E&I Research Studentship project proposal 2019

Project title: Inclusive design of buildings and places from a disability perspective

Supervision Team:
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Project Highlights:

- to advance the inclusive design of more accessible environments
- to develop innovative analytic techniques in design that acknowledge the social aspects of lived-experience
- to advance disability-led participatory engagement in design processes.

Project Description:

This research engages with the central concern of making the designed environment more accessible for people's different capabilities, to redress the longstanding disequilibrium in access to and positive experience of the world we all inhabit.

Figure 1: Streetscapes

The project is inter-disciplinary with the intention to advance the ways that we design for people's different capabilities. The research will explore how social meanings can radically impact on and transform the everyday experience of the designed world and the built environment in particular, for example, through studying the effects of interventions and breaching experiments on everyday lived experiences. Design, as an area of inquiry, will be approached drawing on recent theory and research insights on the lived-embodied, socially shaped experience of problematic spaces, places and other designed things ([1] [2] [3] [4] Boys, Luck, Suchman, Akama).

Research Methods:

The research will involve participant observation and ethnomethodologically-informed ethnographies of the everyday living practices of people with disabilities. It will explore experience and meanings through observational research and the analysis of digital data.

Indication of project timeline:

Year 1: Research degrees training, emersion in literatures in the fields of inclusive design and more recent developments in design research methodology
Year 2: Collaborations with research participants for data collection and presentation at a design conference.
Year 3: Complete data synthesis and analysis and write-up thesis.

References

1. Boys, J., *Doing disability differently: an alternative handbook on architecture, dis/ability and designing for everyday life*. 2014, London: Routledge.

2. Luck, R., *Inclusive design and making in practice: bringing bodily experience into closer contact with making.* Design Studies, 2018. **54**(1): p. 96-119.

3. Suchman, L., *Anthropological relocations and the lmitis of design.* Annual review anthropology, 2011. **40**: p. 1-18.

4. Akama, Y., S. Pink, and S. Sumartojo, *Uncertainty and possibility: new approaches to future making in design anthropology*. 2018, London: Bloomsbury.

Candidate Applications

- 1000 word cover letter outlining how they are equipped in their educational background and expertise to conduct the research project,
- a CV including contact details of two academic references
- An Open University application form, downloadable from: http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process (Note: This is an Advertised studentship and you do not need to submit a proposal).
- IELTs English Language test scores on application. An average of 6.5 and no less than 6 in anyone of the four components. Applicant should have these results when applying.

Applications should be sent to
STEM-EI-Research@open.ac.uk by 28 February 2019