ISSN: 1755-068
www.field-journal.org
vol.8 (1)

‘Independent Thought’: Withdrawal Towards our Self-Rule and Freedom

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We, Tilo Amhoff (European), Vanessa Nkumbula (African), and Vivian Wall (Caribbean) would like to introduce you to the ’Independent Thought’ reading group at the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD) at the University of Brighton. ‘Independent Thought’ was a student and staff forum for open debate on questions of race and decolonisation, concepts we critically investigated.[1] This paper is a compilation of the findings of the reading group, written predominantly in three voices, but inclusive of the many diverse voices of the reading group itself. The first voice speaks on the African experience of decolonisation. It provides the paper with an internal perspective of the matter, rather than the external investigations of onlookers. The second voice speaks on methods of adopting antiracist pedagogies. It explores how academic institutions and staff can approach the process whilst outlining the realities that they will face. The third voice speaks on achieving a decolonised curriculum. It navigates how the attitudes, experiences, and identities of the student body can be acknowledged and how the students take a very active role in curriculum design. The three voices stand united in the belief that a more fruitful architectural education can be achieved upon transcending the colonial legacies and inequalities perpetuated across the discipline.

We first got together around module assignments in a typical institutional setting and relation, but soon realised a shared interest and desire for change. As there was no space for our collective ambition within the institution and the curriculum, we created one in the form of a reading group, as an extracurricular activity somewhat tangential to our institution. We acknowledge that we come with different backgrounds,

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experiences, ambitions and positions to this group, and that we are doing different emotional labour. Hence, we always ask ourselves:

What is our position? Where are we speaking from? With whom are we speaking? And to whom are we talking? What is the language we speak? And what is the tone in which we speak? Who will listen to our voice?

In solidarity with the students at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) and in response to their critical document 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', we are working towards lasting and meaningful change in the curriculum and for a critical pedagogy of architecture that is decentralised and pluralistic, that will integrate other modes of categorisation, logics and processes into the content and methods of research. SSoA students' situation, their lived experiences and struggles as reflected in the different accounts in the document, are very much shared by the diverse international and national student body at SoAD at the University of Brighton. In our institution, the architecture course is the most diverse (although less so in the staff body) and we face the same challenges in terms of representation, structure and pedagogy. The Race Equality Charter and the Inclusive Professional Practice working groups are the two current institutional working groups set up to address systemic racism within our institution and enable structural change. Within the architectural humanities, however, the aim is not only to internationalise and diversify representation, resources, methods and examples, but to work towards a decolonisation of research that takes seriously the legacy of colonialism. Moreover, we recognise the need for a different pedagogy, beyond the disciplining function of the institution, that opens up forms of assessment to work beyond the academic conventions.

In the reading group we emphasised the importance of a person's social and political identity, the importance of one's lived experience for identity-based politics, and the role that architecture, the city and the built environment play in materialising, articulating and challenging identity politics. The aspects of a person's identity can be race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, disability and age, and they often combine to modes of discrimination or privilege. This intersectional approach, as developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her essay 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour', considers all the factors that apply to an individual in combination, rather than considering each factor in isolation.[2] Crenshaw demonstrates the importance of addressing race and gender together, as women of colour are marginalised by white women in feminist politics that tackle sexism, and by Black men in antiracist politics that tackle racism. She argues that although racism and sexism often overlap in people's lives, they seldom do in feminist and anti-racist practices, and hence their individual politics proceed as if these experiences occur in exclusive terrains. The ignoring of these differences

1 We would like to thank the members of the 'Independent Thought' reading group – Shade Abdul, Katy Beinart, Bruna Borges Joaquim, Joe De Kadt, Dhruv Gulabchande, Úna Haran, Angel Harvey-Ideozu, Mia Henderson, Lance Kangethe, Peter Marsh, Elliot Mason, Clarissa O'Driscoll – who have contributed to the thinking and arguments of this paper in more ways than we can acknowledge. This paper is also yours.

2 Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour', Stanford Law Review, 43:6 (1991), 1241-1299 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039> [accessed 12 October 2021].

3 Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins', p. 1299.

for identity politics often leads to tensions between groups rather than to solidarity, which affects their strength. In contrast, Crenshaw argues that:

> Intersectionality may provide the means to deal with other marginalisations as well. [...] Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics.[3]

This sentiment of intersectionality is echoed within our reading group.

I, Vanessa Nkumbula, focus on the African mind in my essay 'Byachikuingwa: The Journey to the African Mind', with key references to *Decolonising the Mind* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and *Decolonising the African Mind* by Chinweizu Ibekwe.[4] 'Byachikuingwa', meaning 'withdrawal towards our self-rule and freedom,' advocates for the accumulation of knowledge of oneself that leads to the mental withdrawal from Eurocentric thinking to advance academia, in this case architecture, in our favour. Byachikuingwa attempts to take control of the narrative of decolonisation, encompassing the experience of Africans through an ongoing process of reclamation, by creating a term that placed the colonised, in this case Africans, at the centre of their decolonisation. The term is a combination of different words and voices from selected African countries that encompass the words 'withdrawal' and 'freedom'. The aim of the concept formation was to advocate for the gathering of contextual African knowledge that leads to withdrawal from Western trains of knowledge production to advance academics in their favour. In addition to withdrawal, the term continues to seek control of the narrative of decolonisation by championing Africans' lived experiences in a continuous process of self-determination.

In our reading group we continued to demand this process of reclamation by not only exploring but decentring decolonial discourse through the inclusion of multicultural knowledge and practices from various contexts, from Mary Graham's 'Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews' in Australia to Amawtay Wasi's 'Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples' in Ecuador.[5] Throughout the year, the group has questioned language, syntax and semantics and how they have been used to maintain imperial and postcolonial hierarchies, relationships and logic, particularly through institutions. For instance, in architecture the ongoing use of 'primitive' and 'vernacular' in relation to non-European architecture.

In *Africa's Tarnished Name*, Chinua Achebe highlights that 'the point is to alert us to the image burden that Africa bears today and make us recognise how that image has moulded contemporary attitudes, including perhaps our own, to that continent.'[6] Achebe goes on to say that in order to

4 Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind (Oxford: James Currey, 1986); Chinweizu Ibekwe, Decolonising the African Mind (Lagos: Pero Press, 1987).

5 See Mary Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology, 3:2 (1999), 181-194 <https://brill.com/view/journals/wo/3/2/article-p105_3.xml?language=en> [accessed 12 October 2021]; Amawtay Wasi, 'The Closing of the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples', UNPFIP Network < http://unpfip.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-closing-of-intercultural-univeristy.html> [accessed 12 October 2021].

6 Chinua Achebe, Africa's Tarnished Name (Milton Keynes: Penguin Books, 2018), p. 46.

7 Achebe, Africa's Tarnished Name, p. 16.

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change this, the world 'needs to hear Africa speak for itself after a lifetime of hearing Africa spoken about by others.'[7] While the text is explicit in its reference to the African context, these sentiments are shared by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay in her 'Open Letter to Sylvia Wynter: Unlearning the Disappearance of Jews from Africa'.[8] In her letter, Azoulay critiques the use of 'Judeo-Christian' in Sylvia Wynter's '1492: A New World View', exploring the origins and use of the term in relation to her Arab Jewish heritage.[9] She ends the text by inviting Sylvia Wynter and others to begin and continue the conversation towards a new world view that references various perspectives and interests, not unlike Walter D. Mignolo's call for a pluriverse and multipolar world.[10]

I, Tilo Amhoff, when introducing race as a subject matter in the architectural humanities modules at the University of Brighton some years ago, was hoping to create a space that allows questions of race to be addressed in our architecture programmes. In a recent lecture a colleague and I were asked by one of our students:

'How do you, as white people, feel teaching a course that does not support and/or accommodate people of colour? Additionally, my knowledge of ancestry was stripped from me during the transatlantic slave trade.'

'Why did North America and/or Europe not accommodate the migrants of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, considering they purged these countries of their natural resources, exploited their cultures and beliefs, and destroyed their homes?'

As Philip S.S. Howard asserts: 'the white anti-racist worker, despite their opposition to whiteness, is still privileged by that whiteness.'[11] Moreover, in a recent Racial Literacy Training for staff at the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD), *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Sala was recommended to address one's own complicity.[12] This investigation of whiteness and white supremacy was also vital for the 'Unlearning Whiteness' statement from the Black Faculty of the School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University, in support of 'On the Futility of Listening', the statement of the Black Student Alliance.[13] In the statement the Black Faculty also centre 'unlearning whiteness', the 'understanding of anti-black racism through a deep analysis and investigation of whiteness and white supremacy.'[14]

In the reading group we explore academic literature, conceptual frameworks, and modes of theorisation that can be translated across cultural and intellectual contexts, and that can reposition the connections between a global context of our disciplines and our understanding of it. In that respect, the reading group aims to open up questions around decolonial thinking in relation to and across territorial and disciplinary

8 See Ariella Aïsha Azouley, 'Open Letter to Sylvia Winter', The Funambulist, 30 (2020), 22-29 https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/reparations/open-letter-to-sylvia-wynter-unlearning-the-disappearance-of-jews-from-africa-by-ariella-aisha-azoulay> [accessed 12 October 2021].

9 See Sylvia Winter, '1492: A New World View', in Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas, ed. by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), pp. 5-28.

10 Walter D. Mignolo, 'On Pluriversality and Multipolar World Order: Decoloniality after Decolonization; Dewesternization after the Cold War', in Constructing the Pluriverse: The Geopolitics of Knowledge, ed. by Bernd Reiter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 90–116 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv11smf4w.8> [accessed 12 October 2021].

11 Phillip S.S. Howard, 'On Silence and Dominant Accountability: A Critical Anticolonial Investigation of the Antiracism Classroom', in Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance, ed. by George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006), p. 49.

12 Layla Sala, Me and White Supremacy (London: Quercus Books, 2020).

13 Black Student Alliance, 'On the Futility of Listening: A Statement from the Black Student Alliance at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation [BSA+GSAPP] to the Columbia GSAPP Dean, Faculty, and Administration' <https://onthefutilityoflistening.cargo.site> [accessed 12 October 2021].

14 Black Faculty, 'Unlearning Whiteness: A Statement from the Black Faculty of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation' <https://unlearningwhiteness.cargo.site> [accessed 12 October 2021].

boundaries. Moreover, at a time in which students are often encouraged to be the consumers of their education, the reading group is a vital reminder of a potential in which students are instead the producers of their education, critiquing the education they are presented with and, either independently and/or together with staff, developing alternative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary modes of learning. The reading group builds on the work of previous excellent research on space, race and architecture by Yat Ming Loo (University Nottingham), Ana María León (University of Michigan), Huda Tayob and Suzanne Hall (LSE) and Tania Sengupta (UCL), to name just a few. As an exploratory platform, the reading group also has the potential to be a working group for the co-design of the curriculum at the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton. We work to make changes to the architectural humanities' core curriculum for the next academic year and to co-design a more specific curriculum on modernity/coloniality for an elective module.

A very important concept for our reading group was the notion of 'unlearning' or 'unlearning with companions', which Ariella Aïsha Azoulay developed in her most recent book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. For her, 'unlearning' encompasses a variety of practices, for example, questioning our habits of studying the world through the concepts and categories of a few selected thinkers and/or relying on the state archives. This means no longer privileging the accounts of imperial agents, such as scholars, and instead using other modes, including the many refusals in people's actions. For Azoulay:

> unlearning with companions is a withdrawal from the quest for the new that drives academic disciplines and an attempt to engage with modalities, formations, actions, and voices that were brutally relegated to 'the past' and described as over, obsolete, or worthy of preservation, but not of interaction and resuscitation.[15]

This also requires us to move away from objects of study that are thought about to companions that are thought with and with whom entering the archive or museum could be imagined as a form of co-citizenship, opposing imperialism, colonialism and racial capitalism. Moreover, 'unlearning', Azoulay argues,

> is a way of assuming that what seems catastrophic today to certain groups, was already catastrophic for many other groups, groups that did not wait for critical theory to come along to understand the contours of their dispossession and the urgency of resisting it and seeking reparation.'[16]

For her, 'unlearning', moreover, is a way to rewind the idea of progressive history, and to facilitate a 'potential history, a form of being with others, both living and dead, across time, and against the separation of the past

15 Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism (London: Verso, 2019), p. 16.

16 Azoulay, Potential History, p. 17.

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from the present, colonized peoples from their worlds and possessions, and history from politics.'[17]

I, Vivian Wall, following Dei and Kemp ask: 'How much can be accomplished if we decide to negotiate around domination or oppression?'[18] When it comes to architectural education, it seems that the content we are taught is as filtered as the coffee that we drink. In contrast, my essay 'architectural edYOUcation' is a call for education that transcends inequality and prejudice. The essay encourages educators within the field to critically examine the content delivered within the curricula, exploring how it reflects the cultural identities, expressions and experiences of the student body.

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica the humanities are defined as 'branches of knowledge that concern themselves with human beings and their culture, or with analytic and critical methods of inquiry derived from an appreciation of human values and of the unique ability of the human spirit to express itself.'[19] However, the architectural humanities, especially in architectural education, still too often prioritise one culture (European) while denouncing the human spirit, despite all the work of colonial, postcolonial and subaltern studies.[20] In our reading group, we acknowledge that the world views of cultures beyond the European context are only scarcely represented in academic literature, with even fewer of these texts being written by scholars with lived experience of what they write. As a result, papers by authors with a cultural connection to the subject matter became prominent. In 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', for example, Mary Graham discusses the attitudes of Australia's aboriginal people towards land and the human spirit.[21] She states 'that each human bears a creative and spiritual identity which still resides in land itself.'[22] Within the aboriginal's worldview, land is sacred, and human beings are seen as its custodians, not its owners. Architecture in theory and in practice is ultimately connected to land, space and people. When embarking on a mission to decolonise this field of research, indigenous perspectives are invaluable as they challenge our postcolonial relationship to the aforementioned.

Academic writing is often an unsuccessful platform for multicultural expression since present-day academia itself is bound up with colonisation. Seeking to challenge this, 'Independent Thought' became a collaborative investigation of the kaleidoscope of human experiences and expressions. The conversation centred around how these can find their place in the architectural humanities, encouraging us to question our current methods of defining academic or scholarly material and push the boundaries of its restrictive traits. For example, a common characteristic of academic material is the creation of an impersonal account of the subject matter

17 Azoulay, Potential History, p. 43.

18 George J. Sefa Dei, 'Introduction: Mapping the Terrain – Towards a New Politics of Resistance', in Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance, ed. by George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006), pp. 1-2 (p. ?).

19 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Humanities | Description, History, Meaning, & Facts', in Encyclopaedia Britannica <www.britannica.com/topic/humanities> [accessed 12 October 2021].

20 See for example Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2000.

21 Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', 181-194.

at hand. This is justified in favour of objectivity. As this technique leaves a variety of perspectives overlooked, the group identified it as a form of exclusion which is further perpetuated in the language in which academic material is written. Writings often consist of a language imposed rather than one which was chosen. A significant example is the use of the English language, which was forced upon countless nations. Regarding it as the default within academia is an exclusive act and leaves many experiences unrepresented, especially when valuable information is lost in translation. In addition to favouring objectivity and the English language, academic language itself is very distinct and tends to be devoid of emotion. Although the intention may be to present a rational argument based on reason, it often creates content that is difficult to understand and interpret. The group sees this as a form of exclusion as the invalidation of emotion and personal experience within academia is synonymous with the invalidation of marginalised communities' perspectives and underrepresented voices within academia.

Instead, the reading group seeks to expand our modes of receiving knowledge and find ways to represent the intangible, reintroduce creative expression, and incorporate the human spirit. This transcends literature and opens us up to other forms of expression such as poetry, film, and music. For example, 'How Architecture Impacts Our Mental Health' is a deeply impactful short video in which the spoken word poet LionHeart speaks of architecture's effects on one's wellbeing.[23] We are taken to the urban context of London, as he recounts his experiences growing up in Kentish Town. This piece radically transformed our ideas of inclusivity in the architectural humanities, enabling us to hear the voice being represented, see who was speaking, and view impactful imagery alongside the powerful words being spoken. Fela Kuti's *Afrobeats* music and his performance venue The Shrine is also a great example of 'unlearning', demonstrating not only creative expression and learning 'otherwise', but importantly also reminding us of the value and importance of all the learning that happens outside the space of academia. *Afrobeats* offers education, learning and 'unlearning' through the direct and creative expressions of music, communicating the themes of Kuti's writings that centre on the injustices in Nigeria under neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Kuti also includes the intangible and the human spirit. As Dele Sosimi highlights, the performance venue was called *The Shrine* because Kuti 'asked for a minute of silence to pay homage to the ancestors and the gods.'[24]

Part of its academia's colonial legacy is the denial of access to the education that colonisation aimed to spread around the world. The establishment of schools and formal education through missionary societies in the colonies was performed with the intention of converting Africans to Christianity and teach them enough to serve in colonial

22 Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', p. 183.

23 LionHeart, 'How Architecture Impacts Our Mental Health' <www.youtube.com/watch?v=08K-M2N_Rxs> [accessed 12 October 2021].

24 Robert Barry, 'Remembering the Shrine: Fela Kuti's Shamanic Temple and Political Soapbox', FactMag <https://www.factmag.com/2015/10/15/fela-kuti/> [accessed 12 October 2021].

societies rather than take part in it. During colonisation, for example, Trust Schools affiliated with the mines in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia were established. These schools catered to colonial settlers, and alongside those were Government Schools that catered to indigenous Zambians. Access to Trust Schools was granted to indigenous Zambians if the guardian of the child worked as office staff. The quality of education between Trust Schools and Government Schools differed so greatly that indigenous Trust School alumni had better chances of accessing further education and jobs in the colonial society. This process of constant exclusion maintains an indigenous underclass by granting limited access to historically segregated spaces. In addition, present-day access to higher education outside the African continent is further made difficult with systems such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) that is required despite students being formally educated in the English language. Aimé Césaire indicates that indigenous Africans and Asians are denied access to education, going on to say, 'the colonised man wants to move forward, and the coloniser holds things back.'[25]

Moreover, while education is now, in principle, more accessible to marginalised communities, the institution and its curricula however do not always speak to their experiences. Though eager to participate in academia, a large population from historically marginalised groups recognises this disconnection. Even though academic institutions have evolved since their inception, the content does not reflect its student body, as Vivian Wall has highlighted in her work. Clareese Hill addresses this through her own academic experience in her article 'Survival Praxis through Hood Feminism, Negritude and Poetics', in which she critiques institutional hegemonic practices that subversively discourage individuality and holistic identity.[26] Hill helps us understand that it is not hypocritical to critique academia while participating in it since we are forced to participate to survive within a postcolonial world.

Marginalised communities are often restricted in their expression of self and robbed of the ability to emote. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that much academic research is often impersonal, emotionless and unable to represent the intangible. Bearing this in mind, we are very inspired by the Transformative Pedagogies at the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA) at the University of Johannesburg, introduced by Lesley Lokko. We similarly encourage and demand an engagement with indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, people and languages. Importantly for Lokko, 'theories must be generated that are informed by life as it is lived, experienced, and understood by local inhabitants.'[27] This would involve the ongoing critique of knowledge, its location and its production. Safe Space was one of the initiatives at the GSA, and for us stood as a good example of intertwining conversations about race and identity with other forms of expression, often more performative, within the curriculum.[28] These

25 Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 46.

26 Clareese Hill, 'Survival Praxis through Hood Feminism, Negritude and Poetics', Architecture and Culture, 9:2 (2021), 238-248 (p.241) <DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/20507828.2021.1879460> [accessed 12 October 2021].

27 Lesley Lokko, 'A minor majority', arq: Architecture Research Quarterly, 21:4 (2017), 387-392, (p. 389) <DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1359135518000076> [accessed 12 October 2021].

28 Lokko, 'A minor majority,' p. 390.

conversations also inform how students approach their design projects.[29] The *Transformative Pedagogies* creates a space for these conversations and expressions. Safe Space also speaks to us about navigating the space of the institution, in contrast to the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples *Amawtay Wasi* in Ecuador, which was shut down in 2013.[30]

In conclusion, in the 'Independent Thought' reading group we argue for the architectural humanities to be more subjective, to allow for more personal accounts, to be based on one's own lived experience and expressions of individuality. This in turn would also mean to promote a greater diversity of languages and oral traditions, including Creole languages, and to allow for emotive responses and accounts. We argue for writing that could incorporate lived and bodily sensory experiences, greater diversity of methods and media, alternative forms of creative practice, the use of visual narratives in the architectural humanities, and the power of spoken word and music performances.

As we see decolonisation as an ever-changing – and, we also felt, never-ending – process and struggle, one that is very fluid, dynamic and impossible to achieve in a linear fashion, the reading group could only ever be a small beginning. The process of decolonisation must be continuous and continued in order to counter the ongoing recolonisation processes in academia and beyond. We therefore named our reading group 'Independent Thought', referring on the one hand to the decolonisation processes of the Independence Movements and, on the other hand, to the ambitions of critical thinking. The name 'Independent Thought' also conveys our own specific ambition of working towards decolonisation, the 'withdrawal towards our self-rule and freedom', without having to use a term that constantly recentres the processes of 'colonisation'. In that respect, the 'Independent Thought' reading group becomes a new alternative space, a beginning of liberation and a small exercise of autonomy and freedom.

What did we really change, though? What did we really achieve? We probably only touched a few lives, but for the period of the reading group we created and maintained a space for a critical discussion on race and space, and on architectural education and its institutions. This is not nothing, and it is vital for the people involved and for our institution. It made a difference, in the moment, and it has a concrete legacy in the forms of a changed curriculum and this paper, but hopefully also a more intangible legacy beyond that. We believe in incremental change, and in effecting change in our immediate environments. And it is our hope that the members of the reading group will continue the legacy of the group into their new contexts. May the seeds of the reading group also bear fruit in places and people elsewhere.

29 See Lesley Lokko, 'GSA Safe Space Online Series' <https://www.imoriginal.co/single-post/2017/11/29/6-PART-ONLINE-SERIES-GSA-SAFE-SPACE> [accessed 12 October 2021].

30 See Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, 'A New Social Condition of Knowledge', in On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 69-74.

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Biographies

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Vanessa Malao Nkumbula is a freelance architect in her home country of Zambia and has recently graduated from the March RIBA II at the University of Brighton. She is a strong advocate for decolonisation, particularly in education, after going through an undergraduate programme in Zambia that focused on European Architecture. She has particular interest in critiquing and re-theorising language and its use in relation to post-colonial contexts to align them with decolonial discourse. Vanessa's work is strongly influenced by her desire for an alternative practice that fosters reclamation of space, action, and expression that is informed by the African experience.

Vivian Wall is an Architectural Designer practicing social and inclusive design across the built environment. Whilst pursuing her BA in Architecture at the University of Brighton, she wrote a critique of the exclusivity of architectural education and its denunciation of diverse perspectives. Her work and dedication to the field have been awarded by 'Women in Property' and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). As proud national of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, she amplifies the voices of post-colonial states and has made it her mission to ensure that every contribution to her field is a conscious cultural creation.