

Studio in the Woods diary

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Piers Taylor from [Mitchell Taylor Workshop](#) sent Footprint this report from a gloriously sunny weekend on the Isle of Wight:

Studio in the Woods doesn't really exist – it's an invisible studio. There's no institution, no one owns it, no organisation funds it, no one audits it, and it is beholden to no one. It's a group of people that have come together each year for the last five years, and each time there's never any sense that it will necessarily happen again.

Peter Clegg suggests that it is me that has brought them together, but I'd hate to think that my role is in any way different from any of the other people that take part and those who teach, visit, talk or show up, each of whom is unique and has something incredibly special to give.

Like my practice, I like to think Studio in the Woods grew out of a frustration of having taught in institutions that I felt out of synch with, places where people talked about learning outcomes above all else, and out of a joy I felt in the chaos and surprise of making quickly at 1:1. It was also, selfishly, a way of getting together many of the people I had respect for, hanging out with them for a few days and watching them do their stuff. These people were Meredith Bowles, Kate Darby, Gianni Botsford, Toby Lewis, Peter Clegg, Charley Brentnall, Ted Cullinan, and in recent years Susanne Tutsch and Barbara Kaucky or Erect Architecture, and Je Ahn and Maria Smith of Studio Weave. We've also been joined by Toby Maclean, Lena Ghotmeh, Shin Egashira, to name a few.



There's been a desire for those on the outside to try and pigeon hole what we do – as if being interested in wood and place means we're *only* interested in wood and place and as if mainly operating with lo-tech equipment during the workshop means we're somehow anti technology and anti modernity... Quite the reverse is true. In many ways Studio in the Woods is a celebration of our diversity (as individuals, as a group) as much as our similarities and I'd hate it to be limited to a predefined ethos. Much of it in any case depends on the extraordinary energy and ideas of the participants.



Peter Clegg has described how:

'Studio in the Woods reminds us of the relevance of 'making' in architectural education. In an era where students so often rely on secondary sourced material and digital delusions, it is refreshing to find the principles of observation / hypothesis / fabrication / installation / revelation built into a creative design



This year, we were in the Isle of Wight at Joseph Kohlmeir's invitation. I don't know what we'll do next year, or where we'll do it, but what I do know about Studio in the Woods is this: The power of working in a group; the fascination of seeing the diverse approaches of these different groups and tutors; the joy of the happy accident; the intensity of bringing something to a conclusion in a short space of time; the visceral thrill of materials, and of timber; the heady pleasure of working outside in summertime; watching people at the top of their game; seeing the intelligence of the students; the pleasure of being surrounded by good friends.

