

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHITECTS**

**DULUX STUDY TOUR  
2024**

**FLYNN  
CARR**

**5 WINNERS**  
**10 TRAVEL COMPANIONS**

**2 CONTINENTS**  
**4 CITIES/ REGIONS**

**TOKYO | BERLIN | MADRID & VALLADOLID**

**21 PRACTICES**  
**16 PROJECTS**  
**2 WALKING TOURS**  
**2 CYCLING TOURS**

**IN 12 DAYS**



# INTRO | OVERVIEW:

Much like the practice of architecture, the Dulux Study Tour 2024 felt to me akin to the complex interplay of interwoven threads and thoughts.

The Tour, generously funded by Dulux, for which we were the sixteenth group of grateful recipients, was an opportunity to experience and engage with seminal works of architecture and the practices responsible across the globe. The People, the Process of Practice, and Place are the Threads that this report draws upon to reflect on our time in Tokyo, Berlin, Madrid, and Valladolid.

Our experiences were enabled by the structure and scaffold of our Itinerary that is facilitated by the ongoing support of Dulux and the skilful curation of Abbey Czudek and her team at the RAIA. The regimental itinerary is shaped by the collective suggestions of the winners and was the foundation of our shared experience.

Thank you to Dulux and the RAIA for enabling our collective journey and fostering our interests across an intense 12 days of travel and engagement, exploration and awe.

## IMPACT & ENGAGEMENT:

How do you convey the complex, thought provoking, colourful, sensory overload that is the Dulux Study Tour? An almost impossible task?

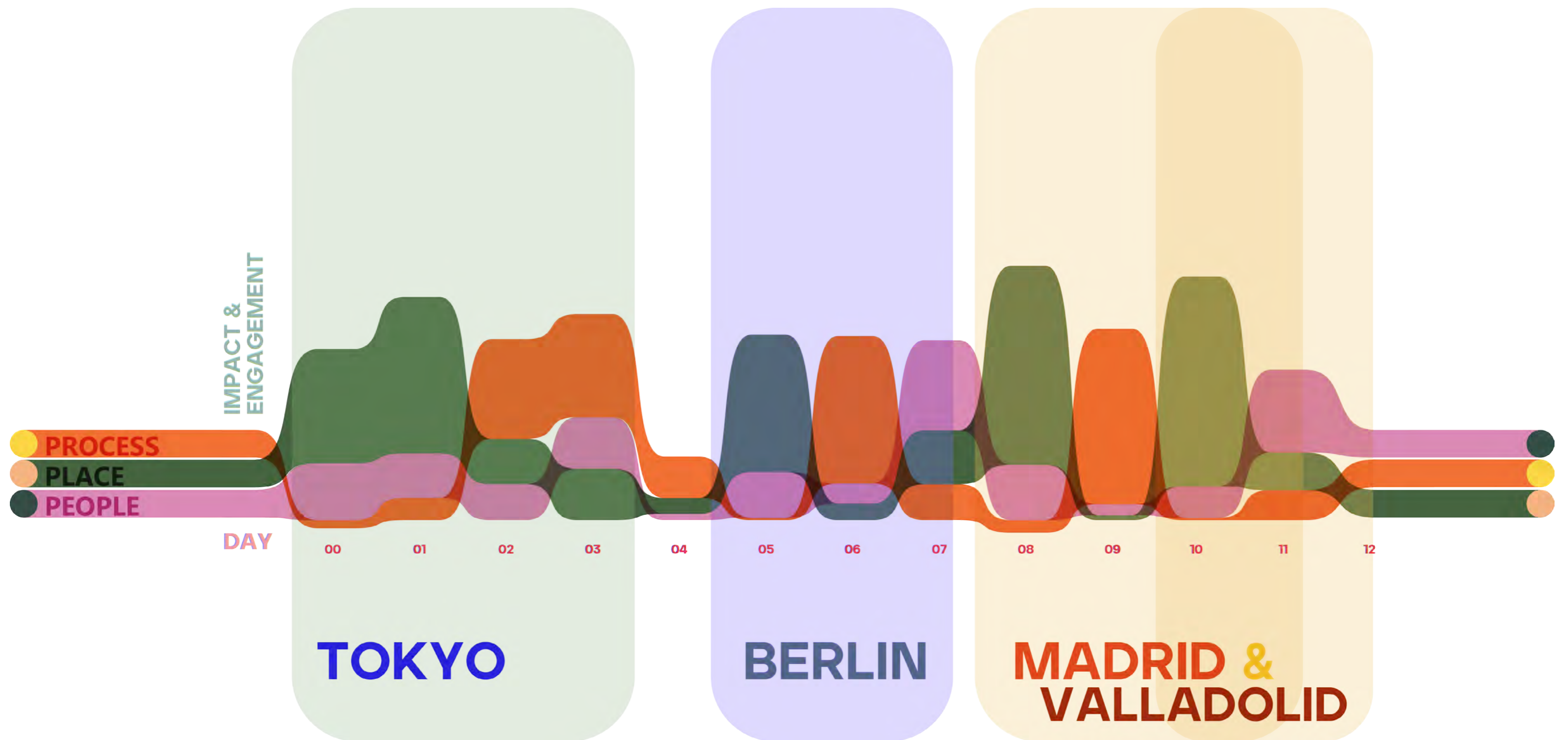
The following is my attempt to summarise an intense array of experiences.

Imagine the Dulux Study Tour as a vivid living tapestry of experiences that take place across an international itinerary unfolding with military precision over a 12 day period. On compiling reflections and observations, with recorded summaries of experiences recorded on the categorised itinerary.

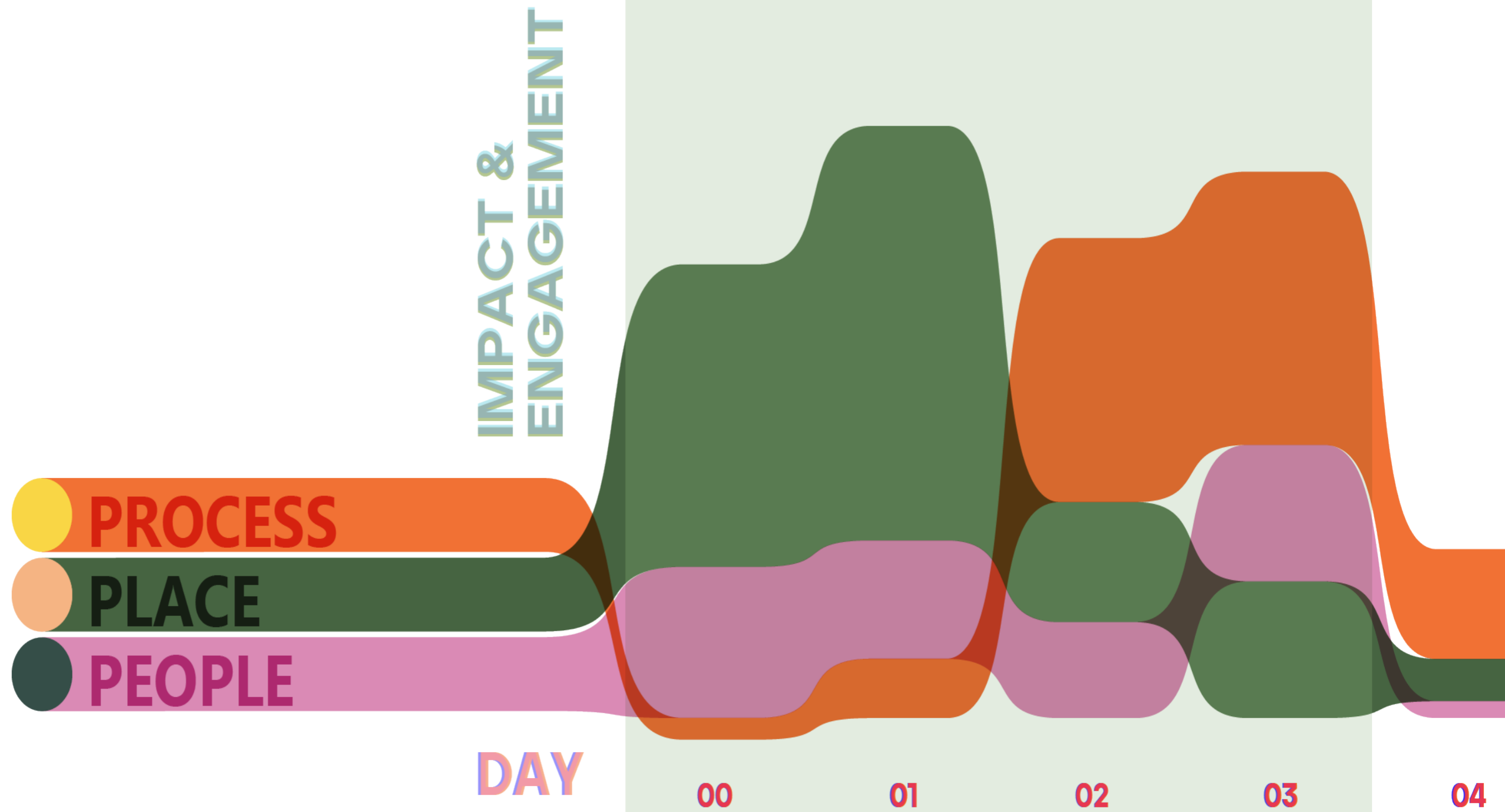
Scores of impact and engagement resulted from a summary per event that included total photos, sketches, and conversations provoked. The ranked scoring created a ribbon chart of Impact and Engagement over the duration of the Tour, a visual means of presenting my experience.

The categories for events and experiences formed the threads of People, Process, and Place.

# PEOPLE, PLACE, PROCESS



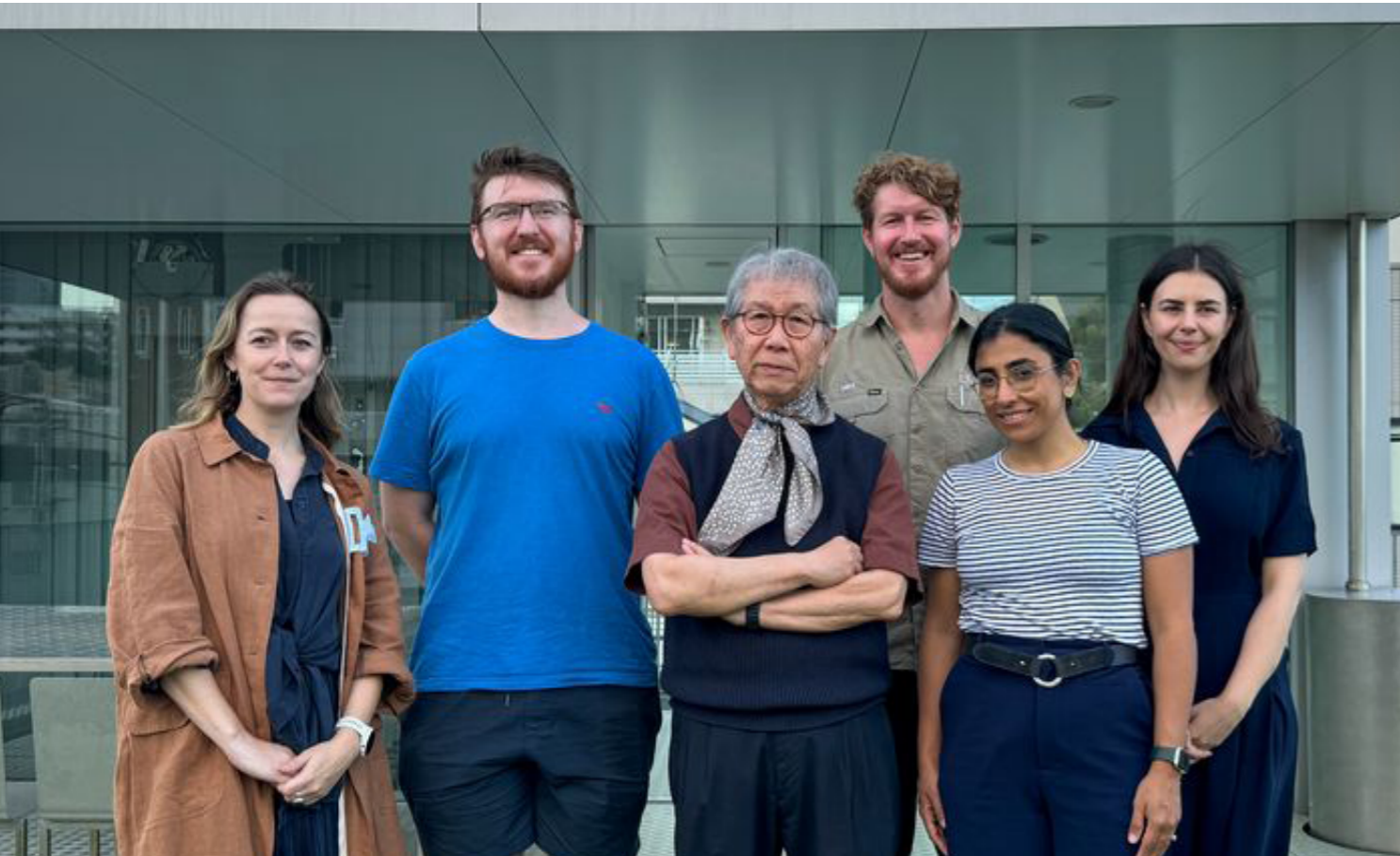
# TOKYO



# TOKYO PEOPLE

Of all the experiences from our time in Tokyo, the theme that seemed to run concurrently through the city was a generosity and spirited kindness of Tokyoites. This was exemplified by the lovely family of the Chestnut Tree Library who generously opened their home for us to experience with their architects from Atelier Bow-Wow.

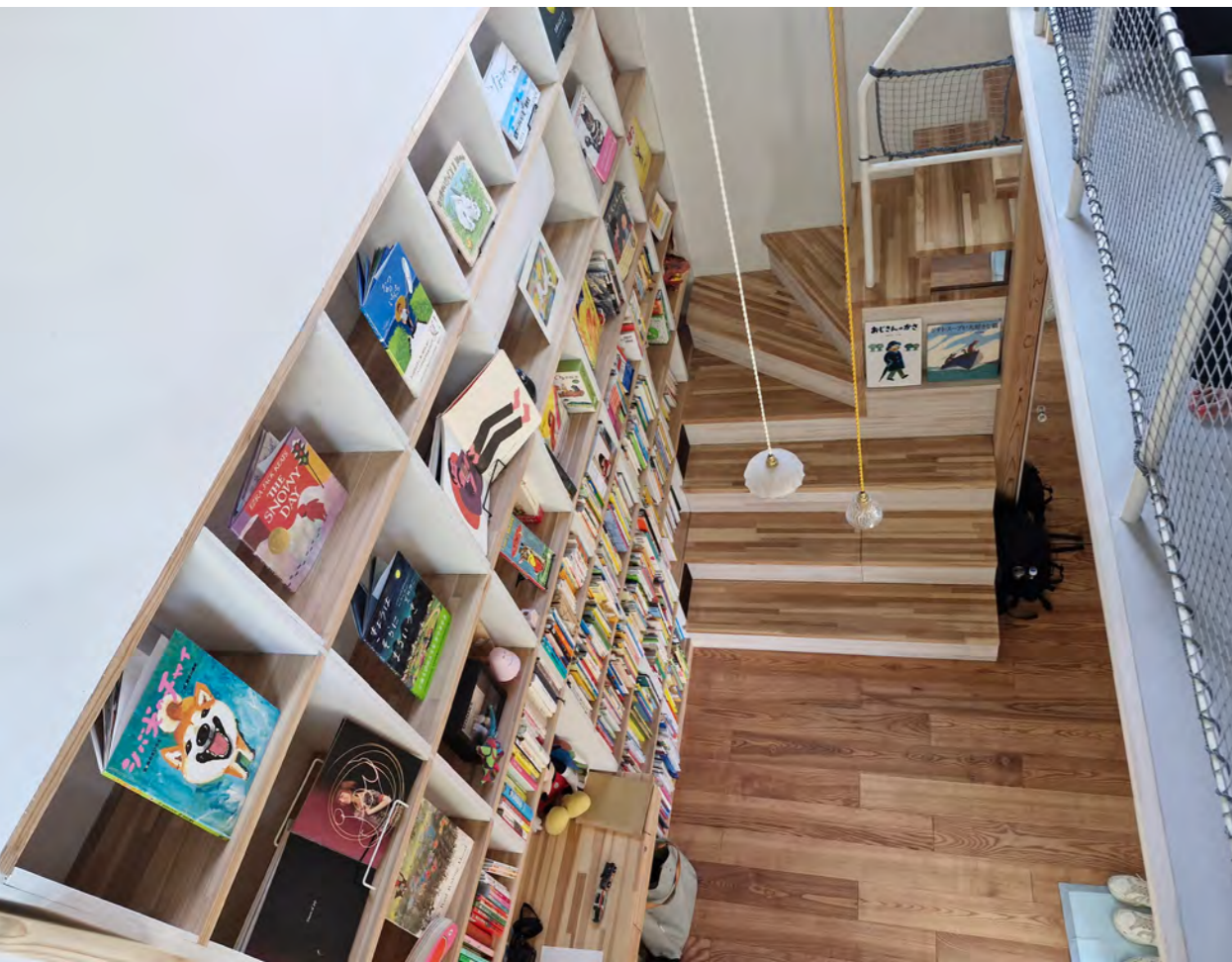
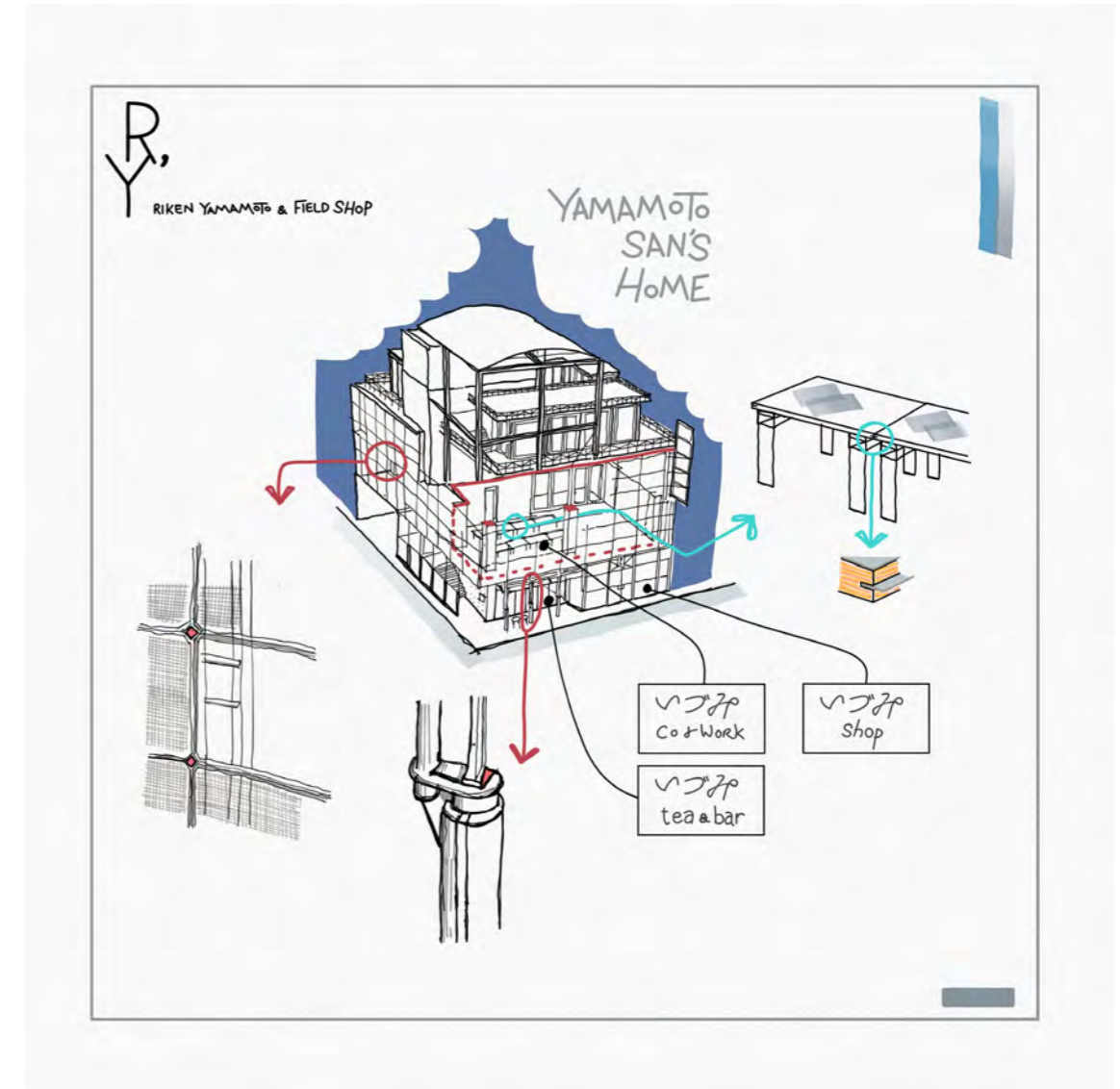
Two very proud young children happily showed off their home to the study tour, with mum close by fielding questions as we enquired as to their experience of the space and the intergenerational living arrangement. The family Shiba Inu entertained the dog enthusiasts of the group, as the design team keenly highlighted the low-cost nature of select building materials, upcycling of materials from the old family home, and the overall plans for future development of the site.



# TOKYO PLACE

Carefully controlled and curated are fair descriptors for both Tokyo and the nature of much of the architecture for which Tokyo is famous. I don't believe you can understand a city/ place or region in a single visit or three-day period; the closest you might come to having an appreciation or understanding is through the eyes of a local. Our tour guide, Taka, provided us with the best possible foundation for this on our day one tour through the chaos of Shibuya, the juxtaposed history and contrasts found within the peaceful Meiji Gardens, and the ostentatious glamour of Omotesando. Shibuya is a fantastic example of how humans seek to control, confine and curate the natural world with the train station built over and around the Shibuya River.

The Place with which I resonated most was the diverse program and consideration of Gazebo House by recent Pritzker laureate Riken Yamamoto. Truly a building for the community with mixed-use program including a restaurant/ bar, co-working office area and bookable meeting room, retail, and Yamamoto-san's own home split across the top terrace.





# TOKYO PROCESS

There was a prevalence of model making within the many practices we visited, prompting passionate conversation amongst the study group. In Tokyo, there appeared a significant cultural importance to modelmaking in the testing and realisation of concepts and the communication of ideas. Another point of group interest in process was regarding unpaid internships; these continue to be the accepted cultural norm for architectural practices in Japan.

Interestingly, at Kengo Kuma & Associates this practice was time limited to a three-month period after which you would do a 12hr studio-like exam, producing drawings and a model to present to Kuma-san the following day – after which you would know whether you were to be employed.

Regarding procurement processes, I found it notable that up to 80% of work in some Japanese studios is procured via competitions.

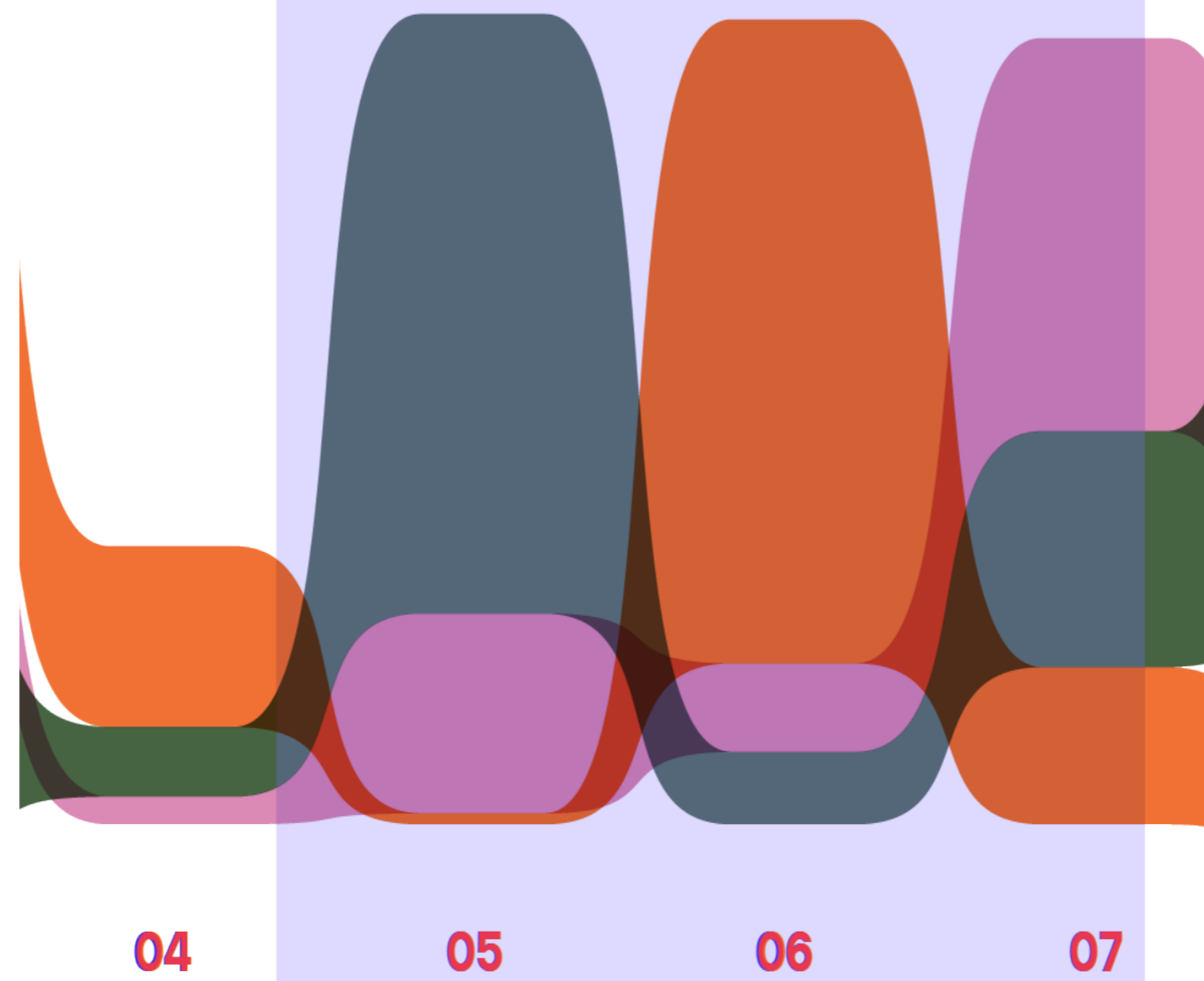
The Practices whose processes I found myself most drawn were small studios similar in size to our SDA office. Two examples of this were Riken Yamamoto & Field Shop and Keigo Kawai of Studio TAB.

Yamamoto-san's studio is physically divided across multiple split levels that allow for a layering of program and personnel; the office appears to function well as a small community of its own. Yamamoto-san's staff spoke warmly of the communal meals and lifestyle led by the team – as they often come together to share lunch, a drink or occasional dinner either on the roof top terrace or at the Gazebo House bar. A practice of some 12 or so people producing highly considered work for local communities on a global scale.

Keigo Kawai generously journeyed in from his rural practice to present to us his parsimonious work at TAB, namely his Super Low-cost Big House (SLBH) projects. Costing around ¥21 million yen (approx. \$200,000 AUD), the houses are made from simple and readily available materials of standard dimensions. Kawai gives the owners of his houses complete freedom when designing the layouts. His focus is on flexibility – facilitating blank layouts/ "unfinished architecture" with "maximum flexibility" enabling residents to infill and personalise as they see fit.



# BERLIN



# BERLIN PEOPLE

Memorable interactions with people added colour to our time in Berlin.

We began our time in Berlin with some team bonding as after 24hrs in the air the five winners were dropped by our airport transfer a kilometre from our hotel in the pouring rain. Nothing like a dour shared experience to bring the team together!

We set-out the following day for Alexander Platz to begin our bike tour. Our guide, Richard, was patient with our questions and provided us a solid foundation for our time in Berlin to assist our contextualisation of process and place.

An experience that will stay with me for some time was our night out at the Berlin Philharmonic to see the incomparable Marion Cottillard perform in Honegger's "Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher", Joan of Arc, as it navigated Joan's visions and reflections during her show trial through a fusion of musical styles. While I may not have understood all of the French it was captivating none-the-less.



# BERLIN PLACE

Whilst Tokyo may have been curated and controlled, Berlin provided a punchy contrast, with its largely unkempt verges, parks, and graffiti adorned walls projecting grit and grunge. Something about this urban wild makes the city feel approachable and less uptight. That the locals are seemingly unbothered by a few weeds and the expressive tags of spray paint speaks perhaps to the people having different priorities - perhaps a freedom being sought and celebrated, stepping up from a complex past?

Notably, there appears to be a deliberate move occurring in Berlin back toward live-work models of residence, akin to how Berliners historically dwelt and worked within a single allotment. Suburban sprawl and the daily commute are combated, concurrently enlivening the city, as the people return to reside within mixed-use buildings and injecting local life into the communal parks, bars, and restaurants of modern Berlin.

The lack of mechanical cooling for the buildings we experienced in Berlin was thought provoking for us Aussies. I couldn't help but feel that many of the spaces we engaged with



were surprisingly warm despite mild outdoor temperatures in the mid 20s. Coming from arid Alice Springs, I appreciated the irony of having been conditioned to expect fresh air turnover at a constant 24° despite much higher external temperatures.

Of the places we visited in Berlin my highlight was Wohnregal by FAR frohn&rojas, a 6-story building housing live/work studios. Translating as 'Housing Rack / Pre-fab House', the project is built using a modular kit of parts of pre-cast concrete. With ease of replication, and the considered limits of the local precast manufacturing capacity, TT-ceilings span over 12m, façade-to-façade, at the full extent of manufacturer precast tables.



# BERLIN PROCESS

The first of our practice visits was to Barkow Leibinger, a studio synonymous with the architecture of industry, for companies who have evolved technologies and refined craft. Martina Bauer spoke of the push to see Berlin return to the colocation of residential and industrial functions of old, enabled by a move to an “urban” planning zone. Fundamental to their practice methodology is the triangle of practice, publishing/ research and teaching. Martina urged us all to ensure we “talk to the people who make things”.

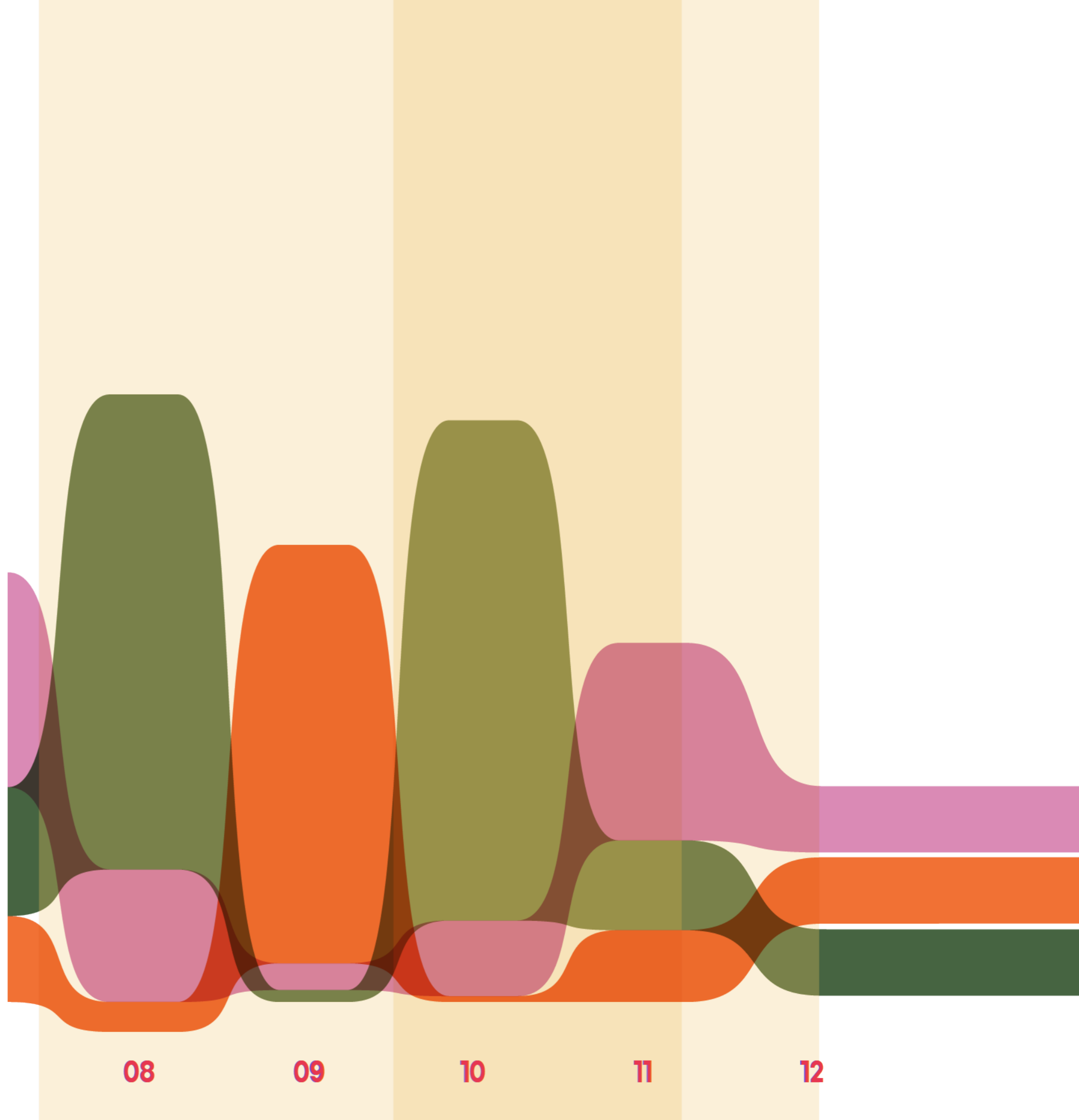
Discussing internships and the prevalence of model making in Berlin proved an interesting contrast to Tokyo. In Berlin, unpaid internships are slowly becoming something of the past whilst model making remains key as a means of communication and concept development. An example of this: Barkow Leibinger displayed models front of house in a ‘Schaufenster’ (Store Window) at the front of their studio precinct.

The capacity of small practice was also highlighted in Berlin. On visiting Wohnregal and FAR frohn&rojas’ studio, I noted how lean their high performing team ran. The catalyst for the formation of FAR was the lack of paid work during the global financial crisis and although they remain relatively compact with eight staff in Berlin and four in Chile, their work now extends across three continents, evidence of the global reach of small practice. Similarly, for the award winning J Mayer H und Partner, an agile studio of 20 staff has come to be their ideal practice size.

Reflecting on procurement processes, Berlin offered its own perspective. The anecdotal percentage of competition procured projects for J Mayer H und Partner was approx. 80%, with a success rate of 40%. I found this remarkable considering the amount of work required for each entry and the contrast to Australian practice.



# MADRID & VALLADOLID



# MADRID & VALLADOLID

## PEOPLE

Our time in Madrid began on a cycling tour with the effervescent architectural tour guide Werner, who passionately detailed the overlapping history and development of the city. When his busy hands weren't aiding his narration, they were rapidly scrawling the next datum on the city map layered over the day as details of Madrid's past were highlighted and brought to the fore. He speaks of the comparative youth of the city when compared to other European capitals, of its founding arising from a need for a neutral geographic centre, of short population booms that contributed to a mix of contrasting styles, a tradition of ornament over monument. I was drawn in by Werner's enthusiasm for the city he loves and has chosen to reside in, of public spaces that are well cared for and well utilised, a city that for the most part maintains a human scale and prioritises its people.

Every now and then you meet someone that is truly out of the box, a character without comparison, on meeting Antón García-Abril of Ensamble Studio I think we all realised we'd met just such a person. He was warm and generous with his time, in his element describing their process at Ensamble's Fabrica, their new research and fabrication facility. Whilst his practice and process may well be beyond our studios means and local capacity in our context of Alice Springs one couldn't help but be in awe of the person and experimental process - Antón is an artist for whom there appear no limits.



# MADRID & VALLADOLID

## PLACE

Specific highlights of place from the cycling tour, beyond experiencing the city itself for the first time, were undoubtedly the apartment complex of Edificio Girasol by Josep Antoni Coderch (1966) and the glorious concrete canopies of the Hipódromo de la Zarzuela by E. Torroja, C. Arniches, M. Domínguez (1936). Riding along City-Park Madrid Río, public parkland over a portion of some 12km of motorway buried 8m beneath the ground, I found placemaking at its best, the prioritisation of people and public space.

Travelling out from the city to regional Spain was a welcome contrast from the city scapes of Tokyo, Berlin, and Madrid. We soon found ourselves crossing the mountains and descending onto plains of poppies and fields of wind turbines, the revenue from which has facilitated community projects that stand as exemplars for regional development.

The projects of Óscar Miguel Ares of Contextos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo were my personal standouts from our time in regional Valladolid. The Ayuntamiento en Valverde De Campos successfully integrates a mix of municipal offices, council chambers, a café/ restaurant, GP clinic, and childcare facilities whilst also doubling as a public pedestrian avenue. This highly

considered mix of program and materiality celebrates the skills of local trades and provides access and amenity for an ageing population.

This regional city of Valladolid itself provided two well considered projects from Estudio Primitivo Gonzalez. The Municipal Archive and rehabilitation of the Church of San Agustin, a complex brief that required the conservation of ruins, celebration of the existing Church and the combined functional requirements of a living archive - the resulting spaces are finely detailed, generous and warm. The Valladolid School of Art is similarly generous in the provision and prioritisation of student-centred spaces. Whilst undoubtedly introspective the bright internal courtyards, expansive textures and bold materiality, result in an atmosphere that celebrates creation.

As a proud regional generalist architect, I loved experiencing these exemplars of regional and rural place making, a real testament to a keen understanding of both local industry and clientele, plus the skilful integration of complex briefs, ultimately resulting in well-loved community spaces.





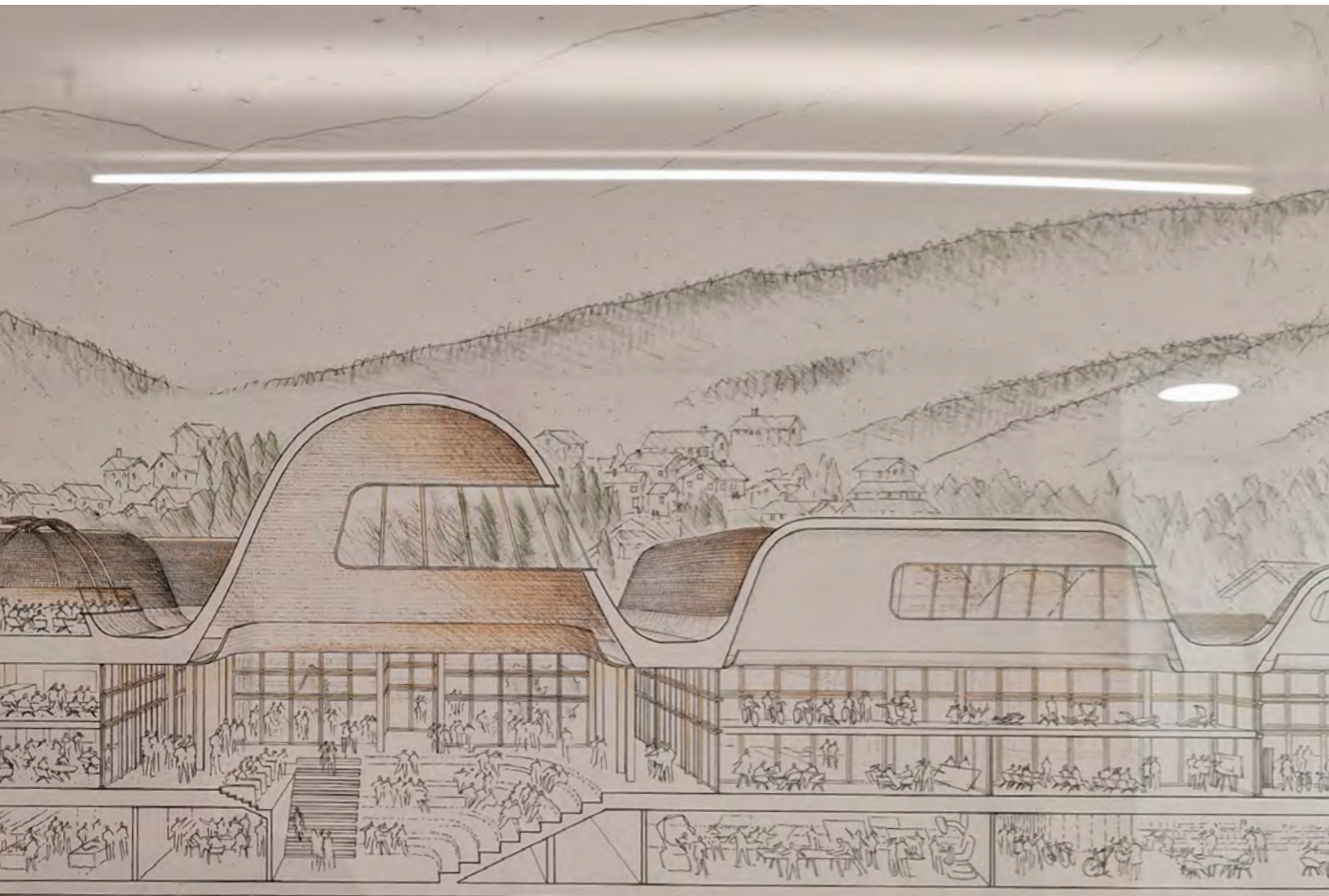
# MADRID & VALLADOLID PROCESS

Our practice visits in Madrid included Ensamble Fabrica and Foster + Partners' Madrid studio.

The veritable artistic playground of urban Ensamble Fabrica couldn't have been further from my experience of architectural practice in remote Australia. In a massive custom built warehouse, a small highly skilled team at Ensamble Fabrica have created an architectural laboratory for testing ideas and concepts around prefabrication and componentry for experimental construction methods for residential works in-situ, anywhere in the world.

One of six of Foster and Partners' siloed design studios, the Madrid office was smaller than expected, with 20 staff in house. Established with an eye to focus upon existing buildings, the Madrid studio spends most of their research and development on Public/ Cultural Projects.

Insights into procurement processes popped up again here, with 80% of the Madrid studio's work the result of competition wins. Senior Partner and co-head of the Madrid studio, Pablo Urango Lillo, spoke of the fierce internal competition for projects, noting that it wasn't uncommon for Foster and Partners' studios to be competing against each other for work internationally.



# THANKS



## ...THE READING LIST

**MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO MADE THIS EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE:**

**THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
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