

Workshops

Name of the Event: RiA II Workshop

Dates: July 11th 2022

Venue: Aquamarine and Purple

Name of the Expert: Dr. Sara Melsen

Co-ordinated by: Dr. Vaidehi Lavand, Ar.Ramiya Gopalakrishnan (RiA Coordinators)

Introduction of Expert

Sarah Melsens trained as an architect at the University of Brussels and as an urban designer at the Architectural Association in London. For the last ten years she has been dividing her time between her hometown in Belgium and the city of Pune, where she conducts historical research on the city's-built environment. Her work centres on the architecture of 'forgotten' city builders such as Indian engineers in the British colonial service and the everyday architects engaged by Pune's speculative developers. Sarah has been involved in teaching in various colleges in Pune, including BRICK and MIT-ADT University and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp. She is Assistant Editor for the online journal Architecture Beyond Europe. For her research on Pune city building, she makes extensive use of oral history and documentary material retrieved from unexplored private collections. This has proved a very effective method to reveal 'history from below' and 'hidden histories' of the built environment and draw attention to the social processes underpinning architectural production and reception.

Brief of the Session:

The workshop was a one-day session for the fourth year Research in Architecture subject. The objective of the workshop was to make the students arrive at a feasible research question in relation to the collected data.

The session started with a 20 minutes presentation by Dr.Sara, to show students the process followed in her research. The presentation helped students understand how to bring focus to a particular question from a wider area of interest.

Students were asked to bring print out of their research proposal, the abstracts of their 3 favorite reference articles on the topic, an overview of the data they have collected so far or propose to collect. Dr.Sara picked two students from the class and went through the process of brainstorming where she made the students come up with words that were relevant to their topic. The following questions were posed in front of them after.

- WHAT is the main question you want to answer with your research paper?
- WHY is it important? (personal motivation? Solving a problem? Testing a theory?)

Workshops

- HOW? Discussion of data collected

Once this was complete, the class was divided into three groups and each student discussed the above questions with respect to their research area. They were then made to write the question on post it. This was again discussed in groups to finally arrive at the right question. Post its were used for this activity to make sure that the space restricts students from writing longer sentences thus, keeping the question crisp and to the point.

This activity would further help students work towards writing an ABSTRACT, the abstract should contain:

- What is the reason for the topic? Why is it important?
- Is it solving a problem in the field?
- Is it testing a design theory for its validity?
- What does the literature say?
- What have others written about your topic? What are the various opinions/main lines of knowledge established?
- What is missing?
- What is the research question?
- Try to identify one main question
- What is the method and scope of the research? (discussion of Data)
- Specify what is included in your research and what not
- identify sub questions and how you will answer them/steps in your research process
- What are the (expected) findings and how do they inform your design project?

Photographs



Workshops

