

# Design Transmission

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The challenge for the First Year programme is to train or coach the architectural thinking process in the architecture field. Students are first exposed to architectural artefacts around them, creating awareness on the appreciation of aesthetics, materials forms, colours, textures, etcetera. The intention is to let students explore 'ways of seeing' for understanding and interpreting objects, places or events. By learning to look beyond the obvious, the 'hidden' qualities will be discovered. Hence, a subject could be seen as something with its own identity which each student could interpret differently.

The objectives of the First Year were met when students' knowledge and understanding improved. They were able to distinguish between conceptual and representational definitions of design elements—such as point, line, plane and volume—and design principles. They could visually interpret and define design elements and principles in their architectural design projects. The students were also trained to communicate their design intentions by means of two and three dimensional drawings, models and illustrative statements by transforming them into design outputs that incorporated all senses in creating the ambiance of an articulated space.

Projects were arranged to cultivate the imagination. The first semester started with a 2D Exploration that lasted 4 weeks. An introduction to the visual language was made possible by 2D Exploration through self-expression and artistic appreciation. Visual language was the basis of design creation and there were numerous ways of interpreting the visual language. It required students looking into possibilities of partial or total transformation, modification and deviation. The second project was called 3D Experimentation and was completed in 4 weeks. The project involved the students' understanding in design at three-dimensional (3D) level. The experimentation of forms and materials culminated in three dimensional transformation and creation of volumetric forms. The final project for the first semester was an Installation and took about 5 weeks to complete. This project served to complement the two earlier projects that required students to further explore the possibilities of incorporation with other dimensions.

In the following second semester, students were introduced to space and the emphasis was on designing interior spaces. A Living Quarter, a successful 3-week project dealt with interior spaces, circulation, spatial organisation in addition to materials, colours and textures to create a desired ambiance. The next project was called 'A Studio Tower' in which the understanding of spatial order and composition was further honed. For this project, they designed and experimented with a vertical space which required them to apply their knowledge on vertical circulation such as the staircase. Additionally, with the introduction of massing + form and envelope + enclosure, students could grasp the idea of structure and construction in their studio towers. The basis of the studio tower design theme originated from paintings from well-known artists.

For the final project in the first year, students were presented with a project called "Getaway". It was a holiday house to display their skills in understanding spatial quality, mass and form, building envelope and enclosure, and basic construction methods. Natural lighting and ventilation were considered in designing the holiday house. Proposals for innovative sun-shading devices were also requested to show their comprehension of environmental physics. In addition, knowledge on structure and construction should be evident in the getaway.

The artefacts produced and shown by students are well balanced in terms of creativity and skill development. The projects managed to uphold students' interest levels and broaden their knowledge and perspective about architectural design and the expected level of commitment from the profession.