

# Paris Summer School Digital Exhibit

Laidlaw Scholar: Ruotong (Aimee) Zhao | Supervisor: Dr Temenuga Trifonova

UCL Faculty of Arts & Humanities



## Project Context

- **What is the Summer School?:** The Paris Summer School: City of Light and Shadow is a four-week interdisciplinary course that combines film, literature, and creative practice with cultural immersion in Paris.
- **Why this project was needed:** This was the first year the module decided to create an online exhibition, making it necessary to design a digital framework that could showcase student projects and act as a resource for future years.
- **My role in the project:** I curated student submissions, built the Reflect blog, developed the Drupal webpage, and integrated the work of different teams to create a functioning and sustainable exhibition.

## Methodology

### Immersion in Paris

I joined the Summer School for two weeks, attending lectures, city walks, and cultural visits to experience how students were engaging with the city.

### Gathering materials and permissions

I worked with my supervisor and department manager to design a consent form, asked students for permission to share their work, and collected project descriptions and reflections in their own words.

### Curatorial writing

I wrote objective overviews of each project, ensuring that they spoke individually but also formed a coherent collection.

### Developing the Drupal webpage

I learned Drupal from scratch, gained access through the department, and created a webpage that introduced the course and linked to the exhibition.

### Building the Reflect blog

To achieve the effect I want on the webpage, I requested a site, worked with the Reflect team to set it up, and curated nine individual pages for student projects, which were then linked to the official UCL webpage.

### Collaboration and feedback

I coordinated with my supervisor, the department manager, the communications officer, and the Reflect team, integrating expertise from each group to complete the exhibition.

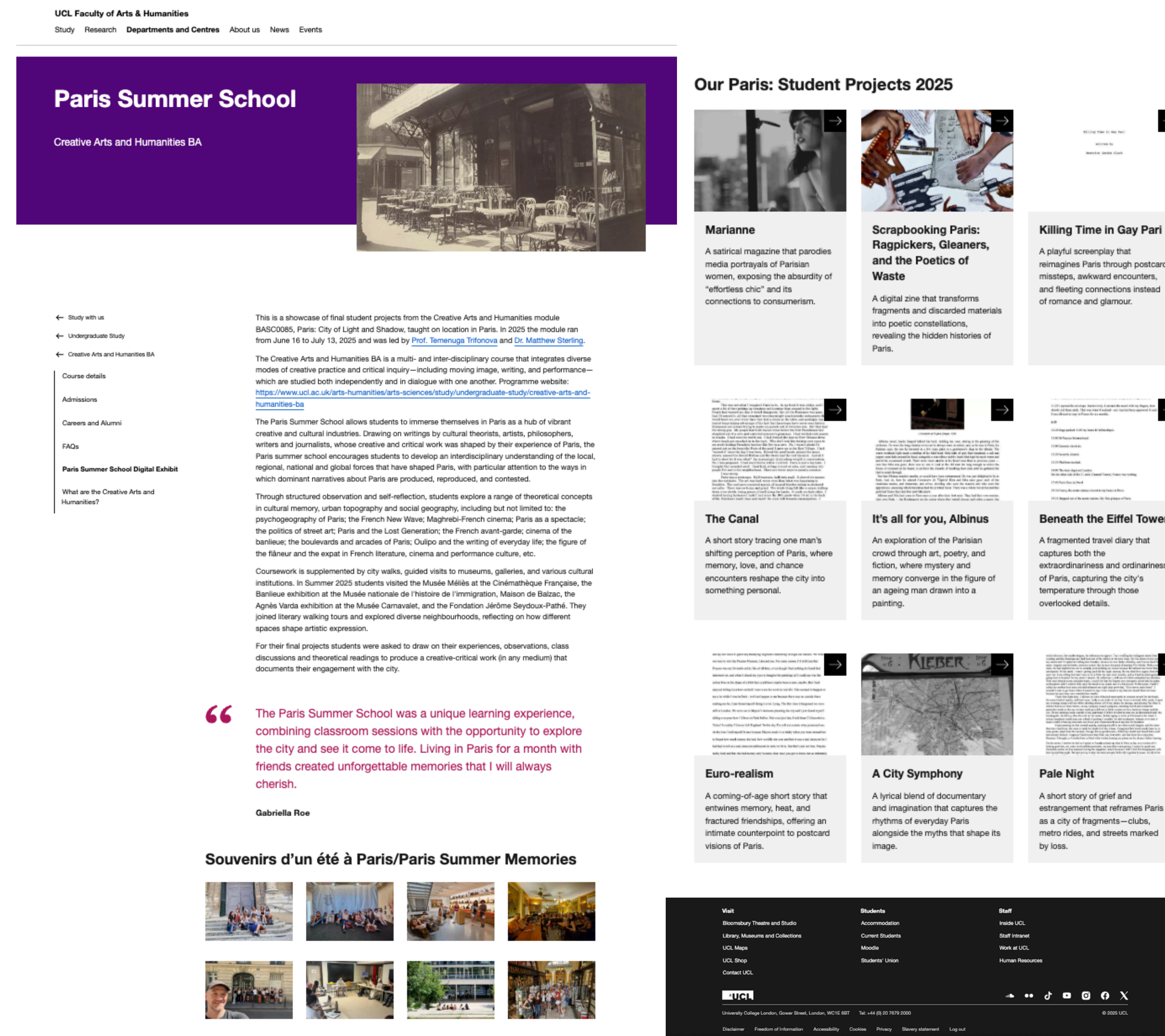


Figure 1. Official UCL Drupal webpage created for the Paris Summer School, designed as both a digital exhibition gateway and a recruitment resource.

## Outcomes & Future Directions

- **Immediate outcomes:** Nine student projects were published on the Reflect blog, each with its own curated page. A new Drupal webpage was created as a permanent departmental site linking to the blog and acting as a recruitment tool.
- **Long-term outcomes:** The project established a framework that can be reused and expanded by future cohorts, ensuring the exhibition will grow each year.
- **Future directions:** The process could be improved by collecting permissions earlier in the course, integrating Reflect content more seamlessly into Drupal, and expanding the exhibition to include multimedia such as video or interactive maps.

## Reflection & Acknowledgements

- **Professional learning:** I developed digital publishing skills in Reflect and Drupal, strengthened project management and writing abilities, and learned how to deliver under institutional constraints.
- **Personal learning:** Living in Paris deepened my appreciation of place-based learning, showing how theory and practice intersect in the city itself. I also learnt what it means to lead a project where knowledge was fragmented across different teams. Acting as the connector between academics, technical staff, and communications officers taught me how to integrate expertise, communicate across disciplines, and take responsibility for making the whole process work.
- **Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Temenuga Trifonova, the Creative Arts and Humanities Department, the Faculty's Communications and Digital Content Officer, the Reflect team, the students of the Summer School, and the Laidlaw Programme for their support and collaboration.

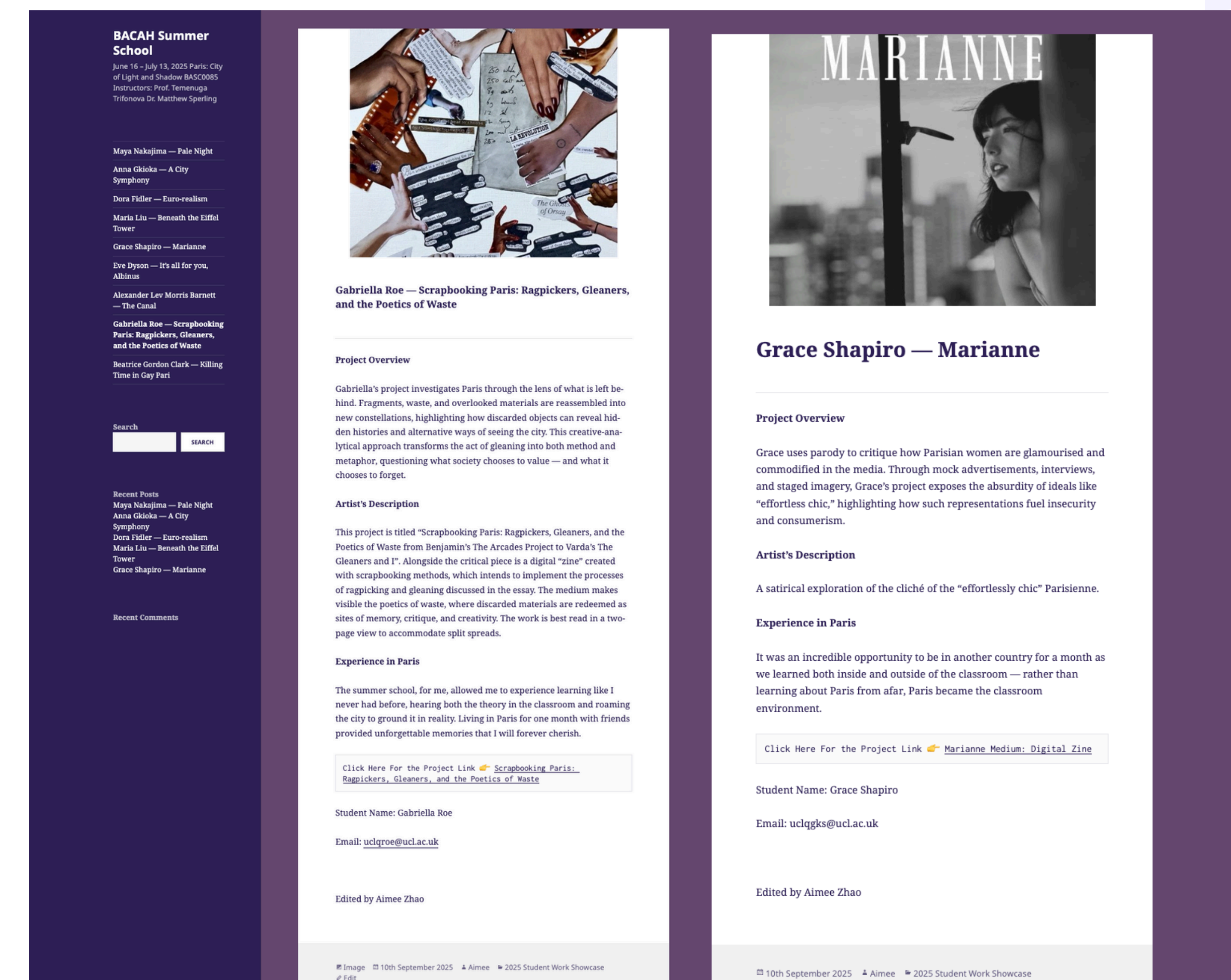


Figure 2. Reflect blog exhibition showcasing nine student projects, each with an individual page curated and written for a public audience.