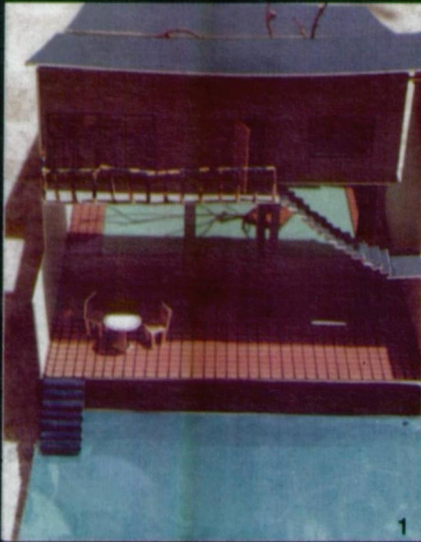


A Student's Perspective on 'Making Architecture'

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Making Architecture involves the whole process of designing a space, from the bold initial sketches to the conclusiveness of a completed building. Architecture is in the building, in the spaces and is to be experienced. While the client, the site, and the available resources influencing the final outcome, it's intrinsically the architects' own creation. A creation, which is the perceived answer, based on the influences of his or her own life's experience. Each individual Architect's experience becomes the final determinant of making their work truly unique.

Architecture is seen as an Art and in the words of educationist S.T.Corey, *"The arts are the content and process by which we bring unity to isolated knowledge and feelings. They are the tools for living life reflectively, joyfully and with the ability to shape the future."*

Just out of school or with a few years of experience in an architectural practice we as students joined the field of architecture with many preconceived ideas. Within the first year at the Colombo School of Architecture (CSA) we question our decisions. Those who came into this field expecting 'higher studies' wonder; question the sanity of our tutors, our fellow students and ourselves. We wonder why, as we are making and breaking and remaking things, listening to wide variety of talks & music, watching films, visiting numerous places from the city we live, to houses, to historical sites, to buildings & exhibitions. Playing with various materials. Privileged to spend time

in stimulating and joyful exploration; in marked contrast to all our friends resignedly trudging along into various other fields.

This back-to-basics start, in retrospect we realize, made us critically question things that we had so far taken for granted in our lives and gave new horizons to our thinking.

Within the next few years of training we were encouraged to develop an understanding of cultural values, human needs and gain awareness of the social and environmental implications of architecture. As well as become proficient in the art of building in order to practically build what we imagine.

The history of ideas, tradition and the study of all cultures further expand our awareness. In the words of Ananda Coomaraswamy *"We spoke of becoming citizens of the world. No one can aspire to do that who has nothing of his own to contribute to the constitution of a cosmopolitan society and will not lay a brick of its structure but only wants to live in it."*

Throughout our studies we are given opportunities to experience the numerous aspects of society. It's arts, culture, history, social issues, communities, traditions, etc., because of the importance of knowing who and what you may influence or change by your creations and also to help focus attention on understanding your own unique context in time, in the world and your possible contribution to society.

As we explore and develop methods of questioning which can lead us to creative answers, these become our foundations, the tools with which we form our individual vocabularies.

With no built works to assess, 'Making Architecture' from a student's perspective revolves around the output of our design studio. The design studio is the focal point in our seven years at CSA, the place where we learn to research, analyse, sketch, draft, make models, write and also visualise and communicate our ideas effectively. As we become more and more aware of possibilities, it becomes a demanding and exciting time to be a part of the design-studio process.

At the same time as we learn at CSA, we start our apprenticeship under a chartered architect. This gives us exposure to yet another aspect of life, the working of an office and the involvement in actual construction work.

Our tutors, visiting professionals, our peers in the school and the multidisciplinary colleagues in our places of apprenticeship bring in a diversity of experiences and ideas. Creating wonderful opportunities for challenging dialogue so that we can discover and develop our skills in the design-studio.

Each design critique brings with it the heady exhilaration of pressure, tension, dead lines and a juggling act between office and schoolwork, as does the 'Crit' with its exposure to a panel of academics and practising professionals. Panellists will listen to our enthusiastic ideas and question our intentions. Some discussions, others heated arguments, as students challenged learn to valiantly defend their schemes and also learn to accept various points of view. A critiques endorsement or censure, contributing towards the clarity of our designs and our whole learning process.

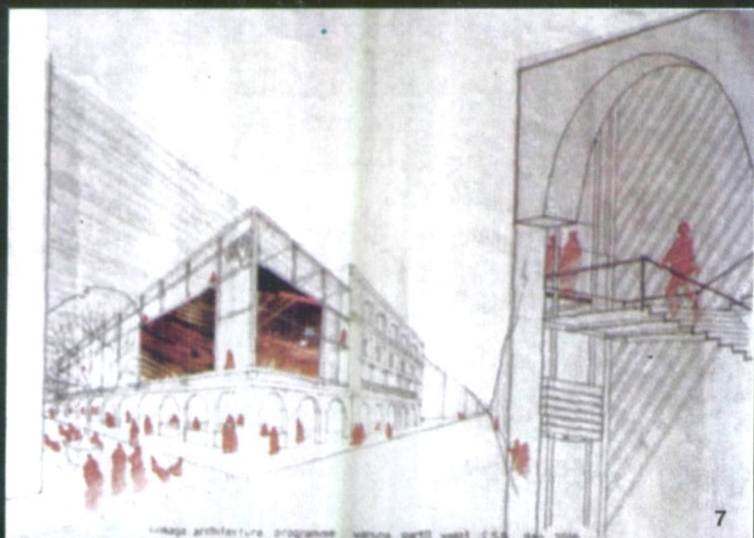
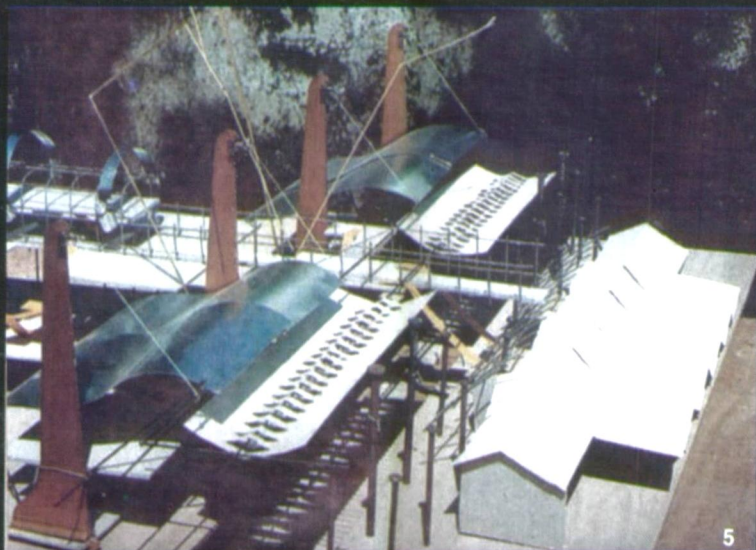
Throughout our course of study



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hands-on experience has been a consistent source of inspiration, to experience a building, a region or a group of people, brings about a greater understanding of people's life styles, which in turn allows us to do realistic and innovative development. Since we are blessed with a small island to call home, visiting and experiencing any project happening in our country is always encouraged and it's a distinct possibility in our lecture course. This year the 5th year students visited Bombay on an exchange programme with the Bombay School of Architecture, which was an experience of a lifetime for the participants. The exposure to a different culture, a place with complex social problems brought about the best in students' designs. It not only inspired the students but also contributed to their development as individuals. Both the Sri Lankans and their Indian counterparts tackled the same design problems. Within the complexity of different sites and the Indian society, the designs by the Sri Lankan students were highly commended.

The final years of our studies focus on subjects to help us tackle work in real life with sociology, law, management, economics, professional practice, as well as subjects to give as a wider knowledge base.

The ultimate goal of our design studios is for the students to cultivate a thinking process by which we can almost intuitively come up with creative and disciplined responses to any future project we might encounter.

Our time at CSA has firmly engraved

in us, to always to be proactive, open to new ideas, never to loose our enthusiasm and trained us to be professionals who are both thinkers and makers.

Most of all as students stepping into a lifetime of making architecture to remember the immortal words of Goethe:

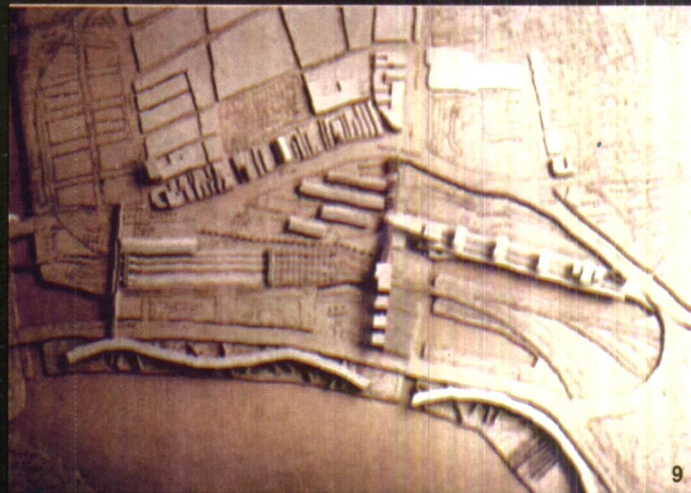
“Whatever you can do or dream you can, Begin it.

Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now”

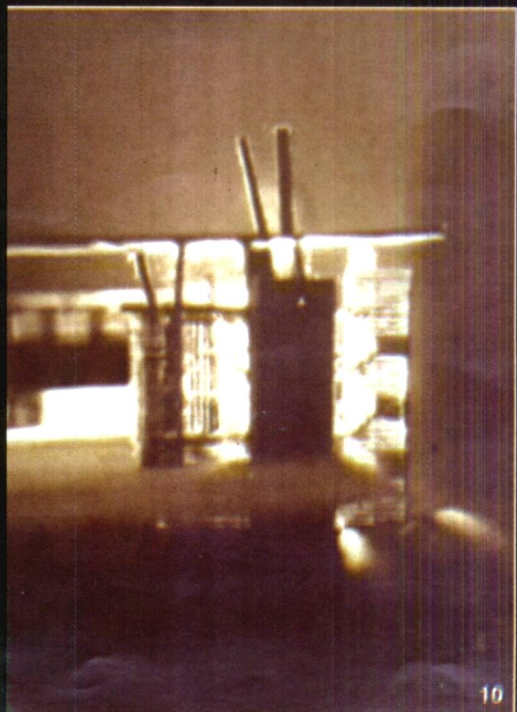
1. Artist studio - Kumudu Perera
2. Play frame - Sanjeeva Ratnayake
3. Garden pavillion - Maria Reiss
4. Hostel for research scholars,
5. Transport terminal - Sumith Perera
6. Independence Monument - Ruwan Tennegedara
7. D.N.Road Project, Bombay - Waruna Gomis
8. Scout Headquarters, Fort - Channa Wijepala
- 9,10 Multi-modal transport terminal, Fort - Aroscha Perera



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