

onOffice

Workplace design

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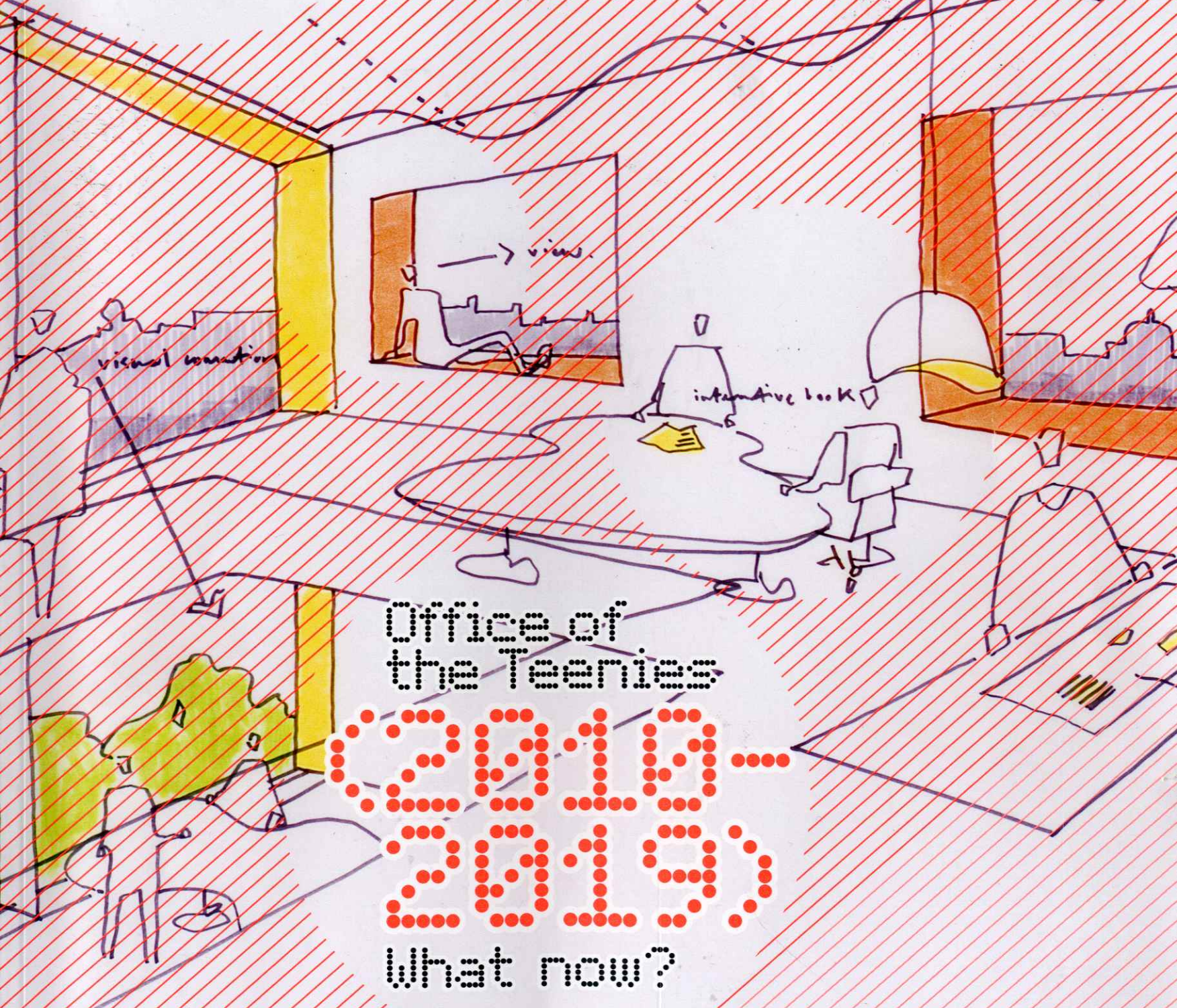
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FACEBOOK KEEPS IT REAL
IN CALIFORNIA

UPPING THE ANTE FOR
PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICES

Q&A: THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE
DESIGNERS IN THE NEXT DECADE



Office of
the Teenies

2010

What now?

Urban enquiry



Critical Cities: Ideas, Knowledge and Agitation from Emerging Urbanists Volume 1 (Myrdle Court Press)

> Edited by Deepa Naik and Trenton Oldfield, *Critical Cities* is the first in a series of books produced by urban platform This is Not A Gateway. The volume brings together a collection of papers, essays and conversations by emerging urbanists, with the discussion focussed on "a transformation in approach to our new urban realities". **onoffice** asked Naik and Oldfield about the book, and what those who build our cities are likely to learn from it.

Why release the book now?

We are experiencing a significant shift in the way we live right across the globe and new ideas, knowledge and approaches are needed to understand this condition, as well as propose new ways of addressing changes. There is a sense that we are out of step with the changes taking place. Moreover, decision-makers have inadequate knowledge and information at hand. But while decision-makers or current city builders are out of step, there is significant and important work being done by inter-disciplinary and emerging urbanists not being shared and circulated, because the platform didn't exist. *Critical Cities* is a contribution to addressing this gap.

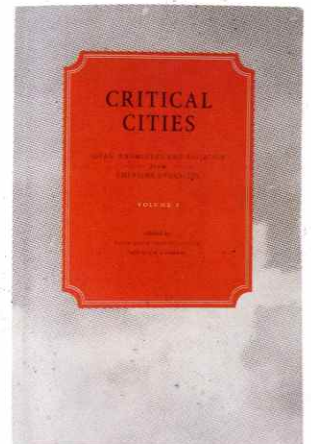
Who is *Critical Cities* aimed at?

Emerging urbanists - highlighting to them that their research needs to fill a larger proportion of the critical research that is needed in this period of global change. Established urbanists - those working at a senior level within government, consultancy,

property development, real estate finance and thinktanks, who openly admit they are out of touch with emerging thinking and research on our new cities. Readers also include academics and students. It is fair to say that the book does also have a general appeal, as it addresses many of the topics surrounding living in cities, such as migration, development, legalities and finance. It is important to note that this book takes a critical view of these subjects (and by critical we mean rigorously researched, theoretical and thoughtful) and that it addresses the more difficult and problematic of these concerns.

There are many different voices in the book, from guerilla gardeners to photographers and film-makers. How important was it to widen the debate about the future of our cities to outside the architectural sphere?

Architects themselves have been calling for a wider contribution to the debate about our cities, as they openly recognise their limitations. Most architects see that the object that has been at the centre of their teaching and practice is no longer (or perhaps, was never) satisfactory to understanding cities, let alone debating their future. The architectural field is increasingly dominated by upper-middle-class men who are unable to address the complexity and speed of cities. The book outlines the idea that although culture-shifting changes took place on the streets, in built space, the disciplines associated with creating that space in the first place have not experienced these changes.



Above The book addresses urban concerns from the history of pest control to London's tallest buildings

Left Beata (2006), by Polish-born, London-based photographer Ania Dabrowska

Bottom Rehan Jamil captures Tower Hamlets' British Muslim community

