Introduction
Architecture in Everyday Life
Ricardo Agarez and Nelson Mota, editors

One does not need to be particularly 'Left', or, indeed, politically minded at all, to appreciate that the architectural opportunities of the future are more likely to lie in the hands of administrative authorities and commercial corporations (whether publicly or privately controlled) than in the hands of any private individuals whatever; or to appreciate the many excellent reasons for such bodies having permanent architects' departments of their own. (Summerson, 1942)[1]

Where lies the real importance of design in the modern world? Not in the individual building designed by the individual architect so much as in the whole material environment […]. The design for one precious building served up as a coloured perspective becomes suspect, otiose. (Summerson, 1956)[2]

The words of architectural historian Sir John Summerson (1904–1992) resonate strongly today, albeit not always in a positive sense. The more extravagant the commission given by a powerful commercial conglomerate to a well-known architectural practice, the more blatant appears to be the need for a different understanding of the social role of the profession; of the choices architects have before them to engage with their communities; of how this translates into the everyday of architecture; and, ultimately, of what exactly constitutes this 'everyday'. Architecture has many faces that captivate the interest of designers, theoreticians and historians, and the ordinary, quotidian tasks of the designer clearly fail to do so. Yet as the pace of urbanisation in the world reaches new levels, it seems clear once more that those tasks need to be examined, studied and discussed if architects are to participate meaningfully in developments that are less about designing the 'one precious building' (indeed, they are often not about that at all) but rather require a competent, rigorous and comprehensive approach in which inconspicuous, ordinary actions and a sense of collective purpose prevail. This issue of *Footprint* investigates the everyday operations of architects in disparate contexts – in private and public offices, in school and at war – and discusses their physical, ethical and philosophical effects and untapped potential. Summerson's consistent elaborations on the changing social and professional roles of the architect in the mid-twentieth century offer a stimulating starting point for this discussion.[3]

Beyond the brass-plate ideal
Our two epigraphs were written fourteen years apart, with one World War in between. In his 1942 essay 'Bread & Butter and Architecture' – the source of the first quote – Summerson took the pulse of the architect's profession in Britain and, importantly, reflected on how the new circumstances of the post-war era might impact on the architect's role in society. The young designer, he noted, could no longer 'pursue the brass-plate ideal' of having a private practice with 'clients in the aristocracy, the City and the Church' as in the past. As these traditional forms of patronage dwindled, a 'permanent salaried employment' became a worthy alternative

to provide those 'three essential things for any born architect – bread, butter, and the opportunity to build.'[4]

Summerson's reflections on the future of the profession were chiefly triggered by the shock-waves of the Second World War and framed by the British context. In his essay 'Humdrum Tasks of the Salaried Men' for this issue of *Footprint*, Nick Beech depicts a sharp image of that historical time and space, examining the work developed by Edwin Williams for the London County Council (LCC) Architects' Department. Beech bypasses the common emphasis on architectural products to focus on the daily, often unconventional practices of architects, showing how Williams played a key role in the formation of a skilled, mechanised, modern demolition industry through his commitment to developing training schools and curricula for the Rescue Service personnel during the war. With his account of Williams' 'humdrum' work for the LCC in the 1940s, Beech goes beyond the fetishism of the formal and structural innovation traceable to the drawing board, exploring instead the relationship between architectural practice and transformations in the building industry, against the background of welfare state politics.

The lineage of the salaried architect's difficult positioning in architectural culture – often caught, in retrospect, in the split history of masterpieces and banal products, as Beech would put it – is the subject of Andri Gerber's 'Independent or Bureaucratic?' Focusing specifically on the struggle between self-employed architects and those working for the state administration in Germany, France and England at the turn of the century, Gerber averts that split and discusses different regional perceptions of the engagement of architects as part and parcel of the state administrative apparatus vis-à-vis the emergence of the entrepreneurial professional. Gerber navigates complex hierarchical structures to position the figure of the architect against the political and social structures of Europe, revealing a nuanced negotiation between anonymity and prominence, and between creative freedom and technocratic deference.

Other contributions to this issue address the multidimensional and heterogeneous reality of the architectural profession exposed by Gerber. Architect Javier Arpa has coordinated the team investigating the work of the organisation Paris Habitat, the most recent iteration in a lineage of public sector agencies that have produced affordable housing over the last century in the French capital. This colossal output was exhibited earlier this year at the Pavillon de l'Arsenal in Paris. In his contribution, Arpa explains how, and why, his curatorial focus was on the 'what' (architecture and urban form) instead of on the 'who' (the agents). This deliberate obliteration of the figure of the architect resonates in Amir Djalali's article 'The Architect as Producer', an incisive account of architect and educator Hannes Meyer's drive to blur the distinction between avant-garde and everyday practices. Gerber's reading of the social role of the architect in turn of the twentieth century Germany can be followed up, in remarkably different circumstances, in Djalali's discussion of Hannes Mayer's strategy to redefine, three decades later, the figure of the architect in the building process; to reintroduce the proletarianisation of architectural labour in avant-garde modern architecture; and to reformat the entire sphere of architectural knowledge production. Meyer, as Djalali suggests, tried to push for a comprehensive transformation of the procedures and means through which architecture and the city were produced: a subversive proposition that would have brought about a dramatic change in architects' everyday engagement with their community and direct co-workers – and one that un-revolutionary, late-capitalist developments have paradoxically made a reality in the present day at considerable professional and social cost.

(Salaried) architects as producers

The Second World War helped shape architects' awareness of their social role and led to a different perception of the architect within society. Employment in local authority housing offices, welfare commissions and commercial organisations (as Summerson suggested) was not only a significant, new opportunity for a financially fragile profession, it became the chance to revert the negative aura of working as a salaried architect, a prospect 'which [in the mid-1920s] attracted few and was entertained by the unambitious and the not very talented […] sought only by those to whom the pay-envelope was a very much more urgent consideration than opportunities for the creation of architecture.'[5] The perception of salaried employment as an unexciting way out for the least able (i.e. least creative) young architects is a recurrent shadow in the culture of architecture that has certainly been cast over the most recent generations, now that the heyday of our belief in the public sphere as a provider of quality services and a locus of technical expertise is over.

In the new *Footprint* catergory of visual essay, João Paulo Martins and Sofia Diniz challenge conventional wisdom on this subject by drawing on the work of architects performing as civil servants under the aegis of the administrative apparatus of the Portuguese dictatorship from the 1940s through the early 1970s. Martins and Diniz examine the 'invisible' contribution of better- and lesser-known architects who operated as designers of the furniture and fittings that equipped extensive public building programmes across the country. By looking at instances of negotiation that took place in obscure government departments between a generally conservative tutelage and a number of officials who were eager to keep up with international developments, their research reveals how noteworthy examples of architectural agency surface in inconspicuous everyday objects and practices.

Research into the ample evidence of qualified work delivered by 'departmental architects', such as those working for the LCC Architects' Department or the Furniture Acquisition Commission in Portugal, runs counter to the persistent anathema towards the everyday role of the salaried architect – even, or especially, within the discipline of architecture itself. Indeed, when asked to reflect on their careers, architects themselves are the first to belittle their more 'bread-and-butter' works as second-rate by-products, if not to simply disavow them, redressing their personal narratives according to what oral history theorists call 'collective and retrospective versions of the past'.[6] At the root of this self-prejudice lies the prevalence of the 'resistant hero-genius' figure as the architect's model, stemming from what Andrew Saint perceptively saw (already three decades ago) as the enduring 'strain of artistic individualism' in architectural ideology, whereby 'a building is significant or insignificant in so far as it incorporates an idea or ideas conceived by its individual designer, and the history of architecture becomes the web of such significant ideas, worked out in special buildings.'[7] The corollary of this concept, still popular because it enables architects to 'see themselves not only as top dogs in the construction process but also as creators and romantics [with] a chance of fame and remembrance from posterity',[8] is that the profession is generally unwilling or unprepared to consider other sides of its activity to be worthy of historical or theoretical discussion, regardless of how central these may have been to its survival.

The role of architects in public service or working as team members in private practice for the construction industry more often than not falls through the cracks of a markedly celebratory architecture culture. Yet time and again, the self-aware architect has sought to revise his or her position within the equation of built environment production, whether by following more socially-disruptive strategies – as pursued by Hannes Meyer – or by working within the cadre of full-blown capitalism.

The exploration of the 'other sides' to the profession gained momentum in the context of architectural education and production in Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, despite the growing importance of authorship as a marker of the architect's creative responsibility. Elizabeth Keslacy's 'Fun and Games' examines emerging conceptions of the architect that radically departed from conventional models. By using instructional studio games to both explore the productive capacities of collective creativity and re-position the designer as one of many figures embedded in a network of design stakeholders, educators such as Juan Pablo Bonta opened new doors for architecture students to engage with their social and professional circles, substantially redressing their everyday remit.

The article by Ellen Rowley, 'The Architect, the Planner and the Bishop', offers a specific example of the designer's complex entanglement with the everyday conditions of practice that occurs in often surprising teamwork settings – one that might have provided inspiration for an academic studio game, with the added element of the Irish Catholic Church as a powerful stakeholder. Rowley examines the tense dialogues and negotiations between different categories of spatial planners in Dublin, emphasising the overwhelming influence of Ireland's theocratic governance in shaping the everyday life of the ordinary citizen and, ultimately, the landscape of Irish suburbia. The interplay of forces that emerges in Rowley's piece portrays the subdued spatial agency of the architect and the planner in contrast to the prominence of the bishop. Drawn from the idiosyncratic context of 1940s Ireland, this case elicits discussions of the 'bread-and-butter' of architecture, and of the latent power structures that determine the everyday of the salaried architect in many other contexts.

Rendering architecture effective in real life
Summerson actively countered the 'artistic' strain of architecture with his persistent focus on the outsider and his 'support of the underdog', be this a Georgian architect, a Victorian builder or, we might add, an Irish civil servant. He believed 'there is a special interest to be derived from examining the position of a minor artist because it shows how the intellectuals of a generation are inevitably forced into a single pattern of growth – however different their capacities or their choice of medium.'[9] This attention to the 'minor' and humble but competent designer was as valid for the past as it was for Summerson's day: a 'tradition of competence and quality in architecture comes along' when the young architect stops being 'always out to ring the last bell rung by a great name' and 'settles down to something not quite as adventurous as his thesis design but not as cautious as the average of new buildings he sees around him.'[10] Summerson was a committed proponent of modern English architecture, yet thought that it would not thrive in the hands of individual geniuses. Rather, he held a 'political belief' in forms of collaborative practice, such as corporate offices and official departments, which were key in order to 'change and clarify the relation of the architect to the public';[11] in other words, to strengthen the relevance of the profession for its wider community. In Summerson's view, these forms of collaboration had the potential, as Philip Goad has noted, to simultaneously ensure 'consistent service, the preservation of the freedom and integrity of the individual designer, and formal and programmatic innovation.'[12]

> Altogether, it seems to me that the highfliers – the Lloyd Wrights and the Corbusiers and their satellites – have broken as many barriers as needed breaking for the present. They have liberated architecture and equipped it for all the real-life adventures which are looming ahead. The next thing to be done is to render architecture *effective* [original emphasis] in English life.[13]

The 'bread-and-butter architecture' of corporate offices and administrative authorities became an essential field for the dissemination of modernism

and modern building processes after the war, and it was the everyday work of the salaried designer – the architect of bureaucracy – that eventually rendered the discipline *effective* in contemporary society, regardless of what little attention it gets from our dominant, hagiographic historiography. In the text from 1956 that we drew on for our second epigraph, Summerson could not hide his satisfaction at showing how, in the game-changing operations of British post-war housing and school building, the 'big official department' with its salaried architects had found the opportunity to 'demonstrate architecture as a public service. […] For many young men returning to their drawing boards after the war, the hypothetical had become the real – the opportunities present were such as a new generation of architects was fully prepared to accept.'[14] Summerson's prewar calls for an 'architecture of bureaucracy' were, to borrow Goad's observation, 'vindicated' by the late 1950s.[15]

While the figure of the salaried architect was, in effect, partly rehabilitated through the post-war architecture of the welfare state, this has since been perceived as a predominantly male ecosystem: symptomatically, Summerson's words concerned a group of young *men*. As Karen Burns, Justine Clark and Julie Willis put it in their 'Mapping the (Invisible) Salaried Woman Architect', women remained invisible but active participants, yet their practices were marginalised within the historical record. Their review of the Parlour project delivers a more nuanced view of the profession, revealing the extent to which surveying the careers of women architects offers a fine-grained understanding of how workplaces operate through gender channels. Women were, and are, instrumental in rendering architecture effective in life: scholarly, professional and social discussions are bound to reflect this increasingly.

In England, key women players, such as social housing reformer Elizabeth Denby in the interwar period, demonstrated the pertinence of another essential strand in the everyday of architecture: teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration, through which single authorship faded away. Across the Atlantic, this strand was developed in large-scale collective enterprises that were gathering attention just as Summerson issued his 'Bread & Butter and Architecture' call – and well before Henry Russell Hitchcock published his article admitting the need for a specifically commercial (note, not public administration-based) architecture of bureaucracy.[16] In April 1941, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened its exhibition *TVA Architecture and Design*, where the architectural-engineering achievements of the Tennessee Valley Authority were displayed. Speaking at the members' preview, David E. Lilienthal, Director of TVA since the project's inception in 1933, stressed how relevant it was that the MoMA 'should see fit to recognise TVA structures as noteworthy examples of modern American architecture and design.' The 'building of the TVA', he noted, was planned as 'an anonymous undertaking' ('You will search in vain for bronze tablets […] listing the names of engineers or architects.'), although it had been touched with the 'special talent and genius' of individuals such as Chief Engineer Theodore Parker or Chief Architect Roland Wank. For the museum's Architecture Department, the 'architectural significance' of the TVA works was to show 'that a huge government project <u>can</u> [original emphasis] produce fine architecture, a gratifying truth we often forget. […] These structures handsomely combine dignity, logic and beauty – from the minor buildings built around them to the colossal dams themselves.'[17] The terms of MoMA's endorsement and the structures they refer to read as an unintended declaration, complete with concrete present-day built evidence, in support of Summerson's campaign for the future of public architecture.

In fact, unlike many of Summerson's (British) examples of the post-war vindication of bureaucratic

architecture, the influence of TVA's methods and approach (from territorial to building scale) on the architecture of the welfare state across the world is increasingly attracting interest in scholarly accounts – a trend most recently testified to by the publication of the edited volume *Architecture and the Welfare State*.[18] In his review of this anthology for *Footprint*, Tahl Kaminer underlines the editors' commitment to redeem figures: for example, the departmental architect designing public housing in Western Europe, typically associated with maligned planning and technocratic policies. Highlighting the 'elusiveness of welfare state specificity', Kaminer suggests that the study of governmental responses to the social critique of society still needs to go beyond traditional geopolitical frames and a narrow definition of 'architecture', usually conceived as an artistic field of creativity rather than a field of social production and reproduction.

Towards a flat ontology

Over the last four decades, the attention paid to the 'underdogs', as it were, has been ambivalent. From the late 1970s, widespread change in the public perception of civic administrations, seen with increasing scepticism, has taken its toll on the image of the official salaried architect; the social prestige that, in some contexts, was associated with his position has waned. In its turn, employment in increasingly large private practices remains a bitter-sweet experience for architects who are, to this day, still generally taught in the old tradition of the 'artistic individualism' mantra. In parallel to this trend are resistant approaches fought militantly to promote the social scope of architecture, as C. Richard Hatch put it. Indeed, confronted with the relentless advance of neoliberalism, in the mid-1980s Hatch bitterly asserted that 'needs formerly considered the most important are lost, among them the needs for many-sided competence and for creativity.' He went on to stress that 'together, these losses imply a greater loss, the loss of the need for architecture and for the city, that is, for rich social existence.'[19]

He called on all architects to loosen their concern with authorship and promote the principle of user participation in design decision-making processes. This would eventually, Hatch contended, make a specific contribution to developing critical awareness and catering for the wealth of human needs, thus tackling 'the anomic production of commercial architecture and the elitist cultural models of the postmodern academics.'[20]

Despite Hatch's praise for the engaged professional, over the last three decades the figure of the architect qua anonymous spatial agent has been swiftly eroded from our collective social conscience. To be sure, as we look back at the twentieth century while well immersed in the problems of the present, the architectural production of those who played their part in inconspicuous offices and unexciting departments, and the place of 'bread-and-butter' architecture in the politics of building design, history and theory, continue to demand attention.

Recently, new emphasis has been put on other ways of doing architecture, operating in contested areas of spatial production that challenge the politics of pragmatic laissez-faire.[21] Following in Summerson's steps, authors such as Jeremy Till and Tatjana Schneider challenge the mythology of the sole architect as hero-author still played out through the figures of the Rems, Zahas and Normans, whose first names are used, they contend, to give 'a comforting familiarity with genius that disguises the reality of how little of the built environment is associated with any architect-author whatsoever.'[22]

This issue of *Footprint* aims to investigate practices that have been eclipsed by the spotlights of mainstream media. In doing so, we are well aware of the need to avoid the lure of a separation between the 'high' and the 'low': a 'split ontology' as Tim Gough describes it in his contribution to this issue, 'Architecture is Always in the Middle…' Instead, our drive to re-examine the bread-and-butter of

architecture aims to contribute to a flat ontology, avoiding the pitfalls of what Gough calls 'the prejudice of the split' that is somewhat implicit in Summerson's writing. In this issue, we seek to explore the many facets of the continuous interplay between architecture, politics, culture and construction, as well as the many nuances connecting the realms of creative composition and its reception. Paraphrasing Tim Gough's title, we want to explore the middle, where architecture always is.

Notes

1. Sir John Summerson, 'Bread & Butter and Architecture', *Horizon. A Review of Literature and Art* VI, no. 34 (1942): 234.

2. Sir John Summerson, 'Introduction', in Trevor Dannatt, *Modern Architecture in Britain* (London: Batsford, 1959), 27. This was a reprint of Summerson's introduction to the catalogue of the Arts Council of Great Britain exhibition *Ten Years of British Architecture, '45–'55*, of 1956.

3. Summerson's 'Bread & Butter and Architecture' text was also the leitmotif of our conference session '"Bread & Butter and Architecture": Accommodating the Everyday' at the European Architectural History Network Third International Meeting (Turin, June 2014). This issue of *Footprint* shares the fundamental premises of the session, as well as some of the papers originally given there.

4. Summerson (1942), 235.

5. Ibid., 234.

6. Cf. Alistair Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77–95.

7. Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 6.

8. Ibid.,7.

9. John Summerson, 'Gandy and the Tomb of Merlin', *The Architectural Review* (April 1941): 90, quoted in Neil Jackson, 'John Summerson and the View from the Outside', in *Summerson and Hitchcock: Centenary Essays on Architectural Historiography*, ed. Frank Salmon (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 263–80. Jackson saw in Summerson's work 'that rather British characteristic of fair play and gamesmanship apparent in the support of the underdog.' Jackson (2006), 275.

10. Summerson (1942), 241–242.

11. Ibid., 237.

12. Philip Goad, 'Genius and Bureaucracy: Hitchcock, Summerson and Post-War Modern Architecture', in *Summerson and Hitchcock: Centenary Essays on Architectural Historiography* (2006), 281–311. Goad's essay, discussing the roles of Summerson and Hitchcock in bringing 'the dichotomous model Genius vs. Bureaucracy' up to the higher echelons of historiography, offers an insightful account of Summerson's (numerous) writings on the subject of the salaried architect, published in the 1930s and 1940s.

13. Summerson (1942), 243.

14. Summerson (1959), 19.

15. Goad (2006), 301.

16. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'The Architecture of Bureaucracy and the Architecture of Genius', *The Architectural Review* (January 1947): 3–6.

17. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 'David E. Lilienthal, Director of TVA, Opens Exhibition of TVA Architecture and Design at Museum of Modern Art', press release, 28 April 1941. The Museum of Modern Art Exhibition Records, Files for MoMA Exhibition #125, *T.V.A. Architecture and Design* (on view from 30 April through 7 June 1941).

18. Examples of this recent surge of interest are Mardges Bacon's account of Le Corbusier's confrontation with TVA's collaborative practices, integrating architecture and infrastructure, and Tom Avermaete's essay on the importance of TVA's model on the work of ATBAT, the organisation created by Le Corbusier to develop new forms of cooperation between architects, engineers and quantity surveyors. See Mardges Bacon, 'Le Corbusier and Postwar America: The TVA and Béton Brut', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 1 (2015): 13–40; Tom Avermaete, 'From Knoxville to Bidonville: ATBAT and the Architecture

of the French Welfare State', in *Architecture and the Welfare State*, eds. Mark Swenarton, Tom Avermaete, and Dirk van den Heuvel (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2014), 218–35.

19. C. Richard Hatch, 'Introduction', in *The Scope of Social Architecture*, ed. C. Richard Hatch (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984), 7.

20. Ibid.

21. Some examples of this new trend were identified in Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011).

22. Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Footprint* 2, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 97.

Biographies

Ricardo Agarez is an architect and architectural historian (PhD 2013, RIBA President's Award for Research) specialised in the history and theory of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture, having written on national and regional identities, dissemination phenomena, housing and public architecture and the architectural culture in bureaucracy. The Giles Worsley Fellow of the British School at Rome in 2014–2015, he is currently FWO Pegasus Marie Curie Fellow at Ghent University. His book *Algarve Building: Modernism, Regionalism and Architecture in the South of Portugal, 1925–1965*, stemming from his PhD research at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, will be published in 2016.

Nelson Mota is Assistant Professor at TU Delft and guest scholar at The Berlage. He was the recipient of the Fernando Távora Prize in 2006 and authored the book *A Arquitectura do Quotidiano* (2010) runner-up in the Iberian FAD Prize 2011. In 2014 he received his PhD from TU Delft with the dissertation 'An Archaeology of the Ordinary'. His current research focuses on the relationship between vernacular social and spatial practices and the architecture of dwelling.