Aptitude Exercise
for Admission to the BA(AS) Program
Department of Architecture
University of Hong Kong

27 December 2021 (available: 12:00 noon, Hong Kong Time) to 31 December 2021 (upload deadline: 12:00 noon, Hong Kong Time)

The criteria measured by the Aptitude Exercise includes the capacity to conceptualize, analytical ability, the rigour evident in approach taken, creativity, and originality. The Aptitude Exercise should reflect the student’s capacities and therefore the work must be conceived by the applicant alone.

A PDF submission must be uploaded by 12:00 noon, 31 December 2021, using the uploading tool found on this page. Applicants need to indicate their application number at the top righthand corner of the first page of the aptitude exercise. The PDF should be no more than 100MB. Applicants do not need to post a hardcopy of their work to the Faculty of Architecture. Applicants selected for an interview will be asked to bring a hardcopy of their submission. Your submission will be discussed at our interviews.

Any questions should be addressed to the Faculty of Architecture by email at baasadmi@hku.hk. We look forward to learning more about you. Good luck and enjoy creating your Aptitude Exercise.

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Exercise Problem

In the 15th century the Italian humanist Leon Battista Alberti wrote De re aedificatoria (On the Art of Building), stating “the city is like a great house, and the house in its turn a small city.” Architecture is about creating communities and generating ways of living together. This requires architects to anticipate and to imagine the life of their designs.

Today, the world urgently needs the insight of architects. According to United Nations data, in a span of 300 years the world will have gone from almost 0% to practically 100% urbanized. Between now and 2050 an average rate of around 1.5 million people will be urbanized each week, producing a city the size of Hong Kong roughly every five weeks. 431 million Chinese citizens have been urbanized in the last twenty years. In the next thirty years India will urbanize, adding another 384 million urbanites to cities across India. Hong Kong is within a 5-hour flight to 50% of the global population and sits at the center of Asia’s massive urbanization.

This Aptitude Exercise asks you to reflect on both Alberti and our current global urban condition by offering interpretations of the following two statements:

1: A Room in the City
Buildings contain rooms. Rooms are how we primarily experience architecture. These may commonly be defined by walls, doors, and windows. However, the city can also be composed of rooms and their boundaries may exist without walls. These rooms are not physically or otherwise obviously defined. The rooms of the city may be described by events or activities, by sun and shadow, with some existing only in daytime or only in nighttime, while other rooms may even move around.
Identify and describe a room in your city. What are its qualities, when does it exist, and for whom does it exist?

2: A Room of Imagination
Following your thoughts on an existing room in your city, describe an imaginary room in the city. It can exist anywhere, at any time, and at any scale. Who is it for? What are its qualities?

Please reply to each statement on a single A4 page, with an image and a 100-word written explanation in English. The complete Aptitude Exercise submission will be two A4 pages. Each statement should be represented as an idea in one single image that is found, captured, taken or constructed by you. Your ideas may be conceptual, poetic, personal or imaginary. There is no right or wrong answer.