**A Few Words From This Year’s Winners…**

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“How would you describe your approach to teaching and educating students?”

One of my beliefs that has shaped my approach to teaching is encapsulated in the phrase taken from Mike Hulme’s *Why We Disagree About Climate Change* (2009)—“disagreeing is a form of learning.” In that book, Hulme argues that agreement and consensus are not the only bases for learning; we can learn just as much from controversies and disagreements. I believe that “disagreeing as a form of learning” is especially relevant to the controversial subject of climate change and sustainability that I teach and to the type of interdisciplinary teaching that I do.

I see disagreeing, especially if it is done not for its own sake but as a way of questioning normative assumptions and the status quo, as an important part of my teaching not only because climate change is a controversial subject. The ability to disagree in an informed and constructive way provides an effective counter to the fairly rampant “greenwashing” which tends to occur in the sustainability discourse we see around us. It is only through critically interrogating assumptions, discerning hidden values and evaluating evidence that one could navigate this complex terrain of claims and counterclaims of sustainability.

The same belief can also be applied to my teaching of architectural design. One of my best design teachers once said, “A good question is better than the best answer.” This quote could be interpreted in a number of ways but I understand it as an attitude that encourages the pursuit of new avenues of enquiry over the reliance on tried-and-tested solutions, such as the prescriptive way of teaching/learning which is quite prevalent in a profession that has its roots in the apprenticeship system. It is also about seeing design creativity as, to plagiarise a well-known computer firm’s marketing slogan from yesteryear, “thinking differently”, that is, to explore a familiar problem from an unusual point of view, to ask questions that have not been asked so that a creative solution can be found.