PORTFOLIO OF PRAXIS AND SCHOLARSHIP
AN INTRODUCTION:
Plato’s Chora Ltd trading as CHORA, is dedicated to importing the intellectual assets of the academic world into the realms of creative practice and scholarship.

The word CHORA is the feminine article of the ancient Greek word choros that in its origins when ascribed a feminine quality describes a space between being and non-being, which at the hands of Plato became ‘the receptacle of becoming’ a place where the ‘as yet unimagined is revealed’.

CHORA is designed as a permeable membrane within which collaborators, gather, collaborate without pre-ordination and where in time, things reveal themselves.

CHORA has no front office, no back office, rather it is an international network of academics, artists, doers and makers who share an ambition for collective betterment deliver through creative acts of praxis and scholarship.

CHORA has developed two distinct yet interwoven areas of endeavour:

CHORA PRAXIS
and
CHORA SCHOLARSHIP

CHORA PRAXIS has supported creative practices in the reflection upon and the development and dissemination of identity. To use blunt words such as ‘branding’ does no justice to this complex process of facilitating and encouraging a deep exploration of the individual and collective values that underpins creative praxis in all forms. CHORA PRAXIS also supports creative praxis in the revealing, articulation and dissemination of project narratives through creative collaboration, which supports tangible artefacts such as Design and Access Statements, Project bids, Feasibility Studies and Design Reports.

CHORA SCHOLARSHIP strives to encourage the questioning of prescriptive forms of learning through engagement with creative practices in the classroom or workplace. We have just completed delivery of our extra-curricula pilot project: The Place of Glorious Failure’ developed in collaboration with Portsmouth College, a Hampshire based FE provider. The course challenged negatively loaded words such as ‘fear’, ‘risk’ and ‘failure’ by encouraging students to inhabit creative worlds where, by definition, each creative act is a form of failure. The objective was to enhance self-confidence and resilience within students. The student feedback suggests we achieved that objective.

CHORA SCHOLARSHIP is now considering opportunities of rolling out the programme to a wider constituency, examining a range of learning and teaching platforms that would allow the projection of these patterns of learning into (for example) a range of creative CPD offer, and allowing CHORA SCHOLARSHIP to inform CHORA PRAXIS.
CHORA does not have ‘Clients’ but rather a diverse range of collaborators. Our roles are constantly in flux: we change from server to the served depending entirely upon the nature of the challenge. We are currently collaborating with:

Roger Tyrrell and Darren Bray CHORA Co-Directors
PAD Studio Lymington
PCA Architects Winchester
Simon Astridge Architecture Workshop London
Portsmouth College
Tayseer Karray Architect Bristol
Juhani Pallasmaa
Portsmouth City Council
Stephen Morgan MP
Broadway Malyan Architects
Stuart Bertie Architect
BAD Architects Southampton
Portsmouth College
Five Architects Portsmouth
The Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth
Greg Bailey Architect and Academic Portsmouth
Rachel Findler Champion Free Skier London
Jonathan Reid Greymatter Concrete London
Wendy Perring Architect Lymington
Darren Bray Architect Southampton
ASPEX Gallery Portsmouth
Strong Island Films
University of Portsmouth Film School

And our friend who sadly passed away after just one amazing collaboration:
The late Will Alsop Architect London
CHORA disseminates it collaborations and outputs with a diverse range of media:

WEB-BASED MEDIA:
CHORA website: [www.chora.uk.com](http://www.chora.uk.com)
Journal Blogs embedded within the CHORA Website

SOCIAL MEDIA:
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/593291394355665/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/593291394355665/)

COLLABORATOR’S WEB-PRESENCE:
[http://www.padstudio.co.uk/hampshire-architects/ethos/](http://www.padstudio.co.uk/hampshire-architects/ethos/)
[http://www.padstudio.co.uk/hampshire-architects/](http://www.padstudio.co.uk/hampshire-architects/)
[http://www.padstudio.co.uk/blog/](http://www.padstudio.co.uk/blog/)
[http://www.padstudio.co.uk/architecture-media-and-awards/](http://www.padstudio.co.uk/architecture-media-and-awards/)
[http://simonastridge.com/workshop](http://simonastridge.com/workshop)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:
RIBA Guerrilla Tactics Conference 2017 with PAD Studio

CONFERENCE PAPER AND PRESENTATION:
Generosity: An international conference at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, Wales, UK, from 27-29 June 2018 with PAD Studio

BOOK PUBLICATION:
PORTFOLIO OF PRAXIS
PAD STUDIO MANIFESTO

PAD Studio is an award-winning practice comprising a team of five architects, that has since inception developed a reputation for the delivery of contemporary architecture sustainable architecture containing a rich tectonic narrative, advanced through collaborative relationships with their Clients.

The practice has developed a significant portfolio within the fields of 'Live, Work, Play, Learn, and Grow' in addition to projects that dissolve the threshold between architecture and the fine arts such as the 'Exbury Egg'. PAD Studio has developed a consistent engagement with academia through the part-time teaching contributions of three of the team at the Universities of Portsmouth, and Oxford Brookes, Schools of Architecture.

Having established an excellent reputation and 'brand', PAD commissioned CHORA to lead a process of reflection upon and articulation of, the core values that inform the ethos and praxis of PAD Studios. Following a process of collaborative discussions between PAD and CHORA in the design of the brief for the project, it was agreed that the interaction would be structured around a one-day event that comprised two distinct but inter-related elements: 'Praxis Narratives' and 'Project Narratives' and the event was to be structured and led by CHORA. No final outcome was pre-determined except that some form of written piece was to be developed that reflected the essence of PAD.

‘Praxis Narratives’ sought to uncover the core values held by the practice that were incrementally exposed through a series of pre-designed processes during the first half of the day. These values were further explored as ‘Project Narratives’ in the second half of the day through the interrogation of three projects chosen by PAD studio that represented diverse typologies that represented the depth and breadth of the PAD portfolio.

The conversations were extensive, dynamic and free flowing around the threads provided by the predetermined CHORA structure, and across the day the core values were exposed and made evident through the examination of particular projects that provided tangible exemplars of the PAD ethos. The conversations and processes conversations were systematically recorded. Incrementally and in parallel, the specific requirement emerged for a PAD portfolio to be developed as the tangible output for the project.

CHORA developed the first draft of the ‘Emerging PAD Manifesto’ that was honed through a process of collaborative iteration. The Manifesto is now a core element of the PAD brand, attracting positive commentary from peer practitioners, cognate practitioners and perhaps most importantly, existing and potential clients. The Manifesto represents the genesis of on-going and developing collaborations between PAD and CHORA.
MANIFESTO

EMERGING PAD STUDIO MANIFESTO:
(With acknowledgement of Bruce Mau)

1. We believe that no single statement deserves to be number one. It implies a hierarchy; a paradigm we reject in favour of collaboration, networks, transparent and dynamic models of working.
2. We are convinced that architecture holds the potential to enhance the human condition in all that we do. And it does.
3. Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. We listen and collaborate.
4. Our work is rooted in the particularity of place.
5. Those roots represent pad values that enables design to respond to the particular conditions of clients, place and project brief.
6. We work in a world of flux and shifting condition. Our deeprooted values provide stability yet facilitates dynamic response to flux.
7. We celebrate each design voyage in its complexity, challenge and non-linear nature that reacts to circumstances and conditions as they emerge.
8. PAD studio embeds the concept of sustainable design in everything we do. It is not a discreet or applied condition and we strive to extend the debate into the realms of beauty and the poetic.
9. Our values and work are steered by a strong ethical compass.
10. We all teach in schools of architecture and that is core to our development; ‘we teach best what we want to learn’ [1].
11. In a world of white noise – silence stands out more (thanks ben)
12. Eleven provides a space for breath and reflection.
14. We immodestly suggest that we are modest.
15. We are constantly aware of what we need to learn and to educate.
16. We are constantly innovating and developing in our practice in process, representation and communication.
17. Purposely blank.
18. We consistently share and love to be shared with.
19. Our work is informed by work and theory. In theory we return to the root of the word – ‘to observe and to speculate upon.’
20. We have meerkat tendencies – we pop our heads up to become aware of movements in culture, architecture, music, theatre, dance, politics and economics - these are all constantly on our radar.
21. At one with nature and mankind.
22. We are mindful that we need to look from a distance to see the trees that make up the forest.
23. There must be a narrative.
24. Architecture is a means of giving form to the storyline.
25. We are not conformists.
26. We are storytellers and there is room within our story for others.
27. Life experience makes for a richer plot.


DISSEMINATION:

http://www.padstudio.co.uk/hampshire-architects/ethos/

http://www.chora.uk.com/case-studies/


Generosity: An international conference at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, Wales, UK, from 27-29 June 2018 Conference Paper and Presentation
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY TWO

SAAW WEB-PRESENCE

Chora was commissioned to lead a structured event involving all members of SAAW in articulating the practice values, ethos and brand in support of the re-launch of the SAAW website scheduled for March 2017.

Significant time constraints were involved, as both the event and the outcomes required a one-week turnaround to respond to the programme of web-site re-design and re-launch. In preparation, Chora undertook extensive research upon the extant SAAW web-presence and in addition, the web-presence of competitor practices within the London area. A one-day workshop was held where through a predetermined structure, members of SAAW were encouraged to reflect upon the practice striving to capture the essence of SAAW.

The content and spirit of this event were captured and by Chora, and after post-workshop review, were articulated through a written document that identified key-words that underpin the SAAW ethos and further set out the SAAW narrative. The project was completed within the required timescale and the Chora commentary supported the redesign of the SAAW website that was formally re-launched in March 2017.

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https://www.facebook.com/Platos-CHORA-Limited-268362403631398/

http://simonastridge.com/workshop

www.chora.uk.com
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY THREE

PAD FILMS

Following the articulation of pad values and processes within the pad manifesto, PAD commissioned a series of short films that drew upon key elements of the manifesto.

Chora was commissioned to contribute to these productions in articulating the essence of pad.

The films were produced by Year 2 students from the university of Portsmouth film studies degree, providing further evidence of PAD’s collaborative and permeable attitudes.

The films are now embedded within the PAD website and provide a unique vehicle for the articulation of pad values.

DISSEMINATION:

http://www.chora.uk.com/case-studies/pad-films/
http://www.padstudio.co.uk/blog/?start=20
http://www.padstudio.co.uk/architecture-projects/
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY FOUR

PCA PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW

‘Going – into – oneself and for hours meeting no one – this one must be able to attain.’
(Rainer Maria Rilke)

Chora were commissioned by PCA to provide a project design review. The project was the most significant as yet designed by the practice, and the event was structured in the manner of the ‘crit’ we that remember from our university days, in providing a supportive critical commentary.

This one-day interaction provided a critical appraisal of concept design that resulted in further design development prior to presentation to the client. The project is currently moving through pre-application consultation processes in the form that represents the outcome from the ‘crit’. 
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY FIVE

PAD NARRATIVES

‘Objects do not live in a vacuum: they are part of a complex choreography of interactions.’ (Deyan Sudjic)

Chora was commissioned by PAD to review and provide a critical commentary of the processes and content of pad feasibility studies. PAD had identified that the studies were not as yet, fully capturing the ‘spirit’ of individual project concepts and wished to have an external voice to provide a critical commentary.

Chora reviewed four feasibility studies and suggested the projects may have individual ‘narratives’, that at feasibility stage would be captured as a ‘concept narrative’ opening the potential for a much more expansive approach to unfolding project potential to the client and other stakeholders.

This shift of approach constitutes the next phase of the collaboration between Chora and PAD.

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http://www.chora.uk.com/case-studies/pad-project-narratives/
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY SIX

GENEROSITY CONFERENCE – PAD STUDIO

CHORA was commissioned by PAD Studio to develop a Conference Paper and presentation for an International Conference at the Welsh School of Architecture of the theme of Generosity implicit within creative endeavour.

We prepared an abstract that drew upon the PAD Emerging Manifesto that exemplified how through pro-active collaborations with all parties within the design and delivery processes, generous architecture might emerge. The abstract has been accepted by the Conference organisers, and PAD and CHORA are now collaborating on the structure and content of the Paper.

DISSEMINATION:

Conference presentation at the Generosity Conference, Welsh School of Architecture June 2018.

Publication in Conference Proceedings.
CHORA PRAXIS: CASE STUDY SEVEN

PAD LYMINGTON QUAY

PAD were commissioned to develop a feasibility study for the Quayside area in the Hampshire Town of Lymington and invited CHORA to collaborate. The project is within the initial phase but PAD and CHORA are developing a wider remit that encompasses the Quayside but also captures other significant riverside sites in order to build a coherent spatial relationship along the riverbank.

Such an important Project will need the support of the local population and tourists and part of the Strategy is to develop innovative and meaningful processes of public consultation and engagement possibly utilising the experience with CHORA SCHOLARSHIP to ensure that the diverse voices of Lymington are captured and embraced.

DISSEMINATION:

Public Consultations and Design Charrettes
Local Print Press
The Simon Astridge Architecture Workshop (SAAW) were commissioned to design and deliver the refurbishment and remodelling of a single story house in the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire and invited CHORA to collaborate, initially in the development of a feasibility study and subsequently in the development of a full Planning Application now submitted.

The bungalow, designed in the 1660s was an early work of the renowned Architectural Practice now known as PLB Architects and is an exemplar of humane modernist architecture and is a courtyard house.

The site slopes from front to rear and the house benefits from the borrowed landscape of the rolling chalk downlands of the Chilterns.

Over the years the house has suffered from a number of unsympathetic alterations including the roofing of the internal courtyard. The Clients, a husband and wife with two young children, wish to restore the design integrity of the house and remodel internally and extend sympathetically in the spirit of the original designed transformed for 21st Century living.

The children have both been diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), the consequence of which means that appropriate sensory experience is an implicit element within the design processes.

CHORA initially undertook research, contacted the original architect Richard Plinke, to understand the narrative of the original design and a number of study trips were undertaken with SAAW to more fully understand SPD.

A feasibility study was developed and deliver to the Client that articulated the restoration of the open courtyard, a remodelling of the interior and two small roof-top extensions that provided a space of play and contemplation: one each for parents and children. In addition, careful attention has been given to the landscape design, the relationship between the house and the landscape and furthermore, the relationship to the borrowed landscape beyond the curtilage of the house.

Through an iterative process of design development with our Clients SAAW and CHORA developed and subsequently submitted a full Planning Application and we await the formal response of the Local Authority.
DISSEMINATION:
Journal Post: http://simonastridge.com/journal
The Place of Glorious Failure was born.

The objective was to design and eight-week programmes of study that through creative practice, exposed students to the failure that is constant and implicit within all creative acts. We would encourage them to embrace risk, fear and failure as they moved out of their comfort zones.

The programme was from the outset designed as a collaboration with members of CHORA’s networks. It was imperative to challenge preconceptions and the course had to be innovative in structure and content.

To provide a focus for the course we adopted the challenges provided by homelessness: an exponentially increasing phenomenon in Portsmouth and across the UK.

From the outset is was obvious that whilst there was a great appetite for such a programme, little funding was available due to the strictures of the FE system. In collaboration with Portsmouth College, CHORA undertook to encourage support and funding from our own networks and beyond. From these meetings, the City Council contributed a significant tranche of funding, as did the Broadway Maylan, Grey Matter Concrete, Pompey in the Community, and we drew upon some funding from the College. We also gained the support of the then Leader of Portsmouth City Council, the Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan, the Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Football Club.

The design and delivery of the programme was subsequently pitched to the College Strategic Leadership team who approved both structure and content.

CHORA subsequently pitched the programme to students as an extra-curricula event and a cohort of 24 enrolled for the pilot. The programme was delivered between March and May 2018 involving a diverse range of collaborators.

We began by hearing the voices of failure; stories of failure from successful creative practitioners, we built teams, we heard the voices of the homeless, we made big art with Will Alsop, we were inspired by a world champion skier, we made concrete pillows and lightbulbs with Jonathan Reid of Greymatter concrete. Students made personal manifestos, talked about big issues and got their hands dirty. There was lots of laughter.

The CHORA team and all collaborators came away from each session inspired by these young people who consistently articulated a desire for collective betterment in the world.

The event concluded with a ‘public broadcast’ to an invited audience where students effective, and modestly presented their ‘Manifestos of Homelessness’. All students were subsequently presented certificates and appointed as...
‘Ambassadors of Risk and Failure’, and will go on to tell others of their experience.

Student Feedback suggests that the Place of Glorious Failure was a success. We asked students to grade the programme and the results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Approval Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed the Course</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced self-confidence</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced creativity</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced awareness of social issues</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Course empowered me</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the Course inspiring</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commentary included:

‘The Creative Workshops were very engaging.’

‘Most enjoyed concrete making, discussing solutions to homelessness.’

‘Enjoyed listening to people’s stories about failure.’

‘Loved listening to people’s stories, especially PG’s: it was very good to hear stories that directly linked to the issue.’

CHORA is about to move into discussions with Portsmouth College how the Place of Glorious Failure may be embedded within the curriculum, how it may be rolled out to a wider audience using diverse learning platforms and we are also reflecting on the possibility of offering CPD events to professional creative practitioners.

DISSEMINATION:
www.chora.uk.com
Portsmouth College Social Media platforms
CHORA Social media platforms
PORTFOLIO REFLECTIONS
CHORA has been in existence for just over 12 months yet, within this short period has demonstrated significant impact in the world outside of academia. Furthermore, through active processes of dissemination, the activities of CHORA have been exposed to academia through engagement with academic conferences.

Delivering within two themes: Praxis and Scholarship, CHORA has increasingly defined itself to itself and exposed the value of permeable organisational models, the potential held by horizontal, dynamic and collaborative working methods and the merit in non-hierarchical praxis within the creative realm.

CHORA represents an exemplar of the coalescence of the academy and the worlds of research and praxis and of research informed praxis and praxis in research. With our collaborators CHORA has delivered in the realms of design support, design narratives, creative and innovative pedagogy, and enhancing creative identity.

In CHORA, the potential of collaboration between the academy, creative practice and education has been exposed and with our collaborators we are determined to nurture and develop that potential.