

Foundations (Wates House 1975, Lobby 2014)

Lobby is conceived on the eve of the destruction of Wates House as a response to historic and contemporary criticisms. In this foreword by the originators of *Lobby*: Thomas-Bernard Kenniff, Christian Parreno, Mariana Pestana, David Roberts, and Danielle Willkens, quotes from the *Architects' Journal's* damning review of the building in April 1975 are presented in bold.



As you enter this **architectural mumbling**, there is no **absence of wit** at the gates of Wates House. Don is the face of The Bartlett, welcoming coffee-infused constituents through steel turnstiles to the **ill-defined spaces** and **horrifying junctions** where the **decent grubbiness and indecent graffiti obscure the worst features**.

Don't forget to sign in before entering. Welcome to Wates House; welcome to *Lobby*.

LOBBY_CONCEPT

Lobby is a noun and a verb. The verb itself derives from the practice of frequenting the noun. Lobby takes the building and dematerialises it through print. Its spaces are reflected in the structure of the journal and used as a platform from which to critically discuss what is missing from the institution - opportunities for exchange, internal communication, exposure to the outside world.

The publication intends to open a common space to discuss and showcase work produced at the Bartlett in dialogue with the outside architecture context. So far we developed a self-editing structure based on the floorplan of the Bartlett building, which allows for the voices of different students, from undergrad to PhD, to be heard.

It will be divided into sections named after and informed by the character of the rooms and transitional spaces of the school. So, for example, the lobby is the space to receive guests - where we invite external collaborators, the lift is a space in which one travels at a higher speed - where we conduct quick interviews, the toilet where all demarcations between teachers and students get diluted.

LOBBY_STRUCTURE

We came up with six rooms (in no particular order):

- 1) Library: reading lists, recommendations, contents
- 2) Lift: conversations, 60 seconds aphorisms
- 3) Staircase: serendipitous meetings
- 4) Exhibition space: design work
- 5) Toilets: gossip and graffiti, the great equaliser
- 6) Crit room: imbalance and injustice
- 7) Seminar room: essays

The inaugural issue of *Lobby*, printed nearly forty years after the *AJ's* denunciation of Wates House, is composed of work from the **socially aggressive students** [who] **commandeer the carpeted spaces** [and the] **more passive students left out on the lino**. *Lobby* was founded to revel in the **accidents which disgrace the interior** of the building, to question the **drastic mistake of sharp demarcations** within the faculty, to bask under its **harsh overall lighting**, to challenge claims that work has **a lack of rigour**, and to celebrate the (un)spectacular of the **simple brick box** that contains the The Bartlett.