



UNIT I : Kieran Hawkins / Tim Norman

## CHARGED EDGES / CHARGED SPACES

Unit I is set apart by a particular focus on spatial relationships, as both the core subject for analysis of precedent and context, and as the central element in our design proposals. Intrinsic to this is a fascination in physical form, in the manifold ways it can exist, and the spaces it can define. We believe that spaces associated with the everyday, as well as the remarkable, can harbour incredible qualities, inspire fleeting moments of the poetic, reveal tensions between the past, present and future, and generate diverse social interactions. Unit I seeks to reveal the physical forms that define these qualities through honed creative studies and use the resulting interpretations to establish the basis of a new design language. Through this practice we place special value on the craft of constructing thoughtful drawings and models; making things with real care to explore places and ideas. This year we will focus on Edges and the spaces they define. Built and natural edges will be key to our study of precedents and to the proposals we make. Political and social edges will drive the programmatic uses of the buildings that we design.

## POSITION

The starting point for our design practice is developing the imaginative capacity to work from another's experience of space. We consider space to be defined by edges - by edges we mean anything from a kerb, to a wall, to a horizon, to weather, to texture - and, in that same moment, edges to be defined by the spaces they charge. We believe it is useful to think of an experienced space as an Interior, whether it is inside or outside. We are interested in exploring the plastic fabric of these edges; manipulating their physical character to control the qualities of space they define. There are always at least two sides to an edge, an Interior always has an Exterior, connecting out to a wider context. This mindset ensures you

always consider yourself as existing within a space defined by your surroundings, the distant mountain framed by the courtyard forms as much a part of the courtyard's physical edge as the buildings that enclose it. Our design approach is therefore intrinsically contextual and requires consideration of the second order of spaces that our exterior forms part of.

## PROCESS

Creatively exploring the distinct qualities of precedents is critical to Unit 1's methodology. This year we will be examining precedents and their context across 3 'cities': Walsall, Rome and London. Each city harbours a vast range of qualities and spatial moves, defined by a constellation of edges. Some of these qualities will be explicit and easily grasped, others will be subtle, revealed only by forensic spatial analysis and exploration.

### 01 PLASTIC SPACE

Walsall will be our point of departure. Here an interrogation of urban 'set pieces' will be our primary tool with which to build our own polemics. First by way of revealing a set of spatial qualities and edges through meticulous composite drawings that will be experimental through choice of projections, drafting techniques, material augmentation and conscious editing of what's there. Second we will develop an experimental testing ground of models that scale, multiply and focus these concepts and edges. Ideas can be taken to the extreme, or reduced down to their core elements. As with the drawings, there will be focus on deft craft. We will explore different materials and techniques of making and will discuss critically and openly the effects of the detail. We will treat this menagerie of studies as the nursery of a new plastic language that we will take forward and test in new urban settings. The resulting proposals will be richly architectural and intrinsically unique to each member of the unit and the personal language they have developed.

### 02 LEARNING FROM ROME

Rome will be our site of inspiration and a chance to develop further our skills at reading spaces. We will chart its depths, learn to draw out its qualities and understand its edges. We will challenge you to imagine these the spaces of Rome in a contemporary setting and draw links with your own work.

### 03 PLASTIC CITY

London will be at the heart of our building proposals. We will propose complex architectural projects in an established urban setting. Here we will deploy all of our skills developed throughout the year. We will take our investigations and skills into a new context to explore problematic conditions and develop sophisticated new architectural proposals.