

BENEDICT ANDERSON, NANCY DINIZ

Breathe: the air we share

2013 | *Close, Closer: Lisbon Architecture Triennale*

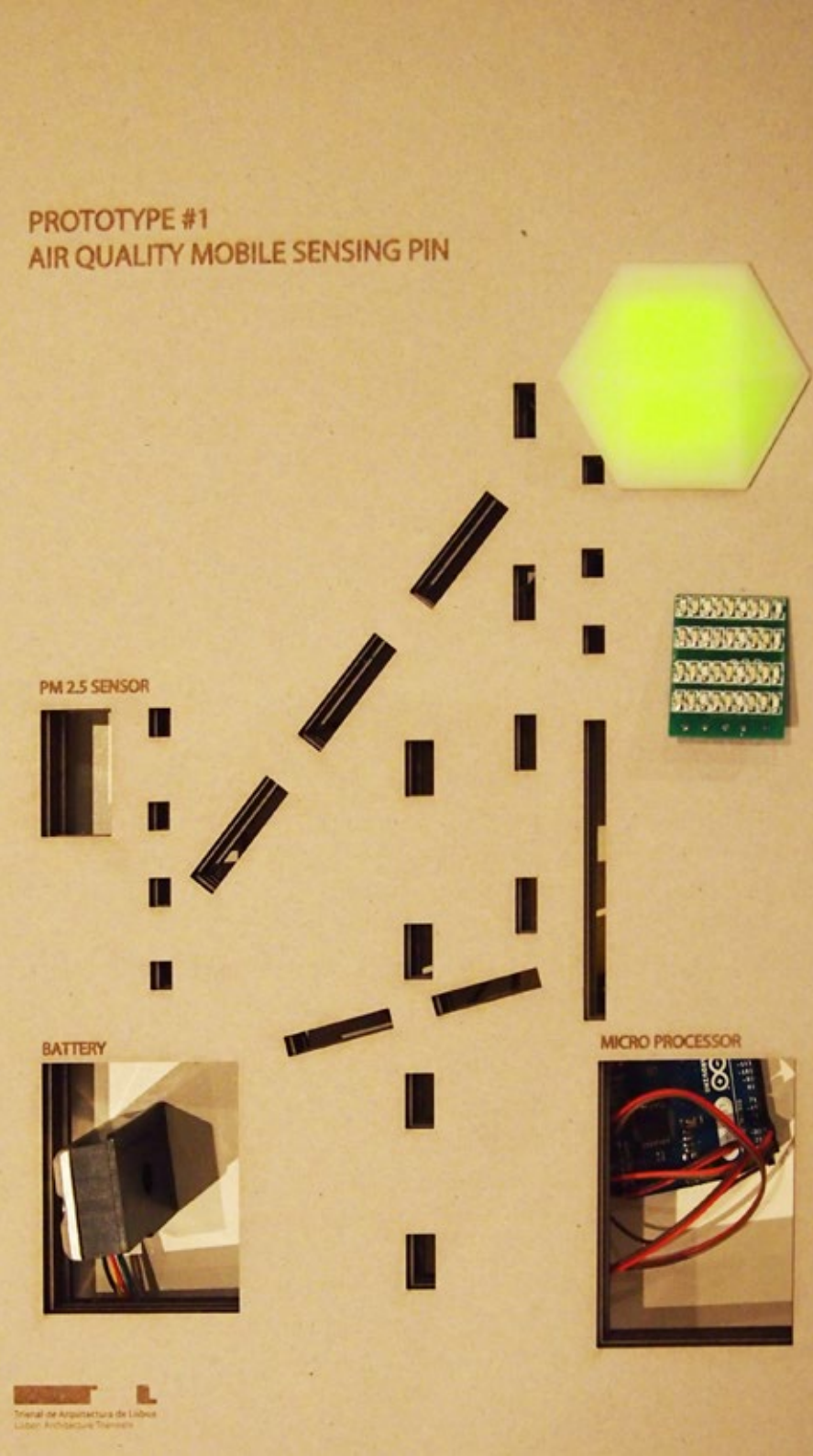
This research is in the fields of interactive and spatial design.

The aim of the chief curator of the third Lisbon Architecture Triennale, Beatrice Galilee, was to position architecture as an ‘expanding field of critical spatial practice’, as ‘a force of occupation and transition’ and as something ‘mercurial and indistinct.’ Responding to its theme *Close, Closer*, this project sought to extend existing research regarding the effects of air pollution, specifically the unpredictable and increasingly volatile urban atmospheres that oscillate around us, through an interaction between people, air and pollution.

The focus was the design of a prototype wearable computational device that measures air quality. Conceived as a ‘brooch’, the wearable device records air pollution levels through an on-line software platform that gathers and displays the data. The innovation behind the ‘brooch’ technology allows its wearers to become surveyors of the air they breathe, rendering both spatial and atmospheric typologies. With an emphasis on current air pollution levels in many Chinese cities, the ‘brooch’ was coupled with real-time visualisation of the air pollution levels from ten cities displayed on LED micro monitors.

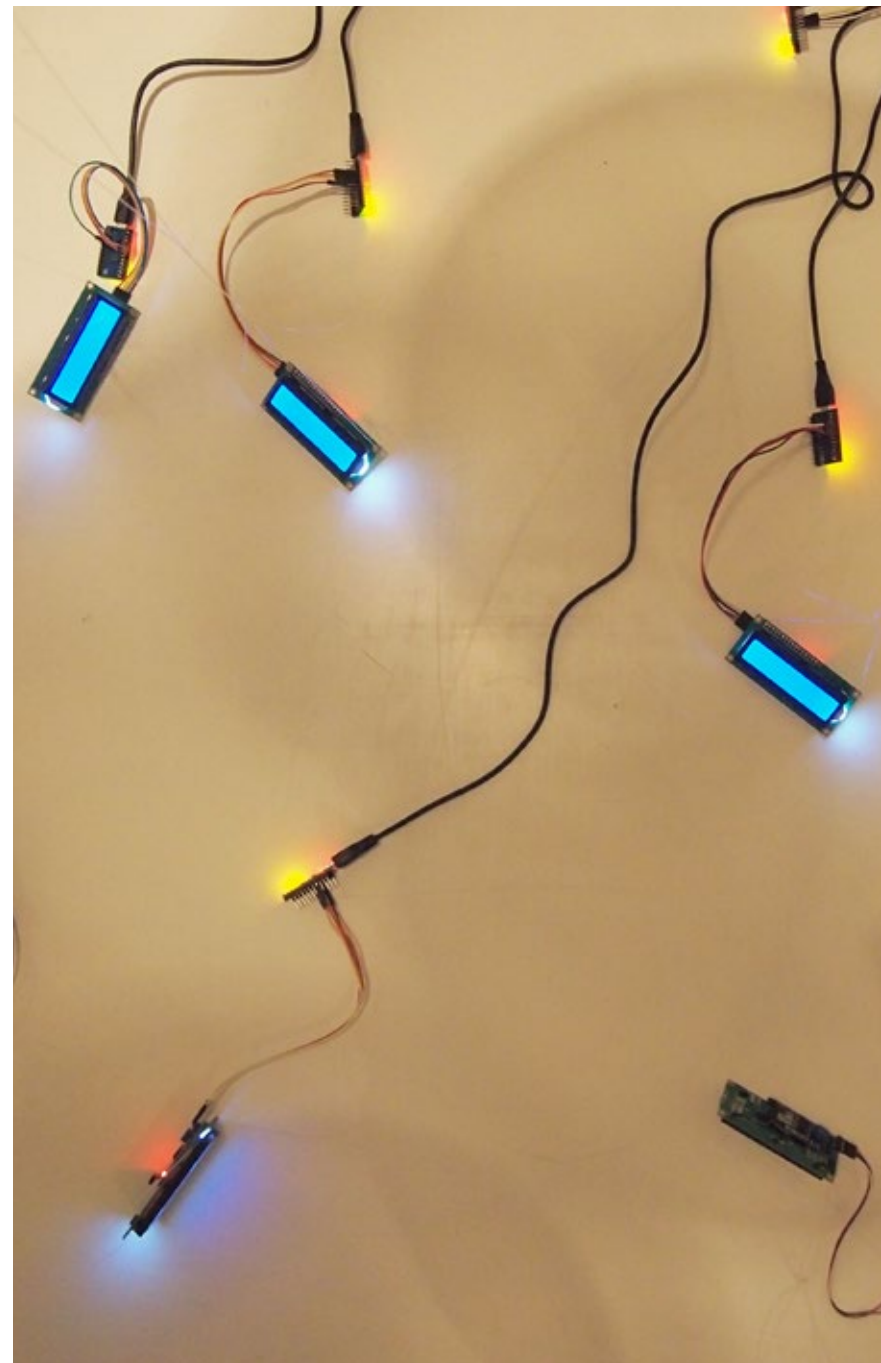
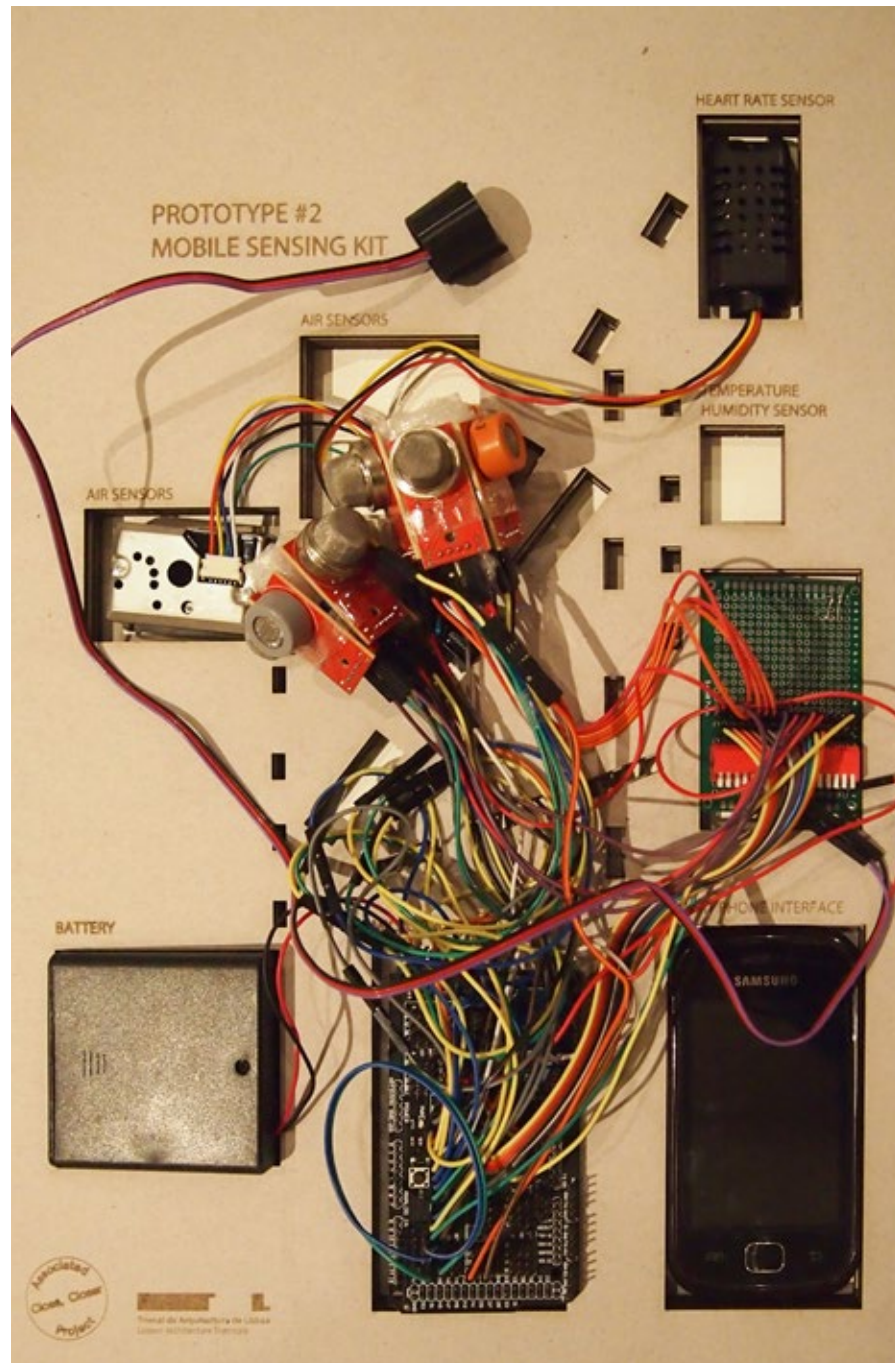
Along with a focus on exterior conditions, an accompanying representation of the interior exchange between air and the body was conceived in order to bring further awareness to the quality of the air we breathe. Assembled from chest X-rays and formed into a sculptural ‘spinal’ curve, the spatial installation brought to attention the presence of the body. Conceived as a means to visualise the ephemerality of air and the effects of pollution, these medical recordings alerted viewers to the fragile interior of the body.

Detail; prototype



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Breathe: the air we share

The exhibition detailed the main electronic components of the wearable device sensing technologies. Arduino microcontroller board, LED (Light emitting diode) PCB (printed circuit board), real-time GPS mapping and photoelectric sensors that enables immediate real-time rendering of air quality, the air particles per micrometre (PM 2.5)



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Installation view

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Breathe: the air we share (CH/AU)



Breathe the air we share 2013 © NancyDiniz

Project by: Nancy Diniz (CH), Benedict Anderson (AU)

Date: 30.09 – 04.10.2013 | Everyday; 10h - 17h

Category: Exhibition / Installation / Lecture

Address: ISCTE/IUL Building II, 1st Floor, Av. Das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa

Focusing on the urgent air pollution problem in China, *Breathe: the air we share* proposes new and portable technologies for reading air quality levels, drawing attention to this urgent problem.

[View on Map](#)

[Bridging fissures, building engagem... \(PT\)](#)

[Cadavre Exquis \(PT\)](#)

[Casa do Vapor \(DE/PT/BR\)](#)

[Caveiras, casas, pedras e uma figu... \(PT\)](#)

[Cidade da Roupa Branca \(AU/PT\)](#)

[close, closer, closest! \(PL\)](#)

[CLOSE to Cities, CLOSER to People \(PT\)](#)

[Closer, Louder \(PL\)](#)

[Curating The Domestic - Images at H... \(PT\)](#)

[Dear Future \(PT\)](#)

[Deutscher Werkbund | 100 Ano... \(DE/ES/PT\)](#)

E → H

[Ecos: Experiências de Escuta e Lug... \(PT\)](#)

[Edge City \(US/IE\)](#)

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[Estratégia Urbana \(PT/CZ\)](#)

[Expeditions \(AU\)](#)

[Expo 7x7 Iberian Architecture \(ES/PT\)](#)

[Over Placed \(PT\)](#)

[Performing Architecture \(PT/ES\)](#)

[Phaidon Atlas Talks \(CA\)](#)

[Planning for Protest \(US/PT/CA\)](#)

[Prémio Secil 20 Anos: Arquitectura:... \(PT\)](#)

[Publi Città \(PT\)](#)

[The City Inside Out \(PT/BR\)](#)

[The Constructed Environment Confere... \(US\)](#)

[The Future Conditional: Lisbon ... \(UAE/US\)](#)

[The Post World's End Architec... \(PT/ES/UK\)](#)

[The Site of Discourse – is it arch... \(PT\)](#)

[The Space Between Words \(CZ\)](#)

[Traço de Arquitecto | Manu... \(BR/PT\)](#)

U → Z

[Um, dois e muitos \(PT\)](#)

[Under Black Carpets, The Ghost ... \(UK/ZA\)](#)

[Unfinished Spaces \(US\)](#)

[Urban Interventions \(PT/BR\)](#)

[Vicino, più Vicino \(IT\)](#)

[What is Architecture? \(US\)](#)

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Supporting evidence

Breathe: the air we share (CH/AU),
Close Closer

Lisbon Architecture Triennale: strictly no buildings allowed

From sofas that swallow you up to a 3D-printed coral reef, the Triennale explores architecture beyond building. But is it all a bit too irreverent?

Oliver Wainwright

Tuesday 17 September 2013
20.57 AEST



Future Perfect? ... A model of a fictional future city features in Close, Closer, the third Lisbon Architecture Triennale. Photograph: Catarina Botelho/LAT

Financial crisis has an interesting effect on the perception of architecture. When the economy falters, buildings are among the first things to be put on hold, and architects among the first put out of work. The conclusion drawn by some is that buildings are simply not enough: to avoid extinction, architecture must claim renewed relevance by being more than a service for the production of walls, roofs and floors.

What often follows this reasoning is a kind of discipline envy, a desire for architects to be artists and philosophers, anthropologists and politicians, performers and cartographers - anything but people engaged in the tedious irrelevance of bricks and mortar.

In Portugal, where graduate unemployment currently stands at 40% and half-finished construction projects dot the landscape, it is easy to see why those trained to design buildings might question if they are better off doing something else.

“This is the generation of young architects who may ask if they should be designing the architecture of networks and systems, of societies or conversations, rather than buildings,” says Beatrice Galilee, the London-based curator of the third Lisbon Architecture Triennale, which opened this week with the aim of positioning architecture as an “expanding field of critical spatial practice.”

Titled *Close, Closer*, the three month-long event takes the form of three primary exhibitions, housed in some of the Portuguese capital's most evocative palaces and

industrial sheds, along with a bulging programme of over a hundred associated events scattered around the city. With these activities - all free to the public - the Triennale seeks to present architecture as “a force of occupation and transition, a speculator and a fantasist,” as something “exciting and intangible, mercurial and indistinct.”



Participatory publishing ... The 'fanzine machine', by Portuguese collective Friendly Fire. Photograph: Luke Hayes/LAT

Walking through the dreamy installations, the overriding impression is of nebulous fantasy. In *The Real and Other Fictions*, curated by Mariana Pestana, a 17th-century palace is filled with a number of “fictionalised re-enactments” of the building's former lives. Over the years, the crumbling pile has been home to the Embassy of Spain and the Legation of Germany, served as the headquarters of a radical anarcho-syndicalists' group, as well as been the base for the Portuguese Association of Landscape Architects. Each of these momentous episodes now provides a tenuous trigger for an installation by an invited artist or architect.

In one room, visitors can join a “parliament” of raked scaffolding seating to discuss a Universal Declaration of Urban Rights and add their ideas to a blackboard. Elsewhere you can help produce an architectural publication in a UFO-like “fanzine machine,” or sit through an hour-long play without actors - where you are encouraged to read the script to yourself in front of an empty stage set.

Each work, says Pestana, attempts to “engage the audience in intimate encounters with the space that envelops them.” It is an ambition interpreted to the letter by Alex Schweder's *Slowly Ceiling* installation: two sofas appear to welcome unsuspecting visitors, before swallowing them whole, as the room inflates around their bodies like a malevolent Polanski film set.

Supporting evidence

The Guardian review of the Lisbon Architecture Triennale

Weblinks:

<http://www.close-closer.com/en/programme/associated-projects/breathe-the-air-we-share>

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2013/sep/17/lisbon-architecture-triennale-exhibition-review>

<http://www.trienaldelisoa.com/en/#/triennale/2013>