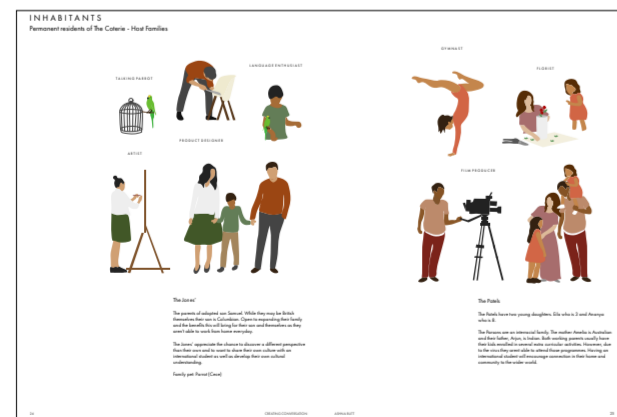# HUMANS OF INTERIORS workshop(s)
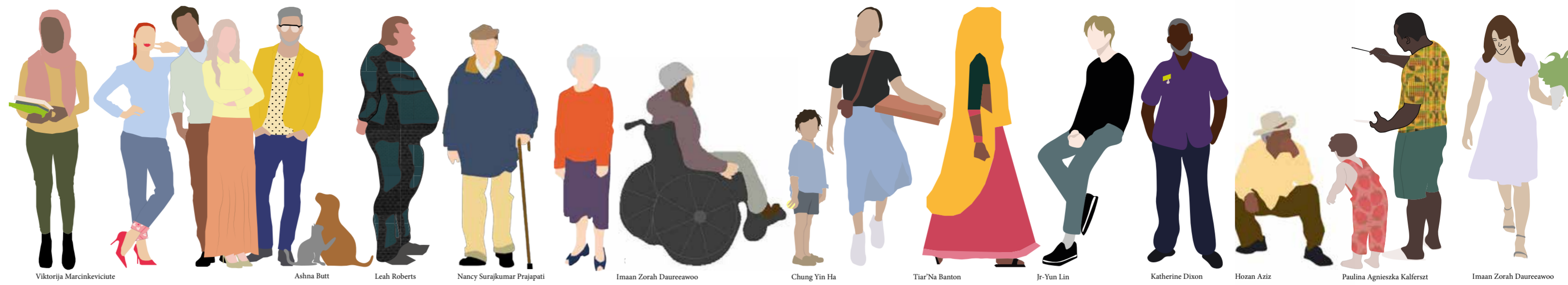
#HUMANSOFINTERIORS is a collaboration between academics from XXXX, the Interiors programmes at XXXX and Interior Architecture at XXXX, and the Academic Writing and Language team at XXXX

Our workshops involve challenging and remaking the current pedagogy, which has thus far been rooted in a specific geographic niche.

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We have developed a series of targeted and inter-disciplinary workshops with which to ensure that IAD designers and educators are equipped with the knowledge they need to deliver presentations and discuss unconscious bias in representation, as well as inclusivity and diversity, during seminars and workshops which cover information about the full range of "protected" characteristics as well as other relevant considerations when engaging in inclusive design. These workshops teach the importance of including a broad range of figures who represent the users of buildings; not just to highlight a practical necessity, but to represent and promote the diversity within our society.

> "Representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation."
>
> (Gerbner & Gross, 1976)

Over recent decades, interior architecture and design has established itself as an influential discipline, able to draw connections between spaces, people and objects and effectively communicate and disseminate to a broad audience: exponential growth in terms of projects, courses and debates has contributed to opening up the discipline on a global scale. However, despite working with and teaching a growing international group of people, we are aware that our cultural narratives tend to originate from a specific western canon, shaped by a very specific geographic and cultural niche. The way in which we model and explain spaces is deeply rooted in our own culture and in a very specific way of understanding the world.

As educators, we aim to foster a global spatial-narrative dimension for interiors, which allows a wider social, political and economic context to emerge.

The work produced by our students reflects these ambitions and, by questioning the way we inhabit the world, translates into disruptive proposals, deeply rooted in research and innovation. However, when it comes to students visualising their ideas, often the representations of inhabitants for their spaces tend to fall short of reflecting the real world - portraying a more narrow and rather conformist view.

Within the disciplines of Interior Architecture and Design, visual depiction of spaces is a powerful tool to communicate use, users and qualities of the designed/proposed spaces. With a mixture of techniques, we can produce images capable of plunging viewers directly into these imagined spaces. Such visualisations, so provocative and seductive, are carefully designed to communicate the atmosphere that the designer is aiming to create, but if they fail to include a fair representation of the people those spaces are designed for, they misrepresent the aim of the project. This part of the process is often no more than an afterthought, which demonstrates a lack of understanding of how the final visualisations impact the future of those spaces; most of the time these images are not even reflective of the demographic they have been designed for. This distinct lack of diversity and inclusivity within visuals is indicative of both a lack of consideration of the existence of people who

are not the same as the designers themselves (who are overwhelmingly young, white and able-bodied) and an equally problematic lack of understanding of the needs of these populations.

Design is a human-centred discipline with many interrelated and complementary fields that imagine and realise objects, spaces and future scenarios. Spatial design, specifically, is a very complex multi-disciplinary realm where different knowledge merges in order to explore, propose and produce spaces that can enhance human inhabitation and experience. The way in which we communicate our projects to stakeholders and end-users is a key part of what we do as designers, as the way we present and represent the spaces we design impacts upon how these spaces are perceived and used.

Inhabitation, and how we choose to visually depict people in our designs is key - demonstrating the social norms and values of this future world.

The lack of diversity in the people represented undermines the communication of the ideas behind the design; if we are designing a community centre but fail to include the full range of local inhabitants, we miss the aim of the project, no matter how good the project is in other respects. Of course, the project visualisations are not the only criterion through which a project is assessed, but they are crucial to how it is accessed and understood by the wider public. Such misrepresentation of users of the designed spaces can cause individuals or groups to feel excluded from spaces that are not welcoming, safe or designed for them (Horwill & Thomas, 2019).

It is important to acknowledge that each of the choices made by a designer about who to include as an inhabitant of a space is a political decision, a specific way of spatial identity-making and urban space-production, so this lack of attention is not just a matter of superficiality - it also reflects a limited cultural approach, in which designers are either unaware of, unable or not inclined to question the socio-political environment in which they are working.

To counter such limitations, we encourage the careful consideration of specific key personal and 'group' characteristics. Including these as part of the creative process can prompt critical reflection about who the inhabitants really are, and whom these spaces are actually being designed for.

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Students that have partcipated to the workshop:
Myroula Christodoulou, Malak Sharif Ali, Carrina Elita Beryl Howlett, Shunian Ma, Aatika Sajjad Cheema, Zayneb Al-graifee, A-Aziz Al Deiri, Rumeyza Deniz Nas, Aditya Sanith Panakkal, Fatine Azri, Adam Abdelkarim Eisa, Neha Yutika Panchasra, Sammiya Umabalan, Thoon Hari, Myasara Daaboul, Afra Anika Kristy, Rachel Hilton, Irma Signe Linnea Vesterlund, Ieva Karaliute, Daŕyna Chobitko, Eren Sahin, Nice Nimitliupanit,Imaan Zorah Daureeawoo, Chung Yin Ha, Tiar'Na Aaliyah Iesha R A J T Banton, Jr-Yun Lin, Sareh Sarvar, Marwan Mohamed Hagi Mak, Leah Yazmina Roberts, Nancy Surajkumar Prajapati, Elizabeth Fadairo, Katherine Louise Dixon, William David Webster, Hozan Aziz, Ashna Butt, Paulina Agnieszka Kalferszt, Viktorija Marcinkeviciute, Tamara Oluwakemi Hannah Orebiy.

1
pages of the brief describing the *Humans of Interiors* Workshop (Oct. 2020) for Y2 and Y3 students.

2
Inhabitants, building on the *Human of Interiors* workshop, is part of the brief for the Final Project for Y3 students.

3
Pages of the Portfolio of Ashna Butt/Y3 for *Inhabitants*

4
Pages of the Portfolio of Elizabeth Fadairo/Y3 for *Inhabitants*

5
Visual by Micaela Susana Cabral Faria/Y3 for *Inhabitants*

6
Visual by Viktorija Marcinkeviciute/Y3 for *Inhabitants*

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