

# notations of architectural anthropology

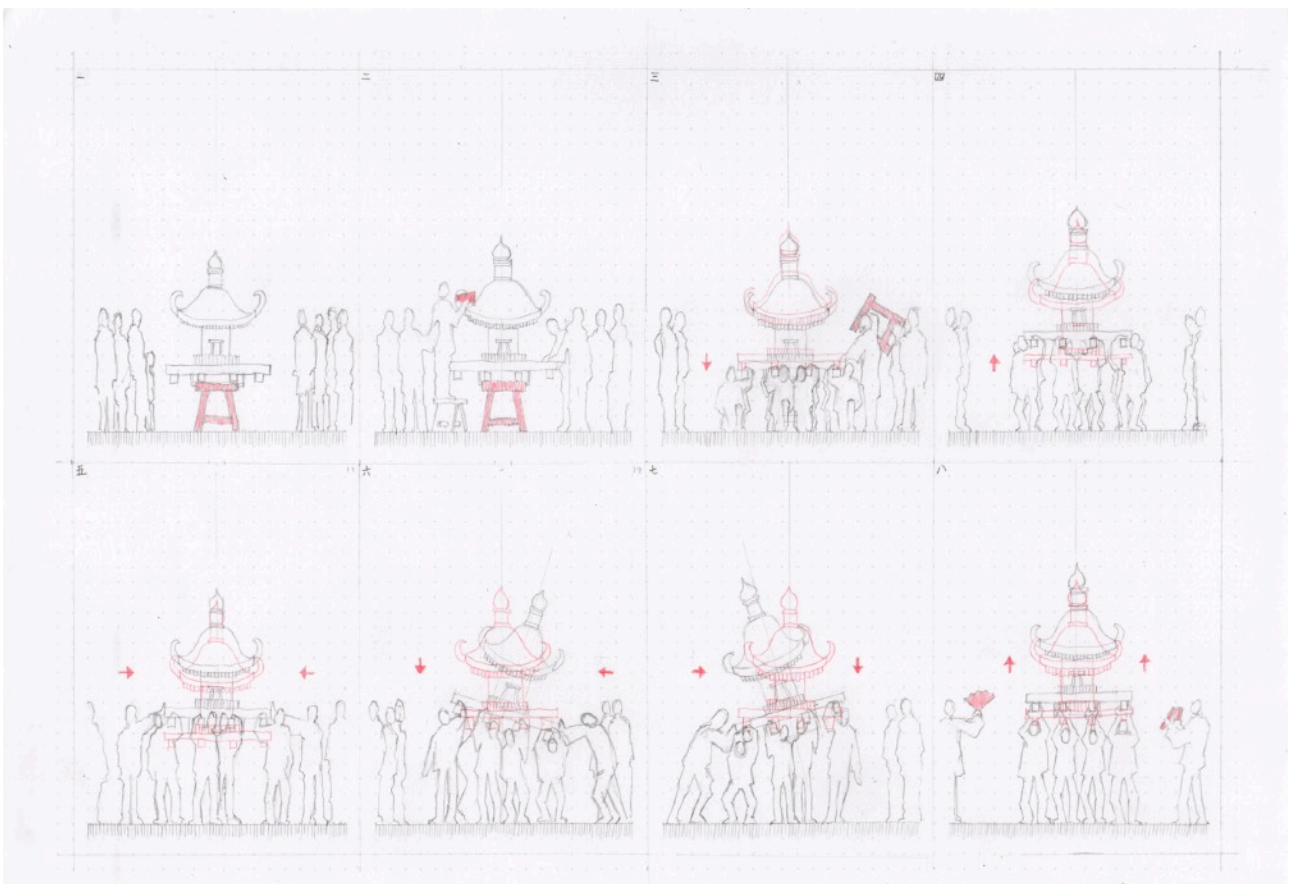
Dr Ray Lucas

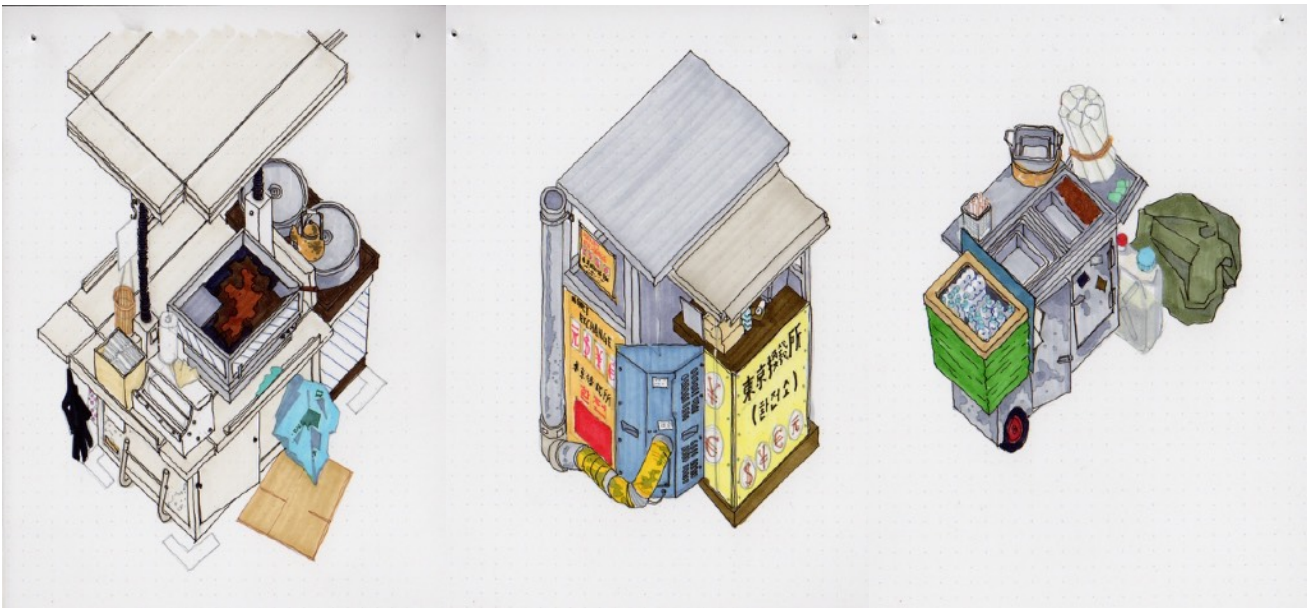
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This talk presents a survey of the theory that underpins the strong correspondence between contemporary social anthropology and architecture. As the study of people and their life-worlds, anthropology has a great deal to contribute to architecture, with implications for long-held assumptions, reinforcing and elaborating as much as it contradicts and complicates. Contestation and challenges are good for both disciplines, and lies at the root of any cross-disciplinarity.

The aim of this cross-disciplinary work is to consider the practices which constitute the built environment at the scale of the building.

The central research question is: what can architects learn from anthropologists?





The aim of this talk is to solve the conundrum of how to integrate anthropological thinking into architecture as a design practice as well as a field of academic study. Anthropology helps us to think about the social life of buildings at an appropriate scale: that of the personal and individual life-worlds which make up our everyday lives.

In order to bring the disciplines together, I propose to investigate notations. Architects have experimented for a long time with different forms of graphic representation and inscriptive practice, many of which find their way in to the toolkits of practicing architects.

Adding to the canon of Thiel's *Participatory Envirotecture*, Lynch's *Imageability*, and Cullen's *Townscapes* are a range of notations devoted to the description of movement. Found within the practice and theory of dance & choreography, diverse forms of notation can be categorised into *matrix*, *pictorial*, *symbolic*, *track*, and *musical* systems.

Notation allows us to describe architecture as it unfolds over time. If we are to discuss practices of dwelling and being in a space, of maintenance and co-production of spaces and people, then we must include aspects of temporality as well as space.

Established forms of notation such as Laban can be used to describe the finest movements of human bodies working together in groups; pictorial notations are much easier to read, and can be devised to show how a scene would appear to an outside observer; matrix notations have a precision and focus. Each notational system brings something additional to our understanding of a space.

I have been visiting two contexts over the last five years, following the example of Kon Wajiro and his modernology.

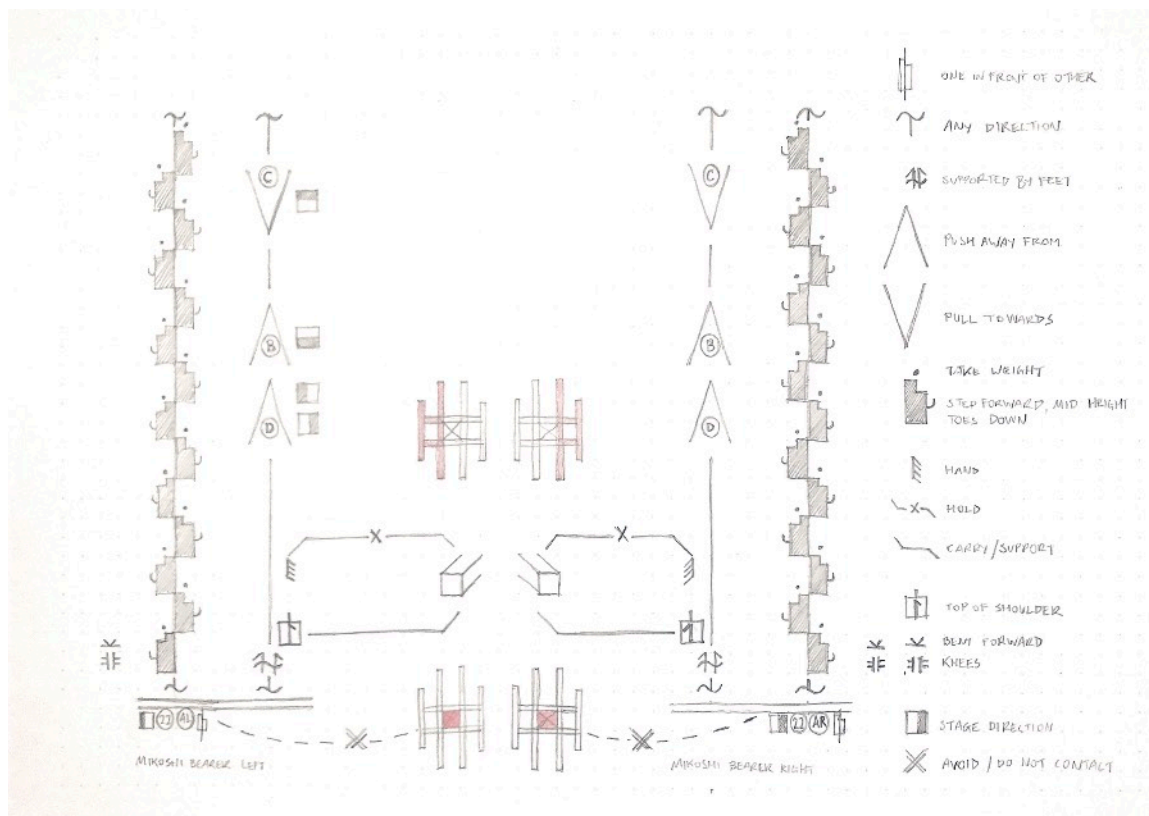


Namdaemun Market in Seoul is the first, a dynamic general market in the centre of the city consisting of large blank-facade structures with a formal market; an external market combining legitimate and illegitimate activities. The architecture is made iteratively by the vendors, responding to needs immediately.

The second field site is Sanja Matsuri in Tokyo. The festival in May makes use of a range of temporary and mobile structures which could be understood as buildings. The Mikoshi themselves are shrines, uprooted from the ground and taken around their territory. The occupation of the urban realm is total for the three days, and Asakusa could be said to remake itself and its social bonds through this celebration.



I have used a range of inscriptive practices from plans and sections through axonometric and oblique projections, space syntax diagrams, agency matrices, and various forms of movement notation to describe these field sites. Further notations include Sensory Notations of my own devising, describing the wider perception of the environment beyond the geometric and visible.





## BIOGRAPHY

Dr Ray Lucas is the ex-head of architecture at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *Research Methods for Architecture* (2016, Laurence King Publishers), and will publish two monographs in early 2019: *Anthropology for Architects* (Bloomsbury) and *Drawing Parallels: Knowledge Production in Axonometric, Isometric, and Oblique Drawings* (Routledge). Lucas is also co-editing *Architecture, Festival and the City* with Christian Frost and Jemma Browne from the recent Architectural Humanities Research Association conference, where Lucas was a keynote speaker.

Lucas has been a member of the European Research Council project *Knowing from the Inside: Anthropology, Art, Architecture and Design* for the last 5 years as an advisor and associate researcher. Lucas has exhibited drawings, notations, paintings, video, sound installations as part of his research, which feeds directly into teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Lucas has research interests in film and architecture, sensory perception, notational and inscriptive practices, architectural drawing, informal architecture, the anthropology of geometry, and architectural anthropology.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

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