The iasap-bv (Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program at Barcelona-El Vallès) is a year-long program of overseas studies for undergraduate students of the Illinois School of Architecture (ISoA) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is a comprehensive international learning experience that has the unique advantage of providing, for an entire academic year, the extraordinary opportunity of living and studying in a historically, culturally and architecturally rich overseas environment. The year of studies is rigorous and demanding, and all participants—students, faculty, guests and administration—are expected to strive for excellence at all times.

The iasap-bv is part of an overarching agreement between the University of Illinois and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) that provides for a significant and long-term academic collaboration. The program is hosted at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura del Vallès (ETSAV) located in Sant Cugat del Vallès, a municipal district within Barcelona's metropolitan area.

The iasap-bv’s goal is to provide students with a multicultural and cross-national approach that fosters integration in a different academic and cultural setting, enriching their educational and professional development. At the same time, the experience of living abroad for an entire year provides opportunities for personal growth and for learning from direct interaction with different peoples, environments and cultures.

Committed to a holistic, creative and open-minded approach to architecture, the program’s curriculum is based on three core courses: Architectural Design, Architectural History and Structures; whereas their specific content is tailored to take full advantage of the program’s location, these three courses are fully equivalent—in academic rigor and content—to the courses offered on the Illinois campus. A fourth course, titled Overseas Architectural Studies, comprises a wide range of special activities such as field-trips, seminars, and thematic workshops.

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this fourth yearbook of the Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program in Barcelona–El Vallès (IASAP-BV). The excellent work documented throughout this yearbook indicates that much of the promise in moving our premier undergraduate exchange program from Versailles to Barcelona five years ago has been fulfilled. We have moved into a region of vibrant contemporary design that maintains the exceptional opportunity and ease of access for students to study European traditions of architectural design throughout the continent.

We are very fortunate to share this exchange with our academic partner in Spain, the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura del Vallès (ETSAV), a school of high standing with outstanding leadership. The vision of architectural education, outreach, and leadership articulated by Victor Seguí, the school's former director, has made the ETSAV-Illinois collaboration beneficial to students and faculty alike. We look forward to enhancing this strong foundation in partnership with Albert Cuchi, the new ETSAV Director.

And speaking of foundations, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dr. Marc Sanabra, recently appointed to our IASAP-BV faculty as the Dean F. and Avis E. Hilfinger Faculty Fellow in Architecture. Marc will be teaching architectural structures to the 2018-19 cohort. He will also share duties with two individuals whose vision and contributions are essential to the success of our Barcelona program: Professor Alejandro Lapunzina, IASAP-BV Director, and Magali Veronelli Lapunzina, IASAP-BV Program Coordinator. They were the heart and soul of our Versailles program for many years and continue to lead our program in Barcelona with intelligence and commitment. They play a special role in the lives of the UIUC students who come to Barcelona, keeping them informed, safe, and providing an outstanding educational and life-building experience.

Of course, IASAP-BV’s greatest legacy is its graduates. I join Alex, Magali, Marc, and all of their colleagues in the Illinois School of Architecture in wishing members of IASAP-BV’s 2017-2018 class, represented in this yearbook, the very best as they take their next steps toward practice in architecture and kindred professions.

Jeffery S. Poss, FAIA
Professor and Interim Director, Illinois School of Architecture
It was a year that none will ever forget, because right from the start—and actually even before the students’ arrival on September 6 of 2017—and for the rest of the nine months of the program’s activity it was marked by historical events that leave a trace in the history of a city and the people who inhabit it—permanently or temporarily. But the year was also unforgettable because of what happened within the program itself: thirty-six weeks of intense activity that demanded full engagement from the first to the last day. And, as usual, the year was unique, filled with activities supported by years of successful experience, but also with new, “experimental,” undertakings, always with the aim of making it a vivid learning experience, a year that will be remembered as a milestone in the personal and professional life of the participating students.

Immediately following the students’ arrival, we began a series of “orientation activities” to help participants get familiar with the environment—the ETSAV, Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona. The highlights of these first few days were “Discovering Sant Cugat” and a long walking tour through Barcelona’s center. The first, a new activity, was designed to engage students in an active exploration of the city in which they will live for the following nine months; it consisted of finding, identifying, and drawing (after all, they are architecture students!) all the city’s places of interest, from architectural landmarks and urban plazas to the location of practical things such as pharmacies, grocery stores, and, of course, cell-phone companies! In the second activity, the walking tour of Barcelona, we traversed some of the central districts of the city with the intention of culminating the day with a picnic at the Villa Olimpica’s beach, but a sudden and persistent summer storm frustrated the project forcing the group to find refuge under the canopies of the Barceloneta’s market, only a few hundred meters before getting to the beach.

The curricular activities began on September 12. At the IASAP-BV, the curricular structure consists of four courses per semester: three “core courses”—Architectural Design, Architectural History, and Structures—and a fourth course—Overseas Architectural Studies—that is comprised of a wide range of activities such as intensive thematic workshops, seminars, organized field-trips and independent travel. This modest booklet is dedicated to an overview of the work that students produced in these courses.

Organized in sections that reflect the program’s curricular organization, it is an opportunity to take a look back at the work produced during the year and thus evaluate accomplishments and shortcomings, the most productive method to continue building the School’s half-century old, and well-known, study abroad program in Europe.
The opportunity of seeing, studying and understanding historically relevant sites in person—buildings and cities—is, without doubt, one of the most singular benefits of the overseas experience. Courses in Architectural History can take full advantage of this unique aspect; therefore, at the iasap-bv, History courses are organized as a mix of traditional in-class lecture sessions and on-site visits to the buildings that marked the history of architecture. In 2017-2018 students took two courses in Architectural History. The first—in the Fall 2017—consisted of an extensive overview of Catalanian architecture from Antiquity to the end of the 20th century. The second, in the Spring semester, took the form of a series of three autonomous thematic modules that, with an expanded understanding of “history” as a way of understanding architecture, focused on a wider range of topics and viewpoints than a traditional History course. These thematic modules were taught by specially invited guests who offered lectures, led visits to landmark sites and buildings, and asked students to explore the module’s theme through a series of assignments that required the development and production of both written and graphic materials (pages 14-23).

The sequence of courses in Structures is fully written and graphic materials (pages 14-23). The fourth course of the program’s curricular structure—Overseas Architectural Studies—is comprised of a series of independent and loosely interrelated activities conceived to take full advantage of the program’s location in one of the world’s most vibrant architectural settings. The course focuses on learning architecture through direct personal experience, using graphic analysis to both record the site and analysis of analysis fosters a higher level of understanding of architecture and the built environment. The course’s activities typically include guided/organized multi-day field trips (to northern Catalunya and southern France; Zaragoza; and Navarra and Euskadi), and several thematic workshops where the students develop skills on graphic studies, architectural photography and the ability to see (observe, analyze and understand) buildings and sites both in the Barcelona metropolitan area and through their own independent study-travel. Together, these activities compose a complex mosaic of eventful experiences that promote the understanding of architecture as a discipline of critical thought and creative reflection. All workshops and special activities have associated course assignments that students develop both under the instructors’ guidance and independently during their travels (pages 36-57).

Traveling independently, either during the periods for independent travel built into the program’s yearly calendar or on week-ends, is one of the major attractions for students during the year of overseas studies. Documenting the sites visited through photography and video is one of their favorite activities, and both are related to assignments issued as part of the Overseas Architectural Studies course. A selection of their photographs—a submitted part of an assignment—is presented in a special eight-page section (pages 58-65).

In addition to the four courses of the curricular structure, every year the program organizes numerous extracurricular activities. Field trips and public lectures were part of the program’s extracurricular activities for many years, but this year we launched new initiatives (attendance and participation was optional): a series of informal talks grouped under the generic title of “Forum” that was dedicated to discuss several topics related to architecture that were not part of any of the four courses (two of the sessions were led by students) and Mindfulness support sessions led by one of the members of the iasap-bv’s team. The promising outcome of these initiatives has encouraged us to strengthen and intensify them in subsequent editions of the program.

Field trips are a fundamental component of the program, generally associated to courses’ activities they consist of half-day or multi-day trips to visit relevant buildings—sites and cities. The latter were part of the three multi-day trips organized this year: to Empúries, Salses, Carcassonne and Sant Miquel de Guixart and to Zaragoza (both in the Fall) and, in the Spring, to the most important cities of Navarra and Euskadi: Pamplona, Vitoria, Bilbao and San Sebastian.

In 2017-2018, the iasap-bv organized four public lectures by renowned practitioners and scholars. In October 2017, Jaume Mayol presented “Building an imaginary,” a talk focused on the work of the office he co-leads with Irene Pérez: TED’a Architectes. Based in Palma (Mallorca), TED’a is among the more interesting emerging firms in Spain and Europe as demonstrated by the awards they received at the end of the 2017-2018. The other three lectures were scheduled in the Spring semester; in March, renowned Swiss historian and critic Stanislaus von Moss offered a lecture titled “First Aid: Modern Architecture and the idea of rescue” in which he dissected about the relationship between institutions such as the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the League of Nations in shaping modern architecture’s humanitarian “unconscious.” In April, Gianluca Burgio, professor of architecture at the school of architecture at the Università degli Studi di Enna “Kore” (Sicily, Italy), offered a talk entitled “Built environment therapies: the metaphor of care in architecture.”

The closing lecture of the year was delivered in May by Laurent Beaudouin who presented the work of Emmanuelle & Laurent Beaudouin Architectes; with offices in Nancy and Paris, Beaudouin Architectes is one of the most important French architectural practices of the last three decades. Their lecture, entitled “Matter matters,” presented an overview of their work in which, focusing on a few selected projects, they insisted on the relevance that materials and their specific characteristics have in their conception of architecture. As part of their visits to the iasap-bv, both Laurent Beaudouin (in the Spring) and Jaume Mayol (in the Fall) extended their contribution to the program by participating in Architectural Design reviews.

The agreement for institutional collaboration between the Illinois School of Architecture and the ETSAV that makes possible the iasap-bv provides tuition-free scholarships for one-year of studies at Urbana-Champaign to up to seven students enrolled in the ETSAV. Highlighting the importance that the exchange agreement has for the Illinois School of Architecture, an insight into their own educational experience abroad—at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—is presented in the closing section of the Yearbook (pages 66-73).

In closing, this little booklet provides only a small glimpse at what participants of the iasap-bv 2017-2018 did and experienced during the nine-month long program.

Their engagement, the quality their work, and the variety of activities undertaken during the year are confirmed by the images that fill the pages of this Yearbook. Yet, nothing can truly transmit the vivid experience of having spent a full academic year studying architecture with Barcelona as a home and Europe as the front and back gardens. The images of this vivid experience will be with them for the rest of their life.
Mida Petita/Small Scale [<700m²]

In the Fall semester, the Architectural Design course took the form of a collaborative joint studio with the ETSAV’s Taller 7PT, a 4th/5th year architectural design course led by ETSAV’s Professor Antoni Pérez Mañosas. In effect, in this course students from the two institutions (which included a large contingent of foreign students participating in the Erasmus exchange program) working in mixed teams of three students, collaborated in designing a small building that they had to develop to a high degree of development.

**Project assignment**

One of the key premises for a sustainable environment is “to build as little as needed” (that is, the strictly necessary volume), taking advantage of existing conditions, as accurately as possible, the antithesis of large urban developments and undertakings. To build accurately implies, throughout the design process, to understand and consider how the different spaces of the project will be occupied and used by the building’s users.

The primary objectives of the course were: to search for a perfect project, that is a design proposal in which everything is carefully controlled and fits as precisely as possible without occupying more space than necessary; the use of exposed brick as the main/dominant material; and, the strict control of the building’s size with the goal of developing the project to a high level of detail and definition of its parts.

**Site and Program**

The assignment consisted of designing a small private restaurant or a dining hall for the adjacent university campus; yet, in either case, the facility had to be open to the general public.

The proposal had to approach both spatial and environmental qualities of main rooms and areas, with particular attention to the main public areas of the building such as the lobby and the main seating hall. Designers were strongly encouraged to design a building that was respectful of the formal characteristics of the immediate context, was formally and aesthetically controlled, and devoid of unnecessary gestural aspects.

Structural design had to be simple and clear (load bearing walls, and concrete, steel or wood structural framing were all acceptable), with the building enclosure predominantly in exposed brick.

Moreover, strong emphasis was placed in the integration of the building’s technological systems and services. Finally, the design of outdoor spaces, either private or integrated to the public space, had to be carefully designed.

The site for the project was a small plot of land adjacent to the old Water Reservoir of La Ciutadella park, built for the Universal Exposition of 1888 by the architect Josep Fontseré from 1874 and converted into the library of the Pompeu Fabra University by Lluís Clotet and Ignacio Pancio in the 1990s.

On the site there were several auxiliary buildings that could be eliminated (for example, the partial—now virtually ruined—wall that delimits a part of the site) with the exception of the imposing brick chimney, a symbolic element that had to be respected and incorporated into the design proposal.
Courses in Architectural History are essential for any architectural program of studies; in an overseas setting, and particularly in a location such as Barcelona’s environs, they have an even higher relevance because they allow to combine traditional teaching techniques and methods (in-class lectures and discussions, and plenty of reading assignments) with visits to the architectural landmarks referred to in those lectures and readings. Yet, nothing can match his opportunity of a direct experience and personal confrontation with the buildings and sites that have marked the history of the discipline. Thus, all courses in Architectural History taught at the iasap bv combine both traditional teaching methods with an abundance of visits to historically relevant buildings (virtually distributed in equal halves).

The curricular sequence consists of two courses, one in each semester, that have very distinct characteristics and formats. In 2017-2018, a course focused on Catalan architecture was offered in the Fall, while in the Spring semester, the courses consisted of three autonomous thematic modules that offered a broader understanding of Architectural History as a way to learn architecture.

**Fall 2017 semester**

**Barcelona, the architecture and the city: From medieval monumentality to urban modern design**

_Professor Carolina García Estévez_

This course was dedicated to an overview of the history of Catalan architecture and focused on the strong relationships between architecture and urban design, one of the main aspects that defined the nature and characteristics of Catalan architecture for centuries, from the medieval period to the architecture of Modernismo, the early 20th century avant-garde and their revolutionary concept of space, and the architectural and urban developments for the Barcelona Olympics Games held in 1992. All these historical scenarios were a pretext to explore the way in which the city of Barcelona has changed over time. The aim was to look at the local architectural heritage as the point of departure to think about the essence of architecture through time, as a synthesis of ideas, techniques and forms in relationship with the space and the city.

The course consisted of classroom lectures and on-site studies of selected masterpieces of Barcelona’s architectural history. Together they completed a panorama of the evolution of Catalan architecture and its insertion within the history of architecture in Europe. A wealth of required readings provided necessary preliminary knowledge of the subject to follow the lectures and in-class discussions, the visits to masterpieces and the assignments that were developed along the course. Bruno Zevi’s book “Architecture as space” could be interpreted as the manifesto that, through visual documents, led students to the understanding of architecture as the expression of its time (pages 16-17).

**Spring 2018 semester**

**Socio-ecological architecture and urbanism: an approach from theory and practice**

_Professors Elena Albareda Fernández and Marta Serra Permanyer_

Nowadays, there is a large gap in learning with a socio-ecological perspective, and the basic tools and methodologies that architecture can borrow from its own history are not usually part of architecture programs except at the master and doctorate levels. However, and increasingly, architects and urbanists need to manage challenges and imperative to integrate a social and ecological approach.

This module offered a critical vision from which critical discourses could be developed on the evaluation of the city to have sufficient conceptual criteria for designing and intervening the urban space. Its main objectives were: learning about socio-ecological urbanism from a historical perspective and concepts on the relationship between the architect, the user, the community and the environment; transfer of values to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society; empowering the future architect’s role in dealing with environmental sustainability and community-driven projects.

The four-week module consisted of history-theory lectures (to introduce concepts and the relevant figures in the field) and related field trips. Lectures presented case studies through an action-research approach supported by the teachers’ professional practice. Field trips served to move from theory to practice. As part of the coursework, students developed a comprehensive booklet focused on the lectures, documentaries, field trips and case-study discussions that unfolded through four intensive weeks of studies (pages 18-19).

**Preservation is Architecture: contemporary debates on heritage and preservation**

_Professor Josep Maria García Fuentes_

The module focused on exploring and understanding the shaping of the contemporary notion of heritage through a historical and critical approach and engaging students in dynamic debates on the intervention, preservation and conservation of heritage from an architectural perspective.

The approach was grounded upon the consideration that both heritage and architecture can be placed within a cultural continuum and are the outcome of a complex cultural, social and political struggle. This is an understanding of architecture and heritage as a process rather than as a revered object to be preserved. To truly understand the way a building tells the story of architecture and materials expresses the values sought to represent and serve at the time, and in the ways that these meanings might or might not be extended, enriched or transformed and reshaped by preservation or new contemporary interventions.

The goal was to give students the skills to read, understand and document buildings, and to define their own educated criteria in dealing with heritage and preservation. Thus, the course interrogated and challenged the current contemporary notion of heritage and preservation, provoking students with tools to work on updating, extending and reusing existing buildings from a contemporary point of view. Emphasis was placed upon the articulation and refinement of architectural projects and case-studies that were analyzed and discussed in-class sessions. Lectures and site visits led to analysis and debate –both grounded and supported by required readings; together, they informed the development of an essay (written and graphic) that was the module’s required assignment (pages 20-21).

**Four Architectural Landmarks**

_Professor Celia Marín Vega_

The third module of the course was aimed at studying architectural landmarks located in Barcelona and nearby that students would likely find difficult to visit independently. For this year, we selected four 20th Century relevant buildings: Antoni Gaudí’s Casa Vicens (Barcelona, 1878), recently open to the public after the careful restoration undertaken by Martínez Lapeña and Torres Tur; Antonio Gómez’s masterpiece “La Ricarda” (Barcelona, 1963), one of the most emblematic buildings of the famous Catalan architect, a key figure of modern architecture in Spain and Southamerica; Miralles & Pintos’s evocative Cemetery of Igualada (Igualada, 1994), operates on the Barcelonian architectural taste of the last decade of the 20th century; and Ricardo Boffili’s Walden 7 (Sant Just Desvern, 1975), which 40 years after being completed continues to surprise students. All visits were supported with reading assignments and required the development of a short written and graphic essay (pages 22-23).
The program's curricular sequence in Structures comprised two courses that perfectly matched the equivalent courses offered on campus. The Fall semester course was Theory and Design of Steel and Timber Structures; the Spring's was Theory and Design of Concrete Structures.

External circumstances beyond anyone's control did not allow that these courses be offered on-site; therefore, the two courses—both required for all students of the Illinois School of Architecture—had to be offered via distant learning (on-line). Yet, this was not an impediment for the students to develop special assignments completely related to their overseas experience.

The Fall semester course in Theory and Design of Steel and Timber asked the students to choose an existing building with architecturally exposed structural steel to visit in person and study for their semester project.

The first phase required the students to research the structural layout of their building, identify the gravity and lateral systems in photographs, and explain the load path through hand sketches and words. This project phase allowed the students to focus on the beauty and practicality of structural steel in our built environment.

The second phase of the project focused on the most popular building chosen by the students to study: The Madrid Barajas Airport by Richard Rogers and Estudio Lamela. The students were asked to build a 3D analysis model of the famously undulating roof and slanting columns, then perform sanity checks on several of the calculation outputs from SAP by hand.

This assignment allowed the students to use several of the equations and analysis methods taught during lectures in a tangible application. It also exposed them to the technological advancements in computational design and analysis that is so prevalent in our profession today.

The Spring semester assignment was directly related to the Architectural Design “Cap Stone” Studio project; consequently, the work produced in this course was embedded into the project that students developed for that course and therefore not represented under this section of the Yearbook.
A Public Library in Barcelona

The Spring semester course in Architectural Design—the “Cap Stone” Studio—was dedicated to designing a small Public Library for a small atypical site in Barcelona’s Eixample. As usual for all Cap Stone projects, the challenge was to design a building in which all elements and aspects of the design process and building design—from conceptual strategies to the design of structure, building envelope and environmental systems—were carefully integrated in the design proposal.

The site designated for the project was located at the intersection of Carrer Roger de Flor with Carrer de Ribes, a virtually triangular plot of land facing a public paseo+park and bounded by mid-rise buildings.

The semester was organized in two distinct parts: the first consisted of a series of interrelated workshops dedicated to generate the documentation needed to develop the project (site analysis, precedent studies, understanding of local and international building codes and program development) and intensive sessions focused on site-occupation strategies and conceptual formal studies (a full session dedicated to experimenting in model form with various materials was, without doubt, the highlight of this period). Following the consolidation of the schematic idea, completed by the end of the first part of the semester, the second period (longer than the first) was dedicated to developing the project to the highest possible level of detail and integration.
Le Corbusier, “Creation is a Patient Search”

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018
Special Activities + Workshops

IASAP-BV faculty + Specially invited guest instructors

“When one travels and works with visual things, architecture, painting or sculpture, one uses one’s eyes and draws, so as to fix deep down in one’s experience what is seen. Once the impression is recorded by pencil, it stays for good, entered, registered, inscribed. The camera is a tool for idlers, who use a machine to do their seeing for them. To draw oneself, to trace the lines, handle the volumes, organize the surface... all this means to discover... and it is then that inspiration may come. Inventing, creating, one’s whole being is drawn into action, and it is this action which counts. In both semesters, students were required to keep a graphic journal of their travels, documenting the buildings and sites they visited in their journey. A selection from the “Architect’s Journal” assignment is presented on pages 46 to 49.

A journal of graphic and written notes was also required for the all-class Road Trip to Navarra and Euskadi; in this week-long field trip, the class visited and studied a wealth of remarkable buildings from various historical periods: the Romanesque fortress of Loarre and the little but beautiful church at Eunate, three buildings by Rafael Moneo (the Archives in Pamplona, the Deusto Library in Bilbao, and the Kursaal in San Sebastián); Francisco Mangado’s Archeological Museum and José L. Catón’s Museo Fournier de Naipes, both in Vitoria; the astonishing Chillida-Leku sculptural park near San Sebastian; and, the highlight of the trip, Frank Gehry’s most acclaimed work, the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum (pages 50 to 53).

The sudden outbreak of a violent rain and wind, coastal storm conspired against our goal to culminate the program of visits at the Peine del Viento, an splendid landscape + sculpture collaboration between local architect Penia Ganchguí and famed local sculptor Eduardo Chillida.

Two cultural entertaining moments marked the week-long trip: an excursion to Game of Thrones’ Dragonstone, located in the islet of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe, and —to close the trip— attending to a concert at Moneo’s Kursaal Auditorium.

Both graphic studies and photography continued to be developed through various assignments throughout the year, especially during the periods of independent study-travel. In both semesters, students were required to keep a graphic journal of their travels, documenting the buildings and sites they visited in their journey. A selection from the “Architect’s Journal” assignment is presented on pages 46 to 49.

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In spite of the abundance and sophistication of technology-based tools of graphic representation, the ability to record buildings and sites through freehand graphic noting techniques (generally and often referred to as ‘sketching’) is an essential component of the architect’s education because nothing can really replace the mental process that takes place in the act of translating into graphic notes what the eyes are observing. The development of the technique is, however, far from automatic, and therefore it requires training, dedication and, specially, practice, patience and perseverance. To introduce these aspects the iasap-bv organizes an intensive workshop dedicated to develop some aspects of the ability to study buildings through graphic analytical notes.

This week-long intensive workshop led by Chicago-based architect Jack Kelley, had two interrelated parts: during the first three days, Jack Kelley made presentations about sketching techniques and graphic methods of analysis that were implemented in sketching sessions at selected buildings in Sant Cugat—at the Market square—and Barcelona—at the Plaza Real and Caixa Forum. The workshop continued as the entire class embarked on a northbound three-day field trip to northern Catalonia and southern France, where students visited and studied buildings from various historical periods from the Greco-Roman city of Empúries, to the medieval Chateau de Salses, the city of Carcassonne and the magnificent Romanesque Monastery of Sant Miquel de Cuixart, without forgetting contemporary interventions at many of the sites visited. This two-page spread presents a snap shot of the workshop’s accomplishments.

GRAPHIC ANALYSIS WORKSHOP
Jack Kelley, guest instructor • Fall 2017

E. Skulte

J. Han

S. Watts

V. Su

E. Fries

J. Han

L. Yang

S. Heckman

J. Han
The practice of architecture requires the combination of several key skills. Among them, one stands out: the ability to understand the built environment, and in our role as architects, understanding it beyond the merely visual. To see the territory, the city and the architecture involves not only the capacity to assess their compositive aspects, but their historical, social and technical aspects as well.

This ability can be learned, and learning it is of key importance in any architectural education; firstly, to develop the full potential of our métier; and secondly, to convey the message that our active professional contribution to the built environment is just one more layer added to those previously existing, natural or manmade.

“Learning to See” fostered this learning. Based on four moments that have given form to the city of Barcelona, this module aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of the multiple processes that shape the city and, ultimately, that produce its architecture and its form.

Based on a combination of analytical and comparative methods and meant to reinforce a transcultural and transgeographical understanding of the urban reality, “Learning to See,” generated connections that can be applied to other urban realities and situations, increasing the value of a study abroad program by prompting students to engage their own experiences, both past and current.
One of the unique characteristics of an architectural study abroad program is the possibility of visiting and seeing buildings and sites of architectural relevance in person. The availability of multiple tools that allow to photograph virtually everything—basic and sophisticated cameras, cell phones, digital tablets—has created the habit to document buildings and sites through still photography. Yet, the “art of seeing them through the camera lens” and the use of photography as an “intelligent” observation of the building/s are not necessarily automatic. Yet, like virtually everything else, it is possible to be educated to look through the camera. For this reason, the IASAP-BV organized a workshop focused on the theme of “architectural photography.”

Led by Josep M. de Llobet, a prominent local photographer, the workshop consisted of an introductory lecture and a series of practical exercises that culminated with a full-session dedicated to document Domènech i Montaner’s Hospital de Sant Pau, one of the masterpieces of Barcelona’s Modernismo Catalan. Yet, the development of “intelligent” observation of buildings through photography transcended the duration of the workshop: the submission of architectural photographs were part of all the students’ travels, including the two field trips of the Fall semester (the latter illustrated through images at the bottom part of the two-page spread).
Rome: Types and its Influences

This Traveling Workshop in Rome engaged the greater discourse on the role of architecture and the built environment. Students visited, analyzed and sketched urban spaces, buildings, gardens and designs that have been collaged into the fabric of Rome in order to understand the design methods used in the creation of one of the most visited and influential cities in the world.

Led by ISoA Professor Kevin Hinders, students studied the typologies and morphologies of Rome’s structures centered on four basic threads: Urban Spaces; Churches; Palaces; and Villas. The period of study focused on the Renaissance and Baroque while studying the great buildings of this period and exploring both where these ideas came from—such as ancient and medieval, and where they led to—such as post-unification, fascism and contemporary Rome.

Because Rome is an incredibly walkable city, students saw a tapestry of ideas while the instructor overlaid a narrative that confronted cultural, physical, phenomenological and social aspects of Rome.

The Pantheon: shining from above over perfect symmetry, the oculus is a higher power over man. The order, the engineering, the details are unparalleled. The most well-preserved piece of antiquity, inspiring generations of architects for millennia. [Sam Watts]

Colosseum:
Marching, marching,
One by one
Encircling their king
Helmets high and guns erect
Backs never seen

Breakdown:
This poem is a formal metaphor for the architectural nature of the Colosseum. I see the archways as lines of soldiers, with keystones as their helmets and columns as their guns. They march around the center stage as if protecting it, like soldiers might a king. Their backs (defined by the internal archways inside the Colosseum) always face the stage, meaning they are on constant lookout 360 degrees around the Colosseum, again reinforcing the protective nature of both soldiers and architecture. [Sierra Heckman]

Stairs: simply a means of egress until they swallow an entire room. The Laurentian Library steps melt out of the library and invite you in, as if they are alive and greeting you at the entrance. They powerfully stand on their own, while still introducing you to a beautifully ornate space. [Hannah Brostoff]

Piazza Navona: There exists a stark, yet likely forgotten, contrast between the Sant’Agnese in Agone Church and its neighboring building to the right. It is a battle between extravagance and simplicity, excess and necessity, power and commonality. [Nesma Hamouda]
Paris, the City and its architecture

Paris is, arguably, one of the most important “architectural cities” worldwide, not only because of the high volume of architectural masterpieces that can be found in all four corners of the city, but -more significantly- because these masterpieces encompass a wide range of historical periods, notably in the last one-thousand years. This Traveling Workshop in Paris focused on an exploration of the city’s complex historical layers and a study outstanding examples of the city’s architecture.

The buildings and sites visited included medieval landmarks such Notre Dame de Paris and La Sainte Chapelle, urban spaces (Place Dauphine, Place des Vosges, Palais Royal, Place Vendôme), masterpieces of the Enlightenment period (Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève, Soufflot’s Panthéon), classical Parisian architectural milestones such as Garnier’s Opera de Paris, and modern and contemporary masterpieces including Le Corbusier’s Villa La Roche, Frank Gehry’s Fondation Louis Vuitton and Jean Nouvel’s recently inaugurated Philharmonic Theater of Paris, where we also listened to a performance of A. Dvořák’s Symphony of the New World; two half-day excursions took us to Paris’ environs: to Versailles, where we visited the Chateau and gardens of Versailles, and to Poissy-sur-Seine for a full visit of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, one of the seminal works of modern architecture.

The Workshop was organized as daily sessions in which students, led by Professor Lapunzina, visited a variety of buildings and sites that provided insightful information about the history and evolution of the city. Twice a day, in the morning and afternoon, each session focused on one building/site which was studied more in-depth through graphic notes, written comments, and photography.
From Sant Cugat del Vallès/Barcelona to the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean basin! One of the program’s goals is to provide students with traveling opportunities to experience in person the rich and varied cultural, architectural and urbanistic history of Europe.

As both a follow up and part of the Architectural Photography workshop led Josep Maria de Llobet at the beginning of the year, students were asked to record their travels through still photography. Throughout the year, they built a photographic journal of the more significative and relevant sites they visited in their independent travels.

Each semester, we asked them to submit a portfolio with their six favorite images of the buildings they photographed. The following pages present a selection of photos from their journeys.
The Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program at Barcelona-El Vallès (iasap-bv) is part of an overarching agreement of institutional exchange between the Escola Tècnica Superior d’Arquitectura del Vallès of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (ETSAV-UPC) and the Illinois School of Architecture of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (ISoA). The agreement contemplates the provision of scholarships for studying at the ISoA for students enrolled at ETSAV. Thus, every year, a selected group of students from the ETSAV travel to United States to spend one year of studies at the ISoA. Typically enrolled as upper-level students, they take courses in Architectural Design and in other areas of Illinois' rich curricular offerings during the two semesters of the academic year.

As an intrinsic part of the bilateral agreement between the two institutions, the iasap-bv’s Yearbook of Student Work is once again very pleased to host and display the work produced at the ISoA by the exchange students who attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2017-2018.*

* Unfortunately, only two of the seven students who received the scholarship submitted their work to be published in this Yearbook; therefore, these pages can only present a small fragment of the work that ETSAV students did at the Illinois School of Architecture in 2018-2018.

Anna Bosch Balague
IASAP-BV Faculty & Staff

Alejandro Lapunzina; Professor & Director

Elena Albareda; Invited lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAB (2005), PhD candidate in Architecture, Energy and Environment UPC-ETSAB; co-taught one module of Architectural History in the Spring semester.

Stephanie Chiricuta; Visiting Lecturer
BS in Architectural Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2013); Master of Architecture (Structures concentration), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; taught Structures on-line in the two semesters.

Carolina García Estévez; Invited lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAS (2005), PhD in Theory and History of Architecture UPC-ETSAB (2012); taught Architectural History in the Fall semester.

Josep Maria Garcia Fuentes; Invited lecturer

Carles Marcos; Lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAS (2001), PhD in Architecture UPC-ETSAS (2016); taught Architectural Design in the Spring semester.

Celia Marín Vega; Invited lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAS (2008), Master in Theory and History of Architecture UPC-ETSAS (2010), PhD Candidate in History, Universidad Pompeu Fabra; taught modules of the Architectural History course in the two semesters.

Enric Massip-Bosch; Invited lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAS (1990), PhD in Architecture UPC-ETSAS (2016); taught one module of the Architectural History course in the Fall semester.

Núria Sabaté Giner; Lecturer

Marta Serra Permanyer; Invited lecturer
Architect, UPC-ETSAS (2005), PhD in Theory and History of Architecture UPC (2014); co-taught one module of Architectural History in the Spring semester.

Magali Veronelli-Lapunzina; Program Coordinator
Professional degree in Political Science and Public Administration, Universidad iberoamericana, Mexico (1984); Master in Public Health, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina (1986); in charge of the program’s administrative activities and students’ affairs. Conducted Mindfulness support sessions to interested students.

Other Participants
Raimon Farné, Profesor Asociado ETSAV; taught in the joint ETSAS+IASAP-BV Architectural Design course in the Fall semester.
Burke Greenwood, Architect; Architect; offered workshop support sessions about portfolio design and application to graduate school process.

Kevin Hinders, Associate Professor ISoA; conducted a one-week Travelling Workshop in Rome in the Spring semester.

Jack Kelley, Principal McBride, Kelley and Baurer Architects (Chicago, USA); conducted a one-week Sketching Workshop in Sant Cugat, Barcelona, Empuries, Saleses, Carcassonne and Sant Miguel de Luixtar.

Josep Maria de Llobet, Architectural Photographer (Barcelona); offered a two-day workshop on architectural photography in the Fall semester.

Antoni Pérez Mañosas, Professor ETSAS; taught (and co-coordinated) the joint ETSAS+IASAP-BV Architectural Design course in the Fall semester.

Merit Language School (Sant Cugat); offered a certified Spanish language course to all participating students in the Fall semester.

Other contributors (participants of architectural design reviews and other activities): Jaime Batlle, Laurent Beaudouin, Gerardo Caballero, Pere Fuertes, Manel Gonzalez, Jaume Mayol, Juan Carlos Sánchez, and Miguel Usandizaga.

... and they said

As the year ended, we conducted an anonymous survey in which we invited participants to share with us their impressions about the yearlong overseas experience that was about to conclude. Below we reproduce a few unedited comments from the students who participated in the 2017-2018 edition of the Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program at Barcelona-El Vallès.

“The [IASAP-BV] program is intensive in the best of ways, forcing most students to reach outside of their comfort zones and dive deeper into the world, literally. (…) This experience was life changing in so many ways and I know it has, and will have, a tremendous impact on my future as an architect, from both a personal and professional perspective.”

“This experience has changed who I am. I have reaffirmed my passion for architecture and made me so much more ambitious to travel the world.”

“If I had the change to do it for one more year I would. This year I have learnt more than ever before, and I think one reason is because we are in an environment in which we are interested and eager to learn. (…) the faculty are extremely passionate, that is extremely important.”

“The program was extremely well thought out and planned. For the amount of time that we were here, we had an incredible amount of unique experiences and opportunities for education and self-growth. (…) It is impossible to put the value of the program into words. I have grown enormously in my architectural and personal education. It takes a lot of courage to decide to move to another country for nine months, but it was truly the most remarkable decision I ever made.”

"Not only a rollercoaster of travel and hard work but also emotions and feelings. Delightful.”

“Travels and field trips were the most amazing part. They took to places we wouldn’t have imagined. Studio, guest reviews and lectures were outstanding.”

“This program was the best experience of study abroad that I can think of; very easy to adjust to the life here because of all the help and support we got. (…) I’ve learned more about my aspirations in the near and distant future by having more perspective about the world. Learning about education and work from a European perspective has broadened my mind because the US system is all that I had known.”

“(…) this year was the [one in which] I most developed architecturally, culturally, and overall personally in my life. It was the most independent experience of my life. I learned to rely on myself and find happiness and graciousness in the little things and in the opportunity of being here.”

“[The IASAP-BV] is an amazing learning experience; it is a lot of work but also a lot of fun traveling.”

“This program provided me with the opportunity to see architecture works that I had learned about in the classroom. It also gave me a platform to combine the knowledge I had gain in the past three years.”