

Embracing Tradition: Classical Studio in 2022

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Abstract

The year 2022 saw the return of Classical Studio the Unitec | Te Pūkenga School of Architecture after a ten-year hiatus. In Classical Studio, the goal isn't necessarily to teach how to design a classical building, but to give third- and fourth-year students a deeper understanding of proportional and compositional principles, and a way to generate and evaluate with traditional design methodology. This time the studio was offered to second-year students, presenting new pedagogical opportunities. The criteria for the second-year studio are outlined, as well as how a classical approach to architectural design is aligned with these criteria. The brief was found in a 101-year-old issue of N.Z. Building Progress, in an architectural competition conceived and judged by Reginald Ford, the founding member of Gummer and Ford, perhaps New Zealand's most influential architectural practice. In a departure from the traditional Unitec Classical Studio, the students were required to present their final designs with CAD instead of watercolour, the opportunities and challenges of which are discussed. This article explains the design process behind the studio, how the brief was interrogated and developed, and what steps the students took to learn how to design a classical building. But more importantly, what lessons were learned from following this process, and how a sampling of classical instruction can fit into a modern architectural education.

Keywords: Architectural design studio, Classical Studio, William Gummer, Reginald Ford, architectural education, classical design

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