

Decolonising the Architectural Curriculum

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Abstract

Since 2015 several student initiatives have pushed to decolonise university curriculums, including ‘Why is my curriculum White?’ and ‘#Liberate my Degree’. The book *Decolonising the University* explores how this can be achieved: first, by thinking about the world bearing in mind the effects of colonialism, empire and racism; second, by promoting alternative ways of thinking (Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu, 2018, 2-3). This approach recognises a very current and timely problem which many academics want to tackle, and yet, some of us feel overwhelmed by such a task. Many of us are a product of such an education, and we need to recognise our positionality to identify new ways of thinking. This paper reflects on the efforts to decolonise the curriculum at the School of Architecture where I teach. These include a more inclusive lens to my practice as an architectural educator: first, by offering extracurricular research live projects during the summer term (2022 and 2023), working with minoritised communities in Nottingham. This project explored issues of belonging and diasporic identities, and the relevance of intangible heritage. Second, by offering curricular activities that engage with decolonising architecture. This coincided with the main theme of the Venice Biennale of Architecture (2023), curated by Lesley Lokko. This reflection offers insights into the challenges and opportunities that both approaches can bring to Higher Education in the field of architecture and beyond.

Keywords: architecture, education, inclusive teaching