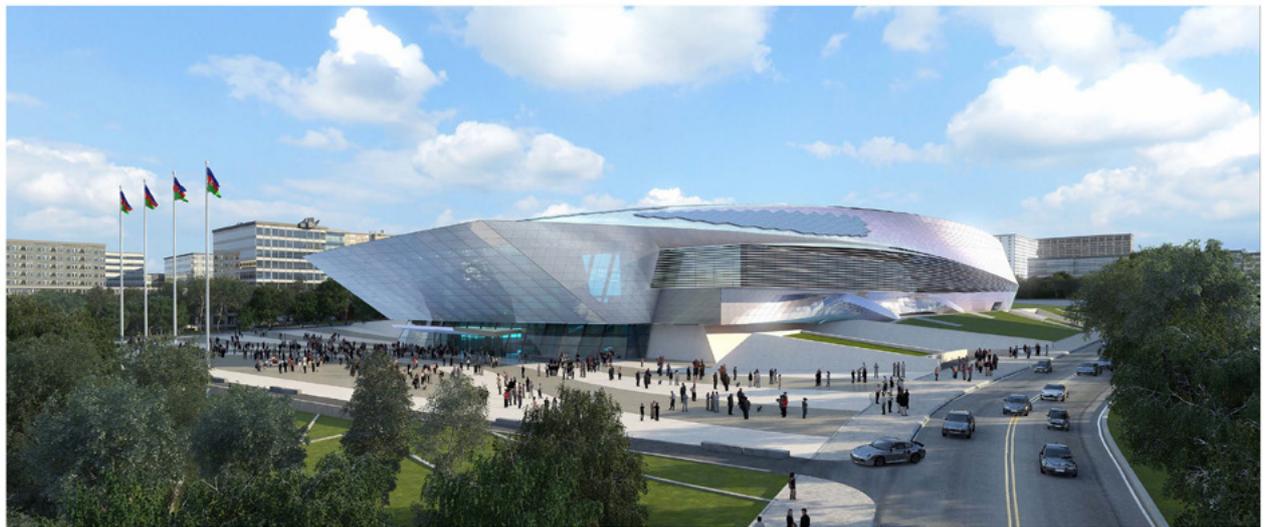




Ok, I think this is sort of an obliged question: you worked for big name offices, such as Coop Himmelb(l)au BIG and (no pun intended!), and I bet many people would love to know more about your intern experience. What did you learn by working at these firms? In particular, did you learn something useful about how to illustrate and present a project?

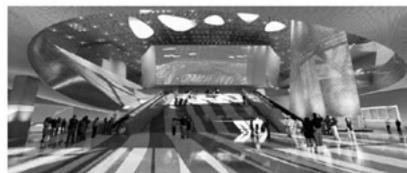
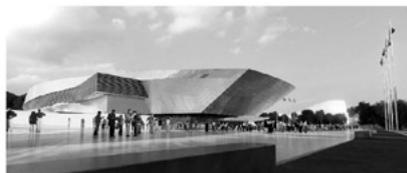
I didn't start off working at these big offices. I worked at much smaller ones to begin with, and the learning process was very gradual. I had already been almost sort of trying to copy their style for a while and I've been learning quite a bit of things. Therefore, by the time I got to these offices, I was almost ready to go with my current skillset. What I did actually learn from them was kind of starting to hold myself to the same standards. Obviously, when you're in school you try really hard, but when you work with such big names you start to get into their mindset a little bit and anticipate what they're thinking and what they're trying to show. For instance, at some places that I worked I redid some really quick "down and dirty" renders to show only and exactly what they needed. We didn't need to do anything fancier. In some other occasions it wasn't just about showing the architectural concept, but suddenly it was about composition, almost like in a painting. I'm thinking about how and where you placed people in renders. It wasn't just to show what they're doing.



The Convention Centre Baku is a 230 000m² building containing a 3 500 seat auditorium suitable for concerts, full theatre productions, political conferences, and formal dinner receptions. Although the project began only in 2013, construction started in 2014 and the building is scheduled for completion in early 2015.

As a member of the 3D team, my role on this project largely involved the development of the landscape, facade, and resolution of system collisions. I developed the internal 3D master file for landscape and architectural models, providing design development and submission documents, as well as revising concrete framework drawings for accordance with the architectural model.

Using Rhino and Grasshopper software I performed collision detection, problem solving and collision resolution of the drainage system, lighting system, building envelope, structural models, and mechanical models, of the Baku Convention Centre, including modeling 2 000 unique louvers and 300 unique cladding tiles using Grasshopper.



That's really true. Especially in visualization it's always a matter of tuning your skills according to the purpose of the image. It could be something for an internal presentation, a quick render just to show the massing concept or even a poster for large format billboards! You really have to learn what could be the best way to show a certain idea.

And of course, this also applies to your portfolio. Speaking of which, is portfolio culture really that prominent in North American school? I'm asking this because here in Italy the "portfolio" topic is almost completely overlooked by schools. Many students start dealing with the composition of a portfolio pretty late, sometimes only after they're done with their studies. So, how is it like in North American schools? Does anyone teach you how to build a portfolio or do you learn by yourself how to build one?

Here at Waterloo University, which is the school I go to, we have alternating school terms and work terms as part of a co-op degree. We have six four-month terms that are integrated throughout the degree, varying from four to eight months long. Because of this, when you finish the first term of your second year you're already expected to get an internship somewhere...

...and you already have to deliver a portfolio, basically.



Yeah. You need to have a portfolio ready by then, which is quite early on! There's no real sort of formal portfolio class or anything like that, but they set up workshops for people who want to get their portfolio reviewed where the master students at the school volunteer their time to give us some advice.

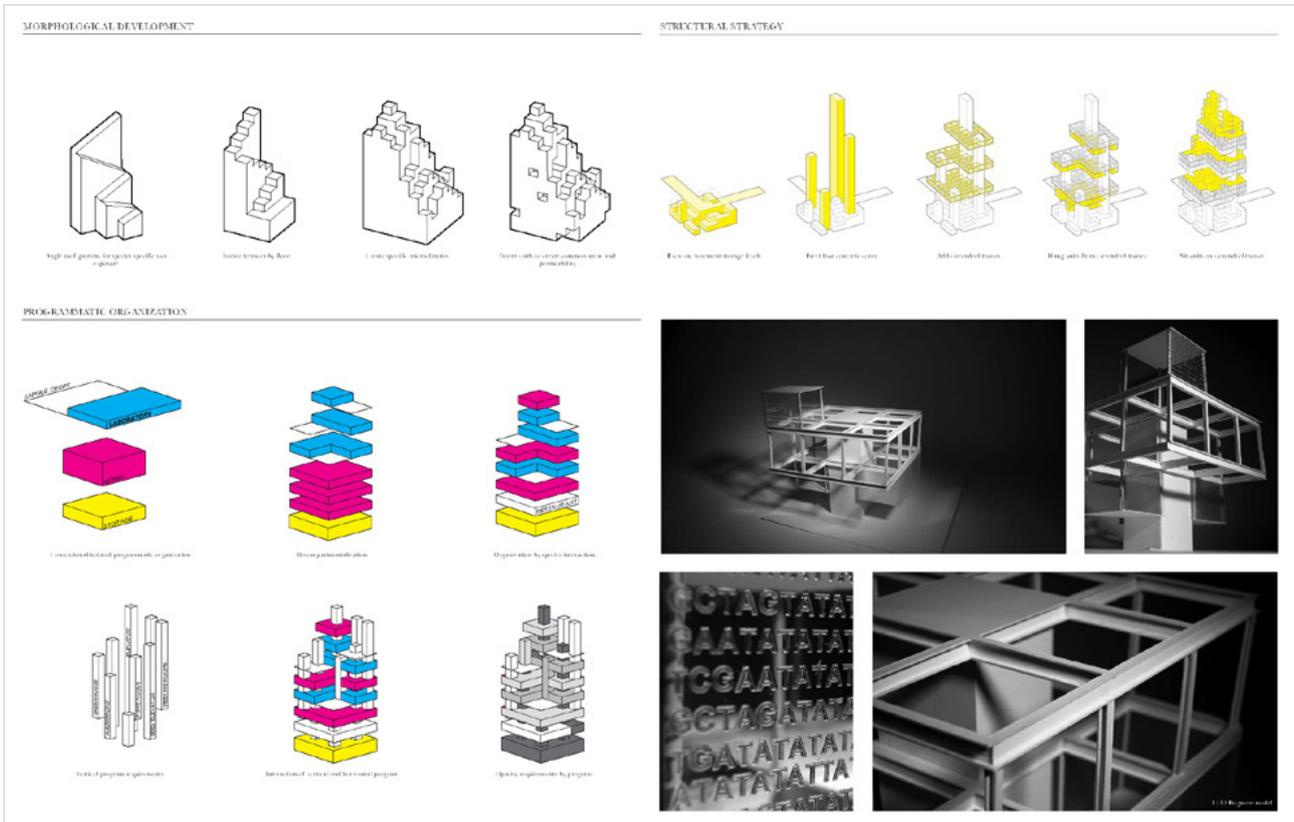
That's a good way to improve one's portfolio skills! I can't stress enough that peer review is one of the most important things when you're building a portfolio. And now, let's just take a step back and follow your portfolio's evolution throughout the years. How did your portfolio change in time?

Well, right now my portfolio is of course very additive. I have gone through and redesigned it several times but I never really deleted the whole thing and started from scratch. And I have to say that my very first portfolio was actually quite bad! There was no overall concept, nothing that would graphically tie it altogether. There was formal similarity but there's a difference, right? So, for the second portfolio I did, I tried to find some sort of concept that would tie it all together and that would make it stand out as well. So, in a way, almost anything could be of inspiration! In my case the, the first concept I chose was a bit less successful I think. I tried to use light painting photography to do my cover pages, and basically keep the overall atmosphere very dark and sort of gloomy. That was really good at tying all together. Even though it was less successful in terms of technique, I think it did actually get quite a bit of response, just because it was something that people hadn't really seen before. I think it started to get a little bit of people's attention just because it's very easy to copy architecture representational styles, because we see them all the time and you want to try them. So, anytime you can put something fresh in there is really good.

A tying concept is a pretty cool idea for a portfolio. That's something you don't really see in European portfolios, which often are more a collection of works than anything else. Speaking of techniques, which presentation skills do you consider crucial to learn for a young architect or student, and what's the best way to acquire them?

I think we can all agree that you learn a huge amount of your skills in school. But what's interesting though is how a lot of these skills, like diagramming for instance, aren't necessarily technically difficult at all, and the same goes for a lot of the graphics. On the other hand, the hard thing is probably learning to select what you need to show, and then what's the most effective way to do that. Because really cool diagrams are not going to be necessarily the best device to explain your project! You know, there's been a project where I did a ton of axonometric views and of the day it didn't work, it didn't show the project as well as it should have. So, I think the skill set is out there! Especially if you're in school you can get quite a

bit of it both by learning from your peers and from your courses, but then it's also very much about how to use it and when.



Yes, that's a pretty important thing, especially when you think about the target of your presentation. We're often speaking to non-architecturally educated people, so it's really crucial to pick simple, yet clear communication devices and tune your style accordingly. But now, let's delve into the pages of your portfolio, shall we? The header of your projects really stood out for me, got to say that it's pretty stylish! I also really like that minimal cover page. What's the concept behind them?

Again, it was something simple to tie all the content together and also to help with the piecing of it. The headers are there to break it up into clear and easily readable sections; there are some pages you can just flip through really fast, and some other you can stay on a little longer. The graphic style is originally inspired by Swiss graphic design: big block letters, a lot of horizontal lines and dividing segments. I also got inspired by more contemporary and kind of minimalist graphic design, in particular by minimalist posters series. There are a lot of creative minimalist posters out there, even about architecture!

Your portfolio has indeed a very graphic design feel to it, especially the cover image: it's a pretty bold and striking statement but really minimal. But graphic design is clearly not your only interest: you added some pretty unique skills to your portfolio. Most people add graphic design, hand drawing or photography work; you added something really particular, namely music production and wood working, which i really dig. So, did these skills actually help you in the search for internships or jobs? Can you tell me more about that?

It's actually hard to say, I haven't had any direct response from anybody, either positive or negative about it. It is interesting though, because it is something we do talk about in interviews, when you start getting to that level. I think they are worth to include anyway in a portfolio because, if nothing else, they kind of show more about your character: the interviewer gets a better idea of who you are, who they're going to be working with, and that makes you little more personable in a way. It also shows that you're influenced by things outside of architecture, which I think is also important: it states that you're a well-rounded individual and that, if you're doing other things as well, it probably means that you're good at time management and an efficient worker.

WOODWORKING



Is there something that you would you like to change about your portfolio right now?

One thing I'd like to do is to add more of the technical work that I've done at my jobs, which is unfortunately difficult because most of it is still confidential. So that may not be happening anytime soon! I may go back through some of the older works that I've done and maybe include some of that, even if it's not current, because I did notice that it's a little bit lacking. Unfortunately, some of the stuff I have in there right now is basically the publicity package that I am allowed to show.

Technical skills are always pretty tricky to show, especially when you're not an architect with built projects. But what do you exactly mean by technical work and how important is to include it in a portfolio?

That's true. It is kind of weird to say technical, but I think is important to show that kind of range of work. It's really easy to show a conceptual representation of your personal work. But then, it's also really crucial to represent your professional work and to display the stages following the schematic design of the building, which also differ from one country to another. Take Denmark, for instance. Due to the way they've laid out the post-education system and the professions, Danish architects don't really sign off on the building and prepare construction documents in the same way than in Canada. Here it's much more specific: as an architect you have to get construction documents done, tender and contraction management, and so on. These are the kind of things which we consider the technical part of the architectural profession, whereas other countries might not even have that! You could say that in Canada designing the building is about 5% of the whole process.

So, showing technical skills is very important, especially for Canadian and American offices, because they are really comprehensive of the work you've been doing at an office.

And the one thing of your portfolio that you'd keep by all means?

Probably the cover pages, for now. I really like that style, what it has done for me in kind of the tone that it sets into the portfolio. So, until I come up with a new concept for something to tie the other work together, I think it's going to stay for a bit.



MOUNTAIN



RIVER



MOON

MONTGOMERY BEDFORD DE LUNA
SELECTED WORKS
SUMMER 2013

PERSONAL WORKS



MUSIC PRODUCTION

Winchester

LOGO DESIGN

Tulu Music Festival
Vibet Rope Magazine

WOODWORKING

Rotations Speaker Set
Walnut + Wenge

PHOTOGRAPHY

Selected Works

DOCUMENTS

Resume
Coop House @ East reference
ZUS reference
sustainable IO reference

See Monty's full portfolio on Issuu.com: <http://issuu.com/montgomerydeluna/docs/portfolio2013>