Alix Smith
Ben Peake
Carly McMahon
Jennifer McMaster
Phillip Nielsen

Thank you for the laughs, tears, and tarts;

The Australian Institute of Architects
Dulux
Caroline Field
Anurita Kapur
Mai Huynh
Linda Cheng
Alix Smith
Carly McMahon
Jennifer McMaster
Phillip Nielsen

We would all agree it's impossible to know a city in 72 to 96 hours. However, experiencing three cities in ten days provides the benefit of fast contrast and comparisons. We compared the publicness of Copenhagen where design is for the city, and an inherent part of the city. We experienced the palatable energy of London immediately. A calmness followed with our final city and the waterside charm of historic Lisbon.

Upon returning from the 2019 Dulux Study Tour, I was often asked: "what was your highlight?" In the first couple of days, I felt a bit taken back by this question. How could I do the study tour justice with a single experience or piece of architecture? However, I quickly came to identify a few key experiences that I could easily share with people to convey how privileged I felt to be a recipient of the award. A few are expressed here as I begin to unpack what we have learnt.

Copenhagen Design For The City



Design for the City

The architects and tour guides we spoke to during our time in Copenhagen (Lundgaard & Tranberg, Gehl Architects, Leth + Gori, COBE, Studio David Thulstrup) all spoke about the city, their role in it, and how design needs to be subservient to the needs of the city and its people.

The civic mindfulness appeared at multiple scales: a power plant as ski slope, a school playground without fences along a suburban street allowing children to build their own relationship with the city, and a car park with a playground on top. There is a general belief that architecture must serve multiple uses, resolve complex urban issues, and provide for the city.

1. The Crystal Sports and Culture House, Dorte Mandrup

Nicknamed 'The Crystal' in light of its semi-translucent membrane made of polycarbonate, the design allows light to filter in to the dark Copenhagen night. During the day, the space is illuminated with natural light.

2. Sjakket Youth Club, PLOT = BIG + JDS

Playfulness of form, colour, and bubble windows made the youth club a fun place to be.

3. Centre for Cancer and Health, NORD Architects

As we rode around Copenhagen, something interesting appeared on every corner as we rode our bikes from building to building.

4. Danish National Bank, Arne Jacobsen

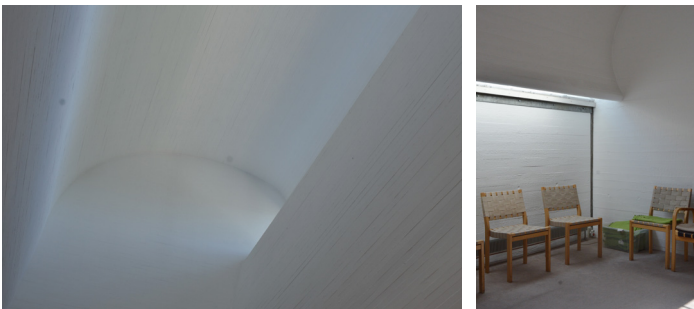
With a strong urban presence, the Danish National Bank was the first stop on our fast-paced 2019 Dulux Study Tour Bike Tour. A perfect way to experience a new city after a 24+ hour flight from Australia.

Copenhagen
Bagsværd Church, Jørn Utzon



Copenhagen

Bagsværd Church, Jørn Utzon



Bagsværd Church tour with Jan Utzon

From the moment we entered the Church with Jan Utzon, who worked on the project with his father, we sensed we were about to experience something special. Our minds forgot the photos and drawings we had studied over the years and we felt the warm embrace of the interior.

As we walked through the church, Jan described the opportunity he was given by his father to run the project. Jan shared the stories we all know of the project: the thinness of the concrete shells ceiling, the 10 percent cost-saving by reducing all the drawings by 10 percent in a photocopier, and the project's commission for Utzon senior after returning from Australia. However, Jan also shared his personal experience of working on the project.

In describing how the various concrete treatments come together in unison, Jan reflected on an analogy from his father – “If we look at the hand, we see the skin is different to the nails but they are all part of the same family.”

Continuing the tour to the smaller rooms, I touched every surface – taken by the clarity, rawness, details, and moments of compression and

expansion. Every space is supported by an ever-present play of light and shadow.

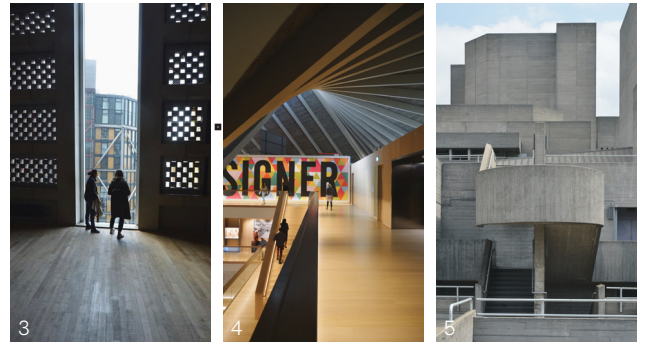
As the tour with Jan began to come to a natural close, Jørgen Ellegård Frederiksen, the Church organist arrived and Jan asked him to play for us. Jørgen first filled the church with the loose sounds of the organ, before revealing a piano which had sat covered in the corner during our tour.

Jørgen told the group the piano was Jørn Utzon's final work for the church, and his final work in life. A project, like the Sydney Opera House, that he would never see completed. With a maple structure and whitewash pine veneer, the piano was constructed by Steingraeber and Söhne after Jan and Jørgen delivered a physical model to their German studio.

The crisp and deep sound of the piano filled the hall – we were experiencing a sense of how a ceremony might feel at the church. The immerse architectural experience became too much, and we all began to cry.

Hearing Jan's personal connection to the project, the timing of the piano, and the inspiring work of a talented architect made this morning an experience I will never forget.

London International Energy



London, International

Instantly, I felt the energy of London. Landing on a Thursday evening, eleven years since my last time in the city, as we travelled via min-bus to our hotel I could sense the energy of people enjoying after-work beers on the footpath outside each pub - which appeared on almost every corner. The practices we visited in London (Peter Barber Architects, 6a Architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, Foster + Partners, AL_A, HASSEL) expressed different energy. An outward facing global reach of British architects. One studio we visited described the profile of the practice as "We're a traditional London architecture office - we have projects all over the world." This energy would later translate into watching Eurovision in Soho, and afterwards, stomping down Old Compton Street towards Heaven nightclub.

1. The Barbican Estate

On our free night in London, I watched the sun set over The Barbican Complex. I knew this project was built on a large area destroyed by WWII bombings, but I didn't realise it was this big. Walking through, the area was filled with people enjoying the warmth of the Thursday evening setting sun, or seeing a show at The Barbican Centre. Within the Barbican enclave of waterfalls and reaching brutalist architecture, the night ran at a different speed compared to the rest of London.

2. Lloyd's of London

Like nothing else, Lloyd's of London Building (2) by Richard Rogers. We had a number of conversations about the ambitions of this building that have made me really interested in experiencing the internal open-plan spaces.

3. The Tate Modern

I loved the Tate Modern when I visited in 2008, so it was great to see the Switch House (3) addition by Herzog & de Meuron. Unfortunately, given the speed of the London walking-tour, we didn't have time to see any exhibitions, but we made it to the top of the extension for an outlook over the city.

4. London Design Museum

Great volume sites over the Design Museum (4), London. We met with Museum Director, Alice Black, who described the history of the organization, and the refurbishment of the former Commonwealth Institute by John Pawson.

5. National Theatre, London, Denys Lasdun

London is a city filled with brutalism. The National Theatre is widely loved, and symbolic of London's sophisticated appreciation of Architecture.

Lisbon
Pavilion of Portugal, Alvaro Siza.



Lisbon

Historic Waterside Calm



1. Lisbon

There is something about cobblestones underfoot that provide a constant and gentle reminder of a city's history. This constant reminder was reflected in each of the practices we visited in Lisbon (Embaixada, Bak Gordon, ARX). They spoke of the city's history by beginning their talks with the story of the building their studios occupied, and the surrounding context. This was one of the constants in the conversations we had with architects, the second being the influence of Alvaro Siza.

After the fast pace of Copenhagen and London, there was a calmness and relaxing quality to our time in Lisbon - an effect of the sun and seaside location.

2. MAAT

I loved the play of light on the ceramic tiles of the Museum of Art Architecture and Technology (3) by AL_A. Amanda Leveté Architects was one of the practices we visited in London. It was fun to see the finished building after discussing the museum's materiality in their Brewery Road studio. Most London practices we visited operated internationally. The architects we've spoken to in Lisbon don't have any issues with external architects designing projects in their city.

4. Oceanário de Lisboa

Another lovely ceramic tile facade at the Oceanário de Lisboa extension by Campos Costa Arquitectos.

5. Gare do Oriente

The play of light and shadow of Gare do Oriente (5), the soaring concrete train station designed by Santiago Calatrava, is an example of a single material used completely and expressively to create an interesting and piece of architecture. Above the solid concrete structure sits a delicate skeletal steel canopy for the platforms. Now used by the daily commuters, and station was designed for the 98' Expo.

Pavilion of Portugal

Photos don't prepare you for the scale of Pavilion of Portugal (previous page) by Alvaro Siza for the 1998 Lisbon Expo.

2019 Dulux Study Tour Post Tour Report



The 2019 Dulux Study Tour is a jam-packed whirlwind tour of fun, reflection, inspiration, and a bit of emotion thrown in for good measure. An experience, I believe, will take us time to understand the full value to our careers. From the moment we stepped off the plane and onto the timber parquet floors of Copenhagen airport, we were surrounded by architectural and design inspiration, including a sighting of Bjarke Ingels at the airport.

The tour structure of visiting three cities, fifteen practices, and countless buildings and spaces over ten days meant that our conversations compared the differences and similarities. Comparisons were made to our own practices in Australia and between the individual cities of the tour. This is something we all do when travelling, but having the focus of five architects put the discussions into overdrive. From Copenhagen's sense of publicness, to London's palatable energy, and historic Lisbon – we discussed our initial impressions of the essence of each city. What opportunities are there for us to learn from the positive and negative aspects of these places? What can we learn from the experience of the various architecture studios we are visiting?

Our analysis and reflection of cities also filtered into our own relationships as we quickly began to form friendships. Conversations about our Zodiac star signs, Myers-Briggs type indicator, and love languages were intertwined with questions of how we create, protect, and improve culture.

Over dinners, drinking, and dancing we were able to enjoy the cities, and each other's company.

The professional and life experiences of everyone on the tour made the ten days more than a study of architecture and practices. It was a much broader conversation of the role and value of design in our society, and how each of us can contribute to culture.

We were joined on the tour by our Dulux hosts, Anurita Kapur and Caroline Field. They have a real passion for supporting and encouraging emerging architects. They wanted us to get the most from the cities and practices we visited. This extended to embracing the 2019 Eurovision Grand Final in London, and fuelling our obsession with Pastel de nata in Lisbon. Linda Cheng, of Architecture Media, inspired our Dulux Study Tour band photos (see above), something we have become accustomed to, and by the end of the tour we were actively looking for our own awkward family photo opportunities. In the hours following the formal end of the tour, and without the steady guide and perfectly timed WhatsApp messages from Mai Huynh of the Australian Institute of Architects, the Dulux Study Tour winners had missed trains, taken a taxi to the wrong hotel, and struggled to open doors of an Airbnb. A sign of Mai's commitment to getting us where we needed to be when we needed to be there. Thank you all!