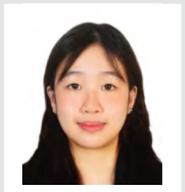


Decontextualise to Decolonise

Interior Architecture Students Re-Imagine Spaces for Artefacts in partnership with the local Museum and Art Gallery



Justine Ya Ting Chua



Joan John



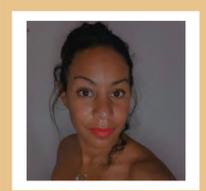
Max Abrahams



Amanda Petersen



Farida Eltayeb



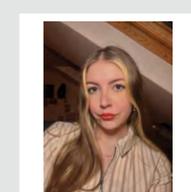
Shavona Phillips



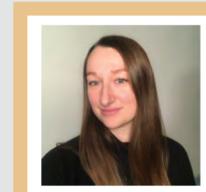
Olivia Cockerton



Malak Murad



Freya Jaye



Carmen Jade Simpson



Felo George



Connor Windsor



Emme Teirlinck



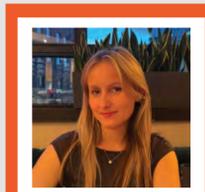
Molly Brockbanks-Hunt



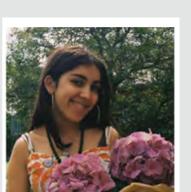
Alex Gheorghe



Orla Hartley



Evie Slingsby



Maya Amin-Sanchez

Decontextualise to Decolonise (D2D) exemplifies collaborative practice through a dynamic partnership between our University's Interior Architecture Level 6 cohort, staff, and Museum partner.

Framed around the museum's decolonisation programme, students engaged in critical spatial reimaginings of global artefacts, working beyond disciplinary boundaries to resituate these objects outside the static gaze of colonial museology.

The project foregrounded student voice, and authorship, culminating in a public-facing digital QR code trail that repositions the museum as a site of co-production and a digital and physical book, that repositions students as authorities in their own education.

D2D integrates academic, curatorial, and student collaborations, blending research, design, and civic engagement. It exemplifies innovative pedagogical methods that centre co-creation, challenging dominant narratives through interior architecture.

This collaboration fostered interdisciplinary dialogue, highlighting how interior architecture can intervene in cultural discourse, academic, and public space.

The result is a vibrant model of practice-based learning rooted in social justice, critical reflection, and shared authorship.

“

As a student who has been part of this project, I'm really excited to be introducing our book. Inside contains a collection of reimaginings, reflections, and challenges to the way artefacts are seen within museum spaces.

This book is more than just a publication; it is an artefact in itself. Representing the collective efforts of our Interior Architecture students.

We have critically examined objects from the Museum & Art Gallery through a decolonial lens. To challenge and rethink where artefacts belong, how they are used, and how museums can be reimagined through interior architecture.

What makes this book even more special is its physical design, which reflects the digital experience of our QR code installation in the museum. The cover, personalised by each of us, reflects the themes of unmaking and remaking.

This is a truly unique and evolving piece of work. Every page is a product of collaboration between students and staff. Blending conceptual thinking, and personal storytelling.

The project has completely redefined the way we learn. Putting students at the center and giving us the freedom to challenge historical narratives through design. It's not just about what we've created, it's about the powerful conversations we've ignited and the unique perspectives we've uncovered throughout the process.

By signing our copy, we're turning this moment into a live engagement. Reinforcing the idea that knowledge is co-created and always evolving.

So, to celebrate this work together, I invited each student to sign the physical book, marking our shared contribution to this journey.

”

Molly Brockbanks-Hunt, Student Partner

Fragments of Time: Tactile, Visual, and Auditory Reimagining of Kashan Tiles



"This project tells the story of Kashan tiles in a new way, bringing their history to life through sound, touch, and sight. These ancient tiles come from Kashan, Iran and have travelled far from their original homes, often ending up in museums far away.

Instead of just looking at the tiles behind glass, visitors can hear stories about their past in sound pods, watch the making process on interactive screens, and touch and explore their textures and designs through movable installations. You will learn where the tiles have been, who made them, how they were created, and the buildings they once decorated.

As you explore, you will hear sounds that might have been part of the places the tiles came from, like the soft footsteps in a mosque or the peaceful sounds of nature in ancient gardens.

A big part of this project is about decolonisation, which means thinking differently about how we show and understand these objects. Instead of just seeing the tiles as things, my goal is to give them a voice, sharing their story from the people and cultures who made them. This project makes sure their history is heard and respected, telling their story in a way that honours where the tiles come from."

Molly Brockbanks-Hunt

Illuminated Harmony: A Modern Community Oasis



"The artefact has been reimagined as a central piece within a public park or community space, specifically in an urban area with historical or cultural significance. Placing the artifact in this context makes it accessible to a broader audience, encouraging engagement, reflection, and dialogue. At the center of the space is a unique level structure designed as a focal point for interaction and engagement. The structure is adorned with hanging decorative elements, which are the tiles showcasing intricate patterns that add a playful and creative touch to the environment. The park invites people of all ages to explore, relax, and connect with nature while enjoying the artistic ambience. With carefully integrated design features, the space aims to foster community engagement, encourage creativity, and provide a versatile area for various activities.

The overall concept balances functionality and aesthetics, offering a welcoming and inclusive environment for both individuals and groups. The central structure features subtle illumination, with lights highlighting the hanging decorative elements, creating a captivating interplay of shadows and reflections. The project addresses decolonisation by moving the artifact out of a museum, where it might feel disconnected from its origins, and placing it back in a space where people can connect with it. This gives the artefact back to the community and respects its cultural significance, helping to challenge colonial ideas of who controls cultural heritage."

Justine Ya Ting Chua

History in your hands: A ceramic experience



"This project is a pop-up ceramics studio, where people can learn about history and culture in an interactive and creative way. The studio doesn't have a set location - it can be built in different places, like a park, so people can enjoy nature while they create; where the sound of birdsong and rustling leaves enhance the experience. Museums are invaluable spaces for education and creativity; however, they often have to prioritise security over interaction, displaying artefacts where you can't touch them! This design changes that by letting visitors take out selected tiles from the walls.

Behind these tiles, they will find interesting facts, personal stories, and beautiful artwork. Here, visitors don't just look at history - they get to create their own. In the studio, people can make and decorate their own ceramic pieces using traditional techniques and colours. Instead of leaving with a gift shop item, they take home something they made with their own hands. This project helps people feel connected to history, art, and a different culture, making learning a hands-on experience."

Olivia Cockerton

Lemon and Pears: Conceptual Greenhouse Diner



"This project is an imaginary space that showcases the rich history of the Iranian spoons. The Iranian spoons are used for special occasions and are used by multiple guests to drink from as they float on top of a bowl of Sherbat. These beautiful and detailed spoons are handmade with pear and lime wood.

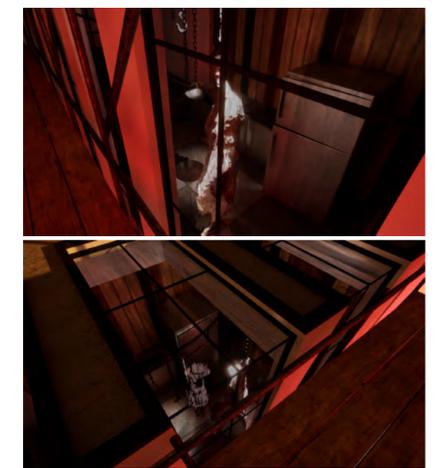
My design incorporates the values of the Iranian spoons within a greenhouse and dining space, located in a public park. The spoons have been repurposed and flipped to act as a seed holder for pear and lime seeds. When the fruits from the trees have been consumed, their seeds can be placed into the spoon to propagate. They can then be planted back in the greenhouse soil to produce more pear and lime trees.

The spoon holders are hanging on a low beam within a central point in the greenhouse, behind the dining table. This way the spoons act as practical decorative pieces. The greenhouse diner welcomes members of the public of all ages to come together and enjoy meals or special occasions within a grand and grounding environment.

This project aims to decolonise the spoon by placing it out of its original context to share its meaning. It is placed where the community and history can be respected and to tell the story of the Iranian spoons."

Emme Teirlinck

The Butcher's Ulu: A Critique on the Commercialisation of Culture



"This butcher's is more of an exhibition space than a regular shop shaped around the ulu's historical origin—a tool used by women for domestic tasks. I've flipped that context here, exploring implied masculinity and how culture is often turned into something to be sold for profit.

The space is designed around the ulu, which have been hung from chains and are used to cut the meat hanging from the racks. The shop has two main sections: a raised workspace where the butchers prepare and cut the meat, and the front area where customers watch. The whole scene is meant to feel eerie, and is communicated through the towering scaffolding, the minimal lighting provided by the streetlights and appliances, and the scratchy figures throughout.

The commercial aspect of this project is a critique of how different cultures often have their traditions taken, repackaged, and sold without credit to the origin. In this case, the ulu has been plucked out in the same manner—mass-produced and sold casually, where now anyone could stumble across it in a 'random shop around the corner.'"

Joan John

Secret Park Venue



"Taking inspiration from the Egyptian Rosette Disc, I created a venue that was hidden beneath a park oasis. This site could be found in a urban garden. I imagined the artefact being the used for decoration just as they did back in Ancient Egypt.

The disc is embedded into the floor tiles, being placed around the venues floor directly underneath the skylights which allow beams of light to descend upon the venue. This with the high ceilings and unique pillar design creates a dramatic space, which is similar to the striking and grand Ancient Egyptian architecture found back then.

The venue is transformative and multifunctional. Events such as concerts, art galleries and weddings are able to be held. The viewing platform in the park also gives a unique perspective of the site, allowing you to look down through the skylights. The platform also features a park cafe for locals and can double as a bar to assist the venue's events."

Max Abrahams

Anonymous Advice



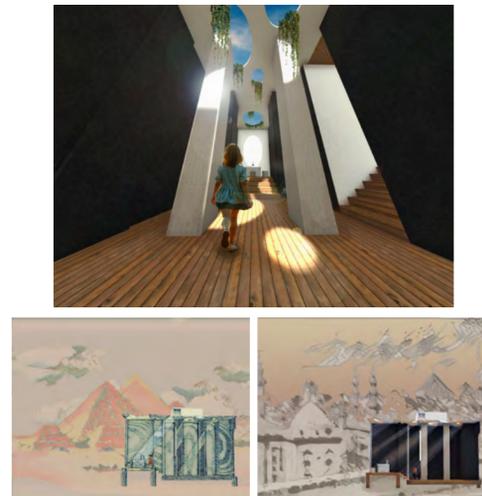
"The Anonymous Advice Centre is a comforting and safe space, centred around the Ancient Egyptian Offering Table. The Offering Table was initially used to offer goods, such as bread, oil and honey, to the dead or to the gods. While maintaining the artefact's initial use and aspect of "offering", the advice centre's sole purpose is to offer and give advice to members of the public, if they are seeking help and guidance for physical and psychological challenges.

The space is designed to protect the customers' anonymity, to aid the public build up the courage to visit the centre and open up to the counsellors. With this in mind, I ensured that each counselling room were to be divided by a concrete wall, splitting the space into two areas (one designated for the counsellor, and the other for the customer).

This division wall has a speak hole and another hole to slot in the small clay offering table, accessible to both sides of the room, used to exchange informative leaflets. In addition, to maintain the theme of anonymity, the build has to separate entrances and routes throughout the structure, to ensure that the staff and the customers do not encounter. This causes the design to have numerous staircases within the centre."

Maya Amin-Sanchez

Handle with Care



"Duamutef's jackal-headed jar, once holding the stomach of the dead, was carefully placed in an Egyptian tomb to protect the body's journey into the afterlife. It had a sacred purpose, deeply entwined with ancient Egyptian culture and beliefs.

Now, a familiar glass jar rests precariously on a kitchen table in a light, modern room. No longer holding a stomach, it's filled with cookies. A child reaches for the jar, and as their fingers graze the delicate glass, it wobbles, losing balance.

Once a sacred object tied to death, it is now a symbol of life and nourishment.

What stories might artefacts tell today if they had never been taken, and how might their meaning have changed in the hands of the people they were taken from?"

Amanda Petersen

Restoring the Baltic narrative: Reimagining the Hove Amber Cup in a Temple of Solar Healing



"This project imagines a fantasy space that not only literally shines light on the Hove Amber Cup but also tells the story of its rich history. The cup was crafted long ago by people from the Baltic region, far from where it was found in Hove, England. Amber, the material the cup is made from, began as sticky tree sap millions of years ago and over thousands of years of underground pressure, hardened into solid, beautiful amber.

In this reimagined space, I've designed a temple that uses sunlight in a unique way, much like how amber was believed to possess healing solar powers in the Baltic region. The temple features a round hole in the roof, called an oculus, that directs sunlight down onto a ritual table where the cup rests. The light makes the cup glow, breathing new life and harnessing the healing properties of the sun.

While the space is a fantasy, the project's goal to decontextualise in order to decolonise British museums is real. It seeks to remind us that many stories from the past have been untold and aims to bring those lost narratives back to life. It's about reconnecting with ancient traditions, honoring the past, and showing how the light from history can still guide and inspire us today."

Neve Fairholme

The Healing Sensation of the Amber Cup



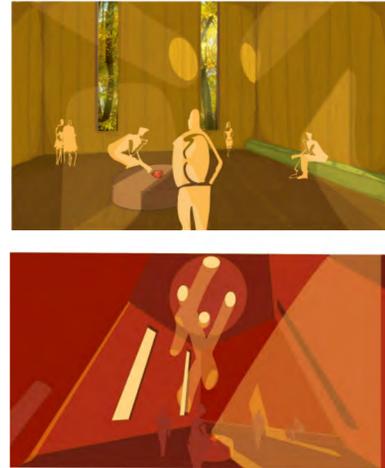
"I focused on the healing properties of the amber used in the cup, while also looking into its origin. The Amber cup was formed from tree resin during the bronze age and has been known for its ability to bring a sense of calming and peace.

So when redesigning a space for the cup, I wanted the experience to be nature driven and provide a space for reflection. I designed a shelter within a forest and with the intention of being wrapped around a pre-existing tree. I created seating and a second viewing platform higher in the tree. The Amber cup resides, within the tree allowing individuals to approach the cup and use it as a way of healing.

My decision to have it in a forest is with the intention that individuals already go to forests for reflection and to escape their thoughts. Naturally, choosing to heal and reflect is already part of their journey."

Orla Hartley

A Sanctuary for Healing



"I imagined the amber cup in a place of peace and serenity. For me, Amber symbolises healing, and while its original purpose is unclear, I like to think it was used in spiritual ceremonies. Since it was discovered in a carved oak coffin, I felt it should be relocated to a similarly sacred space.

I envision the cup resting in a sunlit forest, surrounded by oak trees, frozen in time - a setting that invites appreciation and reflection. The quiet of the rural forest would create a calming atmosphere, helping visitors relax and be mindful. By holding and truly feeling the cup, people could form a deeper connection with it, allowing the space to absorb negative energies and encourage healing.

This space is designed to inspire a more optimistic outlook on life, aligning body, mind and spirit. Traditional museums often remove objects from their cultural and spiritual context, reducing them to artifacts. My approach restores meaning by placing the cup in a setting that honours its potential purpose. By emphasising touch, reflection and emotional connection, this experience challenges the traditional "do not touch" model, fostering a deeper and more personal connection between people, history and the object itself."

Freya Jaye

Amber Sanctum: A Space to Reflect and Restore

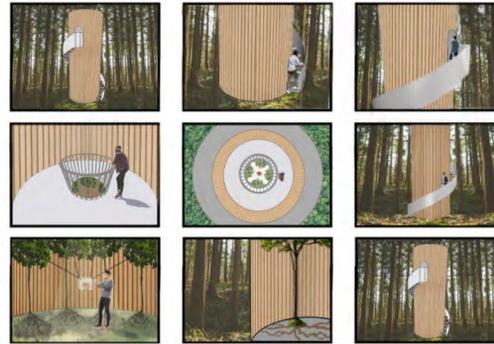


"This project imagines a space that reflects on the history and journey of amber—not just as a cup, but as a material shaped by time. The Amber Cup, a beautifully crafted object from the Bronze Age, was discovered in Hove, resting in an oak coffin, surrounded by nature. My design takes you back to the beginning—deep in the forest among the trees, where amber's journey starts. When trees are wounded, they release sap, a natural healing agent. Over centuries, this sap transforms, hardening into amber, a material that lasts forever, holding the memory of nature within it.

The relocation of the Amber Cup is a gesture of decolonisation, returning it to the landscape where it was found, reconnecting it to its origins. The space is hidden within tall copper walls, creating a peaceful retreat. At its centre, the Amber Cup sits over a reflective water fountain, where light dances across its surface, revealing its golden hues and textures. This space invites visitors to pause, reflect, and restore themselves, much like amber once protected and healed the trees. It is a place of stillness and connection, where nature's timeless journey comes to life."

Shavona Phillips

Woodland Sanctuary



"The Amber Cup creates thoughts of woodlands, tranquility, and healing. Since it was discovered in an oak coffin, I chose to place it in a woodland setting to strengthen its connection to oak trees and nature. I envisioned the cup suspended from oak trees within a wooden structure, with a balcony for visitors to view it from above. Placing it in a natural environment allows visitors to connect more deeply with the Amber Cup and imagine its use during the Baltic Era. This setting contrasts sharply with its current museum display—exactly the effect I intended.

This storyboard illustrates how visitors would move through the structure and experience the Amber Cup in a serene, immersive way. By emphasizing the woodland setting, the design fosters a stronger connection between visitors and the cup's rich history."

Evie Slingsby

Tides of Heritage



"This project looks at how we can change old buildings to make them more relevant today. It focuses on an old part of a Regency building called a column capital, which is a decorative feature from the Regency era (about the 1800s). This part of the building, once found in old buildings in Brighton, is reimaged in a new way. The column capital is moved to a seaside area near the Brighton I360, mixing the city's old and new styles.

The project also challenges colonial ideas that are tied to old buildings and shows how we can think about the capital in a new way. By taking it out of its old setting and placing it in a modern, public space, the capital becomes part of the present. To help connect the past with the future, new capsule pods are added to the area. These pods help the design feel connected to both history, the present, and the future. This project shows how architecture can help us rethink culture and history in public spaces."

Alex Gheorghe

Echoes of Colour



"This project reimagine the Indian tambura, a traditional string instrument, by creating a vibrant musical atrium for the public. The central space features a stage surrounded by tamburas placed at human height, but instead of being played like regular instruments, they are positioned horizontally so anyone can use them as drums. This makes music-making more inclusive, allowing visitors to follow the rhythm played in the atrium.

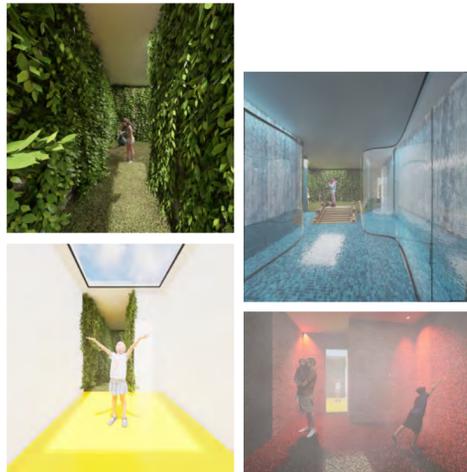
Inspired by India's colourful culture, the space also brings the energy of the Holi festival to life. Colourful powder bursts from the ceiling above the stage, filling the air with bright clouds, while stands offer different powders for visitors to interact with; just as they interact with the tamburas.

Beyond the atrium, the design includes all the important features of a theatre experience: a lobby, gift shop, restrooms, and food and drink areas. There are two entrances: one leading straight to the atrium and another through the lobby, creating different ways to explore the space.

This project also reflects on decolonisation, questioning how museum artifacts, like the tambura, can be freed from display cases and returned to living cultural experiences. Instead of being silent objects, they become part of an interactive, joyful space for everyone."

Farida Eltayeb

Feel the Colour



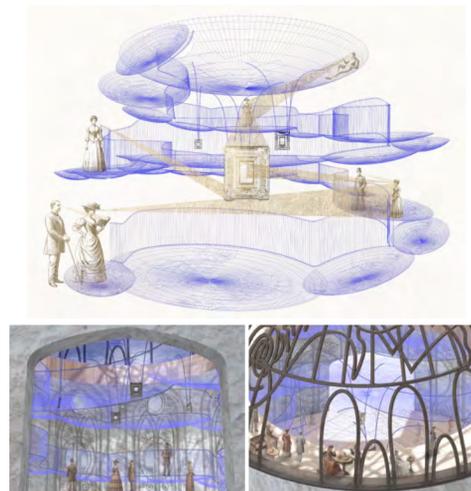
"This project is a unique space designed to help blind children experience colours in a new way. Inspired by Frank Stella's painting Red Scramble, the space includes different rooms, each representing a colour—red, yellow, green, blue, and white. Since blind children cannot see colours, each room uses textures, materials, and shapes to help them feel and understand what each colour might be like.

The red room is built with rough red bricks and has smoke effects to create warmth and energy. The yellow room is narrow and bright, making the space feel warm and concentrated like sunlight. The green room is large and open, like a park or garden, with natural textures to feel fresh and calming. The blue room has curvy walls inspired by waves, creating a cool and peaceful atmosphere. The white room is covered in soft white foam and carpet, with smoke effects to create the feeling of being inside ice.

Located near Blind Veterans UK in Brighton, this space is designed to be both fun and educational. It allows blind children to explore colour through touch and experience emotions connected to different shades. This project creates an inclusive and imaginative world where everyone can "see" colour in their own way."

Malak Murad

Challenging the Original



"Challenging the Original invites visitors to explore the idea of art's authenticity in a creative and thought-provoking way. Inspired by the famous painting Stormy Sea, the space allows visitors to recreate their own versions of the artwork using special tools and techniques. This interactive experience encourages visitors to question what makes art "real" and explore how we value and define originality. What makes a piece of art authentic, and who decides its worth? Visitors can experiment with swapping their recreated paintings, engaging in a playful yet reflective challenge of what is truly "original" and how art is valued.

The atmosphere of the space is designed to be immersive and dynamic. A suspended walkway wraps around the paintings, which hang delicately from above. When one of the paintings is moved or altered, it creates a subtle shift to the suspended space above, causing those who dwell here to stir, acting as a natural alarm to draw attention to the act of changing or removing the artwork. This disruption invites reflection on how easily art can be altered or replaced and what that means for the authenticity of the piece.

At its core, this project explores decolonisation, making space for everyone to create and appreciate art, no matter their background. Challenging the Original questions conventional notions of artistic ownership, suggesting that art belongs to all and can be made and appreciated by anyone."

Carmen Jade Simpson

Abandoned Waterhole



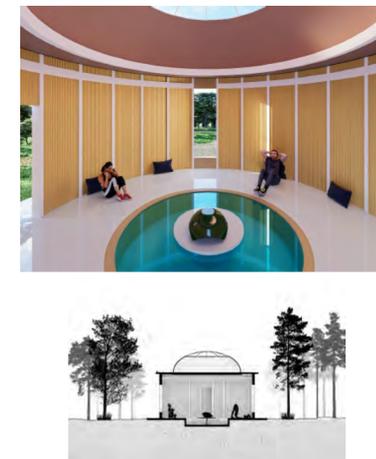
"Once, there was a big, old concrete building that nobody used anymore. It was super creepy because it had been falling apart for years! One day, a brave explorer went inside to check it out. She climbed down the stairs, and each floor looked more spooky than the last.

Finally, she got to the basement, and guess what? There was a hidden waterhole there! It looked like a secret treasure! The explorer was so excited that she set up a projector to shine light on it. When she turned it on, the waterhole sparkled like magic, and the rusty copper rebar around it glimmered too.

In the basement, some little rats were living there, making it their home. They ran around, playing and exploring the old building. The explorer thought it was cool how the waterhole was so beautiful even though the building was all broken. It was like the waterhole was a secret that was waiting to be found! She felt happy to discover this amazing place, and it made her think about how nature can take over even the scariest spots."

Connor Windsor

Shells of Peace



"In this project, I reimagined a turtle shell, which is often kept in museums, by placing it in a peaceful meditation hall in the middle of a natural forest or jungle. Instead of being just an object on display, the turtle shell now becomes part of a calming space where people can relax and reflect. The shell symbolizes peace, integrity, and strength, and by putting it in this new setting, it invites visitors to think about these qualities while connecting with nature.

This project also comments on decolonisation by questioning how we usually display cultural objects. Museums often take items from different cultures and put them behind glass, without considering their deeper meaning or connection to the people they belong to. By putting the turtle shell in a meditation hall, I am giving it a new purpose and showing respect for its cultural value. It challenges the traditional way of displaying artefacts, allowing the turtle shell to be part of a space where people can connect with its symbolism in a more personal and meaningful way."

Felo George

Decontextualise to Decolonise

