Drawing, Building (teaching), Text:

Alternative Narratives & the Practice of Anna Johnson

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Anna Johnson

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Chapter 1. Introduction.

1.1 PhD Summary Statement:

This PhD is a critical examination of my practice as expressed across a 12-year period through my design, writing and teaching. Defining the mode of my practice are three distinct roles: my position as a full time lecturer & Lower Pool Design Studio Coordinator within the architecture department at the RMIT School of Architecture and Design; as an architectural critic and freelance writer with more than 10 published books and more than 100 journal articles; and thirdly, my own architectural design work. This PhD process has revealed and enabled a defining of my procedural and structural working methodologies, as well as a distillation and discussion of a set of particular recurring concerns or thematics. This catalogue captures my reflections upon my practice modes; discusses the manner of reflection undertaken across the PhD; and, via the major design project completed within the PhD, discusses seven framing architectural concerns that define my work and working methodologies. The PhD concludes with an essay that outlines a refined model for my future practice, that of a Writer Architect.

Central to this PhD and my practice has been my position as an architectural writer and the consequences for this on my other two practice modes: educator and designer. In effect, my writing – like my drawing - has generative affectual consequence for the manner in which I design and teach. And it this that drives the central discoveries and concluding statements of this PhD. The reciprocal relationship I have evolved between words and form – text and drawing – define the parameters within which architectural content (meaning, representation and form) are manifested, but also tested and resolved. The acts of observation, critique and narrative development – activities central to my written practice – also have a generative and consequential relationship for my design process, design work and also my design teaching. A central concern of this PhD, as expressed variously across this dissertation, is the consequence of my practice being located between drawing, writing and teaching, thus offering insight into what constitutes architectural criticism, as well as criticism’s generative and productive potential. The oscillations between the written word and drawing in my practice open up a new mode of criticism – evaluative on the one hand, but also generative, speculative on the other, producing architectural content as well as critique. The intent is to curate a spatiality between the object and the viewer (the reader) through writing. This can take different modes and voices, precipitating differing relationships between building and reader. By engaging narrative form and allegory, the potential is that architectural criticism alters the way in which the building and its qualities are revealed, enabling a more immersive qualitative review. Certain
qualitative experiences and conceptual resonances are foregrounded, unlike the traditional ‘third person once removed’ critique. And this generative exchange between text and drawing, text and architectural outcome, underpins this PhD. This exchange also defines my position of Writer Architect – a term I will expand on below and also discuss in relation to relevant practitioners who form my community of practice.

As central modes of my practice, drawing and writing, and the generative particularities of each, are expanded upon within this PhD. Whilst their exchange is important, I will discuss the lexicon and specificities of each. Along with establishing a future mode of practice, and reflecting upon particular methodologies of operating (design, teaching and writing), I have distilled a set of concerns that have been explored across my writing, teaching and design work. These concern the relationship between architectural process, writing and architecture, architectural narratives and form (what I have termed ‘gesture’), and finally Australian vernaculars and contextual engagement.

1.2 The Mode of Investigation and Reflection: The mapping process: Three Scrolls and Three Voices.

The primary mode for the critical reflection of my work has been through a process I call the Scroll Mappings. The Scroll Mappings include three iterations, which account for the three different roles of my practice and operate to draw out and distil the key thematics and working methodologies. It is through this process that a final design project emerged, through which I have been able to establish and put forward in this PhD seven architectural design principles and concerns from my work. These were presented to panels of peers and invited guests at the biannual research symposia, called the Practice Research Symposium (PRS).

Because of their significance as the primary mode of reflection for the PhD, the scrolls are discussed at length across their three different iterations in this dissertation. They are used to establish the central thematics and concerns of my practice, as revealed across the scrolls, culminating in the key generative relationship between writing, drawing and teaching. As evidenced throughout this dissertation, upon its conception the first iteration of the scrolls took on a life of its own. Expanding exponentially to become a live large-scale working document, the first scroll iteration established the reflective process and the differing voices of my working methodology. On it drawing, writing and reflective analysis all work together to reveal new insights and knowledge, and to prioritise thematics. For this reason, it is critical they are included in full in the exhibit and that their size, length and materiality are evident. Also critical for the exhibit will be to evidence the transition between the first iteration - three separate scrolls organised in a linear chronological manner - to the final one, in which hierarchy and order is found in a non-linear, dynamic expression, where the points of interest and
criticality are visually evidenced though clusters in one large diagram. Here image size, critical juxtapositions and alignments across the scroll address the particular thematics.

Importantly, this process revealed and made clear a critical awareness of the way in which writing is used and works across my design practice. The process established that there are three different ‘voices’ used in my writing, each with differing consequences and operative roles. Working through text, diagram and image, this Scroll process provided for the articulation of these different voices. The first voice is that of observer, the narrator who retells the contextual narrative. The second voice is characterised by a shift in vantage point from being within the content and narrative to being outside and above the content - a critic making summations, reflections and assessments. The last voice, only possible after the first two, is that of the designer, the maker who declares propositions and design interests. It is only through this process that I have been able to establish my final practice model of Writer Architect.

The three iterations of the Scroll Maps are each structured differently. The first is manifest as three separate very long scrolls (over 10 metres) ordered in a linear and chronological manner, and is critical for establishing the differences and roles. The second iteration, characterised by a departure from the chronological linearity, is ordered thematically across all three modes of my work. (It is from this second iteration that the final and major design project for this PhD emerged: The Seven Lamp project.)

The third iteration expands out again. More thorough and rigorous, it is an account of practice trajectories which then more coherently ties in my teaching work at the Abbotsford Convent – providing material and a site critical for the Seven Lamp project. It is in this final iteration that the three voices gain clarity and that their role in my practice is established.

One example of this was my shift away from a conceptually based design practice engaged in drawing and a formal and conceptual complexity (Baroque narratives, geometry and gesture). During the past 5 years, with the work I have done with previous colleague and architect Nigel Bertram, and then my book commissions, this practice became more grounded in questions of site and architectural typology (landscape, context, identity and concepts of the local). The role of authorship and design, of generative design methodologies and their testing remains important, as does form and its origin. However, my first mapping iteration revealed that form became less autonomous and more tied to context, site and issues of typology. Here, site is read as a narrative and used to establish design moves.

1.3 The Seven Lamps – Abbotsford Convent Project and declaration of Seven Design Principals.

The Seven Lamps Design project took place two thirds into the PhD process, following the first
and major extensive scroll mapping iteration. This design project was proposed as a way to
give clarity and hierarchy to material discovered from the mapping process and allowed for a
set of particular concerns (thematics) drawn from my work and considered in the context of
the PhD. Each lamp is therefore both a design move (has an visible outcome) and a declaration
of intent (a defined thematic). This project also has the role of demonstrating a central and
defining duality in the work. That is, in my practice as both a writer and designer - an idea can
simultaneously become a topic for discursive exploration and also work as a design generator:
a framework for design moves. Each lamp, expanded in the catalogue proper, is both a design
move and a thematic declaration, and can be understood as a kind of category of field of
interests.

The project is sited at the Abbotsford Convent Melbourne and is a series of seven strategic
design studies that test the identified trajectories through design moves against the context
of a historically loaded site. Importantly, this project has an extensive research background in a
design studio titled Reciprocity that I have run in various iterations, across the past four years in
collaboration with emerging architect Damien Thackray. As I will demonstrate, this site and the
set projects have therefore been a testing ground for my own evolving work and ideas.

Below, I give an introductory account of each lamp. Of note: some are broader in scale but
find particularity in examples within my work, within precedent and in their expression in the
resultant design move.

**Lamp 1: Drawing, the Emergent and the Generative: the Narrative Arc:**

This lamp addresses my investment in generative modes of drawing, writing and architectural
process as place of authorship and formation of the project narrative. Here, I reflect upon
the emergence of these drawings, the narrative they engage, its generative power and then
questions of testing and legitimacy.

**Lamp 2: Sequence and Entry: Spatial Narratives.**

This lamp addresses my investment in spatial narratives and sequencing as a way to read and
curate site and to prompt design moves. In this particular example, it is the condition of entry -
the narrative beginning - and its role across my work that is tested.

**Lamp 3: Views and Allegory, Place, Potentiality and Design**

This next lamp concerns the role of the view and the generative potentiality of observation. The
transformative effect of allegorical insertion as it affects the three spectrums of my practice is
also explored here.
Lamp 4: Gesture, Form and Embodied Narrative: The Search for a Vivid Architecture.

Addressing the question of form and its origin, this lamp concerns my critique of process, architectural authorship and resultant architectural qualities - what I term character. This investigation carries through from my very early interest in the potential gesture (in a Brechtian sense) of architecture. This is a trajectory that works through the Baroque, German expressionism – particularly the work of visionary architect Hermann Finsterlin – and more contemporary examples including local Melbourne architects Edmond & Corrigan, and Ashton Raggatt McDougall (ARM) among others. My work writing a book on artist Sidney Nolan, and Melbourne architect Allan Powell, with their more ‘crude’ or raw insertions into landscape, is also of influence in this category.

Lamp 5: Desire and Juxtaposition: A place where things come close to Touching: Architecture activated by Proximities.

The focus of this lamp is thresholds - a place of desire activated by difference and proximity. Relationships of multiple proximities and my proposition that things cannot be understood in isolation are critical. Architectural meaning and experience, therefore, is formed via relationship. Architecture occurs between conditions, between the generative and the realised, and between text and building. This concept has been pursued in my design work and writing work, and, as I demonstrate here, carries through into my teaching.

Lamp 6: (Inversions and Amplification): Reciprocity and the Sectional Narrative.

This lamp, connected to the previous one, declares an architecture that works through reciprocal relationship and via adjacencies and particularly with site conditions. It addresses my investment in architecture that curates a journey. Architecture – and indeed site – is read or understood via that journey. This lamp reflects and draws upon the relentlessness of the extended section in my work, and its role is to test site and curate visual connection to a narrative.

Lamp 7: Context and Site: Resonances and Riffs.

This lamp engages my investment with site and context, my interest in local typologies, situation and the vernacular. Of relevance here is the action of inserting a new object – design move – into a site, and how that reforges and reveals contextual relationships. Here I also address my interest in what a vernacular beyond cliché might mean in an Australian context. My Nolan research work is critical here, as are a series of articles and books concerning Australian domestic architecture and relationship to place and context.
1.4 Position of Writer Architect as model for my practice.

The PhD has provided the framework for the establishment of my practice as it now stands, as a Writer Architect. Previous to this PhD, the relationship of me being an architectural writer and author and then an architect myself was undefined in terms of the implications for my working method. How did the fact of my writing, of being an architectural critic, strategically affect my own design work? What was the effect of being a writer – placed on the other side of the design process – who critiqued buildings, drew out the architect’s intentions, processes, and influences, then retranslated into a textual account, a narrative of architectural intention? What things did I privilege? What did I foreground and draw attention to? And how was this then a testing ground for my own architectural ideas?

The PhD has revealed that it is a more fluid exchange between observations, my subsequent critique and then my own design ideas and propositions. Both of these modes of working, in a relational way, describe my practice. The space between building and writer, (also between drawing and idea) holds and generates architectural meaning. This third space - invisible, dynamic - is something much written about by architect, educator and historian Robyn Evans, and also architectural theoretician and educator, Professor Jennifer Bloomer, and frames an exchange that is formative in this practice.

1.5 Contribution to Knowledge PhD

This PhD’s contribution to knowledge is threefold. Firstly, it contributes to the culture and activity of Australian architectural review and criticism. Secondly, it contributes to the discourse of architectural drawing, generative design processes and architectural narrative (of which I see architectural drawing as a part.) And thirdly, the practice contributes via example, an alternative model for architectural practice that is concerned with speculative projects and written publications. Regarding the first contribution, and as I will expand on in more detail across this catalogue, it is both the mode of writing, which informs my own generative design material, and the themes and content of that material, which contribute to knowledge and create insight. This content specifically concerns issues including architectural language, process and authorship, architectural criticism itself, and then secondly, issues concerning architecture’s relationship to place and landscape.

The most significant contribution arises from the model of practice I have established. My practice works very productively and prodigiously across writing, drawing and teaching, where each mode effectively becomes a lens, a mechanism for reflecting on and evolving the other two practice modes. The simultaneity of my working modes enables an unusual critical reflectivity. It is this reciprocal relationship between my academic design teaching, design work and critical writing that defines the practice.
The second field of contribution concerns architectural drawing and generative design processes. Whilst the drawings themselves – the projects – make a valuable contribution in and of themselves, it is my reflection upon digital architectural processes and questions of authorship and relationships to outcome, that have been revealed to me via my own drawing and working process. The critique concerns the role of the author, the maker in architectural processes. It says that firstly, the author is no less removed from the process (as has been claimed) across these different processes, and secondly that for this practice and my teaching, the discussions of origin and authorship are not as useful, alternatively, as a forward looking critique of the thing, its qualities, what it does, and how. In this time of increased digital practices and the imperative for social and environmental sustainability, I argue for a more active, transparently acknowledged engagement of the maker in the architectural process (regardless of the process and what it may or may not produce unexpectedly) and a more direct discussion concerning the ambitions for qualities, character and the relationships that are pursued.

Concerning the third contribution, it is through my considerable publication and written work, that I have contributed knowledge broadly to issues of domestic architecture in Australia. More particularly, I have contributed knowledge concerning engagement with local context and landscape, vernaculars and architectural identities. Through my Sidney Nolan book, articles on Edmond & Corrigan, ARM and then my books including New Directions in the Australian House, and COX Architects & Planners, I argue for an engagement with place that draws on alternative mythologies, alternative histories less concerned with colonial past and imagery, 'romantic nature didactics' and more engaged with the relationships and at times, uncomfortable juxtapositions of past and present; of European avant-garde and the Australian context. This strategy of insertion speaks more to a multiplicity of history and context, and less to the singularity of the bush vernacular.

1.5 The Community of Practice

The community of practice for my Writer Architect model of practice can be identified at two scales: the global and the local. Internationally, the community of Writer Architects that I aspire to be part of, and whose practice inextricably links writing and architecture, are English critic, painter and draughtsman John Ruskin, Italian architect and theoretician Aldo Rossi, Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, English architects Alison and Peter Smithson, American architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Czech born American architect and educator John Hejduk, Constant Nieuwenhuys and the work of the Situationists, American architect Lebbeus Woods, architect, writer and educators Elizabeth Diller, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind, Dutch architect and theorist Rem Koolhaas, architects, writers and educators, Nigel Coates, and CJ Lim.
Many of these architects' written work and speculative design projects have enriched, altered and defined various architecture trajectories of the 20th century. For some of these examples, such as Ruskin, it is the fact of their practice being intrinsically linked to architectural discourse, drawing and writing that makes them important inclusions. These architects also form important precedents for my architectural narrative and the allegorical trajectories

Nigel Coates’s AD primer Narrative Architecture is one of the first publications to assemble architects contributing to the discourse of narrative and architecture. Coates gives a thorough account of the different ways in which we might conceive of narrative and architecture. For this practice narrative is an experiential phenomenon - that is, a way to understand the architectural object and its relationship to the city and contextual events; but also, narrative is a structuring device that holds and curates particular content. An examples of this is Situationist concept of the Derive. Additionally, Bernard Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts (1976-81) bring together event, motion and spatial experience of the architectural object within the city. Rem Koolhaus, by contrast, as is particularly evident in his earlier projects including the Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture 1972, proposes an orchestrating narrative overlaid onto the city that works polemically to comment on the effects of the Cold War on cities like New York, London and Moscow.

It’s important to note that the drawn work of some of the above practitioners has been critical for my practice. This includes the work of Lebbeus Woods and Daniel Libeskind. In particular, their generative and narrative forming drawings have been ongoing and important references. In addition to writing, both of these architects also invest in narrative for the genesis of their architecture, in particular, historical narrative that informs a sequenced spatial journey and the assemblage of architectural elements. Drawings and narrative also form the genesis of Hejduk’s work, with its investment in poetics, formal composition and drawing and painting. His work seeks relationship between architecture and nature, art and architecture and between disparate separated communities. CJ Lim’s interest in narrative and alternative forms of writing and representation is more explicit, and like him narrative and story for me generates design potentialities. The question ‘What if…?’ becomes a design prompt.

Locally, the practice of my supervisor Professor Leon van Schaik, with more than three decades of research and publications on spatial intelligence, the poetics of architecture and the fundamental knowledge base of architecture, as well as his Ideograms, forms an important part of my local community of practice. Additionally, the teaching and work of my colleagues Associate Professor and architect Richard Black and Professor Sand Helsel have been an ongoing influence and have been key mentors for my practice. More recently, the design studio investigations and work of my colleagues Associate Professor and architect Paul Minifie and then Gwyllim Jahn have also been an important influence.


2. In his 1956 Theory of the Derive (Paros, November 1956) reprinted in International Situationniste # 2 (Paris, December 1958) Translated by Ken Knabb, Guy Debord, Situationist Theorist, defines the derive as ‘a mode of experimental behaviors linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.’ This is an idea of a wondering, an unplanned journey through the city or urban context with the intent of discovering, encountering a new, unexpected aesthetic and spatial experience.


2.1 Overview

There are the three roles that define my practice to date: that of an architectural writer (critic), educator (full time academic at RMIT) and emerging architect (drawer/maker). Whilst the next chapter makes clear and expands upon the thematic trajectories underpinning the work, this chapter gives a contextual overview of those practice roles and a brief introduction to that context and the work produced within each. These three roles began almost simultaneously just prior to graduating and have consistently – but not coherently until the PhD - defined my working practice. Whilst some consumed more time and creative focus at certain periods, my practice has been a constant exchange and engagement with all three. It is through this PhD process that I have been able to articulate a clear and newfound clarity in the relationships and reciprocities between each mode as articulated in the concluding chapters.

I graduated from RMIT University in Architecture in 1998, but was invited to teach within the program just prior to that in 1997, into key roles that would define much of my subsequent teaching and academic concerns. While still a student, I was invited to take up a design studio assistant teaching position with Pia Ednie-Brown, herself an emerging academic in the field of architectural theory, particularly concerning emergence and digital architecture. This led on to subsequent design teaching positions, including history units and the Portfolio unit. Portfolio, a core communications unit, requires students to reflect upon their design work completed within the first 3 years of the architecture program. Following a series of fixed-term contracts, and my appointment as the school’s International Student Academic Support Coordinator, I secured a tenured position as a full time Lecturer in the Architecture Department in 2006.

2.2 The Writer: Architectural Critic and Freelance Architectural Author

My first defining role is that of writer and architectural critic. A series of academic essays completed at university, including one in final year titled Traverse, led to me to being awarded the Harold Desbrowe Annear Award for essay writing in 1997. This and the quantity and quality of writing completed in my architectural degree led to several writing commissions through Martyn Hook – then architect, RMIT architectural lecturer and importantly, the Melbourne editor of Monument magazine. Following a review of digital practitioner, designer and architect Tom Kovac’s AD Monograph Volume 50 (1999) and several house reviews that were well received, my first major commission was to review ARM’s National Museum of Australia in
Canberra (2000). This was a significant invitation for several reasons. Importantly, for reasons I outline below, it allowed me to attempt a direct and transparent discussion of architectural language, architectural process and the origins of form.

This invitation occurred at a time when I was developing a critique of process-driven architecture and what I saw as the misuse of contemporary architectural theory. Very popular at the time, this set of ideas drew on philosophy, and in particular the work of French theorists Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Both streams, I felt, had a complex relationship with the genesis of architectural outcome and the way in which architects and theorists discussed the origins of architectural form and language. In many cases, an alleged direct relationship to either a theoretical position or a particular architectural process was made. My critique was that this material was in many cases misused, or at the very least, uncritically used, to account for a particular architectural expression.

This position regarding the use or misuse of theory was shared by several international and local academies and writers at the time, including Miriam Gusevich who, in an influential essay ‘The Architecture of Criticism: A Question of Autonomy’ writes: ‘the architect seeks to legitimate an aesthetic preference by using (or abusing), a controversial theoretical posture.’ And, the now Dean of Monash Art Design & Architecture, Professor Shane Murray discussed in his own PhD, Architecture Design and Discourse (2004) the dislocation of discourse from the execution of architecture, he says:

In the discourse surrounding architectural production over the previous twenty years it is difficult to find credible descriptions of the way in which architects actually execute their role. While the published description and analysis of exemplary buildings and the thoughts and motivations of the architects who designed them grows year by year, there is little that makes sense of how the buildings were designed.

The division was between what was claimed for the theoretical underpinnings of architecture and the building’s actual reality. I argued that a misleading and pedagogically, architecturally and critically non-productive split was occurring between the real origins of form, and the building on the one hand, and an idea of architectural meaning on the other. My issue was not with the text itself but the claims and connections made to the formal outcome. For me, it seemed that these theories were not necessarily to be understood as a way to account for form literally, but that theory-driven text was a generative source of architectural production and material. So, in this review of ARM’s National Museum of Australia Canberra I began what would be an ongoing theme in my writing and teaching. I attempted to address these problems, aiming for a clear and transparent discussion of architectural language and its lineage. (Although admittedly not without some provocation and poetics in my own writing!).
The critique of theory and its relationship to architectural form in the mid 1990s also coincided with a critique of process-generated architecture, now well documented, that included the emerging digital architecture idiom and discussions of architectural authorship. Again, the claims made for the architecture produced, concerning authorship, process and architectural meaning, I also saw as problematic. The critique of the digital from this time is also discussed comprehensively in the work of my colleague and current Deputy Dean of Architecture Vivian Mitsogianni, in her PhD thesis White noise PANORAMA: Process-Based Architectural Design. (RMIT 2009)

My critique of architectural form and its relationship to theory or process, was relevant for my own architectural design work. This work emerged very quickly and intuitively from a generative drawing process. The hand of the author (myself) was very present in this work, and it drew various agitation criticism and debate. What was the test of these drawings? Where did those lines come from? This will be discussed further on, but relevant here is to point out the convergence of these discussions and my critique of architectural discourse – the architectural profession - at the time.

The next major period of writing involved a significant review, ‘Our Critical Condition’, for Interior Review No 25 (2002). I was invited to contribute an essay discussing what I saw as the critical issues of the time. My focus in this piece was on the propensity for local journalists to publish high budget, huge residential projects that commonly did not engage the sites where they were located. Additionally, I raised the issue that these published projects rarely engaged a consideration of the house type or relationships to appropriate housing models that could respond to emerging issues of the environment, density, changing family models and affordability. The piece also questioned the role of architectural journalism at the time. I argued that no longer was a real debate or commentary about the building, or these bigger architectural issues, possible or encouraged. Reviews, often where the writer was strategically invited by architect and magazine, served to unquestioningly praise the architecture and architect without serious discussion. A growing resistance to this phenomenon was certainly present among academics and this piece gave voice to these emerging doubts and objections.

The next major writing piece was a project that would consume the next three or so years from 2001 - 2003. I was invited, via the Melbourne writing agent Helen Elliot, to write a book titled Nolan, the Man in the Mask for Duffy & Snellgrove publishers. The book would tell the story of Sidney Nolan, his life between 1938-1947 whilst in his famous relationship with John and Sunday Reed at Heide in Heidelberg, Victoria; and his painting of the Ned Kelly series. The commission has not yet resulted in a published book (predominantly for issues of litigation and controversy concerning the material I discovered), however the project altered my career
nevertheless. Several trajectories, discussed and reflected upon in more detail in subsequent chapters, broadly concerned the introduction of modernism to Australia and its impact on the Australian landscape as depicted by artists, and as engaged with by Architects. Most significantly, however, was the demands for it to be told in a narrative ‘story form’. The rich narrative material I was working with reignited my interest in narrative form itself, in myth and allegory and their potential relationships with architecture.

Following this major commission and further freelance writing assignments, in 2003 I was invited to do another series of significant writing jobs that would, in effect, consolidate my position as a freelance architectural writer. I was invited to become Monument’s Feature Writer between (2006-2008) meaning that I was only able to write for Monument during this period. However, following this and the Nolan project, I was engaged in a further series of book commissions that resulted in my working on ten books over the next eight years, five of which were sole authored and the remainder were co-authored. The first of these was New Directions in the Australian House which also led on to the next edition of that book, The Australian House, a series of major monographs on Alex Popov, Cox Architecture, WOHA Architects Singapore, and then Frank Stanisic Architects, along with a series of more than 100 key journal articles on topics including the work of Peter Corrigan, John Wardle, Mario Bellini, Roy Grounds, Wood Marsh, Denton Corker Marshall, Allan Powell, O’Connor + Houle, Kai Chen and Ashton Raggatt McDougall.

The invitation to complete the WOHA monograph was a major commission that expanded my field knowledge and research into South East Asia, in particular Singapore. I considered WOHA’s architecture in terms of formal pursuits, but also issues of the vernacular, local identity and their rethinking of high-density living and mixed-use typologies.

Two final and significant books and recent publications, that have not been discussed in detail in the context of this PhD, are one written in collaboration with Professor Leon van Schaik: Architecture & Design, BY PRACTICE, BY INVITATION, Design Practice Research AT RMIT and another in which I was the sole author of the ‘Case Study Practice Profile’ in Momentum: Contemporary Victorian Architecture 2000 to the Present.

2.3 The Drawer (Designer):

My second role is that of a designer – emerging architect. I have grouped the design work into five stages that reflect particular interests and developments. Again, this section is an overview of those stages and does not unfold my detailed reflection and critique.

The first, Generative Gestures and Desirous Doodles, includes work that was completed in my Masters of Architecture. There are several formative projects in this stage including ‘Over
The Ropes’, and ‘ACT Bridge: A viewing Machine.’ Dominated by an intense and iterative drawing process and modelling methodology, these projects took place when I first began reading architectural theory and poststructuralist theory. This period is characterised by a very productive, rapid design and drawing process, in which I produced vigorous speculative architectural propositions. The generative role of my drawing, reading and also my own written responses were not, however, undertaken in a particularly critical or controlled manner. Drawings began quite abstractly and, through a process of multiple and extensive redrawing, became more refined.

This stage marked the beginning of my investment in architectural narrative as a design inquiry and these gestural drawings were the attempt to translate that narrative and idea into spatial sequences and formal relationships. These projects explored an alternative architectural expression and one that had a civic role. Form did not follow function, and the hope was that architecture was a cultural expression that offered a dynamic, vivid expression of ideas. The details of each project will be explored more in following chapters.

My very rapid drawing process was difficult to account for in crits. What did each line mean and where did it come from? These questions and the work itself fuelled many years of thinking, but also paralleled a growing idea that process driven architecture, and the emerging digital process-generated architecture particularly, was no more or less valid or ‘correct’ as an architectural process. I speculated that the issue of authorship was simply deferred via those alternative processes, and whilst similar formal types emerged, they were somehow more legitimate because of the apparent removal of the Author.

This next stage of design projects, which I call Inflections and Desire: Intuition, Process and Authorship, begins with an important case study: ‘Dream House’. This paralleled my growing interest in narrative filled expressive architecture, including the work of Peter Corrigan, Ashton Raggatt McDougall, the Baroque, and also some emerging local digital practitioners including Paul Minifie and his thesis project the Klein Bottle. However, I was also very engaged by the writings of post structuralist theoretician Gilles Deleuze and particularly his book Li Pli, (The Fold). Working with a more knowing or deliberate drawing process in this house project, lines became walls, thresholds, surfaces and structure in a more resolved way. Transitions from inside to outside, upstairs to downstairs, drove key architecture moments across the project.

The stage, Generative Reciprocities: Text & Drawing, The Name(ing) of the Rose (object) includes two projects ‘The Nine Muses’ and the State Library Extension Project. The Nine Muses is particular significant in the context of this PhD. The process of of this project was revealed as the beginning of allegorical process and intentionally using text and writing as a mechanism to explore spatial architectural ideas. The subsequent State Library project was the first outcome.
of this process.

Field Lines: Drawing as Abstract Machine, as Narrative Maker, includes drawings and projects undertaken under the supervision of Pia Ednie-Brown at a Spatial Information and Architecture Laboratory (SIAL) Post Degree Masters course. Whilst this enrolment only lasted 18 months, my investment in the potential of my drawings themselves and the cinematic, virtual possibility of the digital architecture was important. However, the highly abstract nature of the investigation, the readings and work produced was, I felt, counter productive to the development of my work. In a slightly reactive move, I then enrolled in the Urban Architecture Laboratory (UAL) Masters with Shane Murray and Nigel Bertram.

The UAL degree - now called ‘Urban Environments’ - can be characterised as being driven by a concern for architectural and urban precedent, site and typology, including civic narratives. Working from close and direct observation, conventional architectural representation methods are employed including detailed plans, sections and axonometric projections, at a range of scales. It was because of the direct engagement with site and the city, and the particular application of drawing in detailed close observations of contextual circumstance, that I shifted my research. For the next three years (whilst having two children) I worked on UAL Masters project across three design research projects sited at Broadmeadows, Docklands Melbourne and then St Arnaud in regional Victoria. However, it should be noted that Murray left for a major academic role at Monash University six months after I began there, and after another eighteen months, Bertram also left. It was then that I changed supervisor, to Professor Leon van Schaik, to undertake this PhD. It was after leaving the UAL model and beginning my PhD with van Schaik, and discussions with colleague Richard Black, that I came to understand my previous drawing as a kind of translating device rather than solely a generative process. I now see that this was the beginning of my understanding that the drawing was and will be a mechanism for capturing, abstracting and translating qualities, including site.

Like writing, drawing has different roles, purposes and critical applications across my practice. As I state above, and as can be seen throughout this dissertation, many of my earlier drawings are generative expressions that capture particular qualitative impulses – aspects – and formal possibilities that arise from the intersection of readings, the project’s thematic, and site. Additionally however, drawing and diagramming is used as a translational device – literally a type of notation – that accounts variously for a series of conditions, including site relationships and observations, particular patterns of use, or alternatively, of character and grain. In more recent work and in my teaching, drawing is used to capture certain on site anomalies – character qualities or poetics. These are then further ‘operated on’, iteratively drawn and redrawn and given spatial and formal expression. My site analysis, a departure from more traditional modes
of site work, produces drawings that are the resultant marks of an inherently generative observational process.

I continued to invest in site and context as way to ground my own work and because I was becoming increasingly interested in issues of a relevant Australian architecture and in particular, the Australian house.

2.4 The Educator: Laboratory of Design Studio.

My last role is that of educator, and now full time academic in the Architecture Program at RMIT University. Whilst I have taught communication and history subjects, and I am the coordinator of the only history unit in the Masters of Architecture Program, Asian Architecture + Urbanism, it is the design studio teaching that is a laboratory for design research. Design studios are structured such that individual studio leaders curate, write and design the content and course program, therefore enabling a fertile place for design research. Additionally, since the beginning of 2013, I have become the Lower Pool Design Studio Coordinator for the Bachelor of Architecture and Design. This role obviously involves a much larger curatorial role, where design research and architectural education must be considered at the scale of the entire program’s vision, ambitions and intentions. In collaboration with the Program Manager, I work to ensure that studio offerings reflect those overarching program ambitions – to continue what is an adventurous, dynamic and richly diverse Architectural School.

I will next give a brief overview of the suite of my design studios. The particular agendas and direct consequences of each will be expanded upon in the following chapter. [Note: I have been the design leader in all of the following studios, but have collaborated with colleagues in most instances.] My first series of design studios, You and Mies, and House Studio 1 & 2, were taught in collaboration with architect and writer Marcus Baumgart and focused on the relationship between architecture and language – both architectural language specifically and the discourse surrounding the object. In the second set of studios, simply titled House, this discussion was focused on the house typology and issues of domesticity and site.

The next two studios, titled Poetics of Translations 1 & 2, were taught in collaboration with local architectural historian and critic Dr Karen Burns, drawing on her interest in surrealism and its possible relationship to architecture. Additionally, I explored my developing interest in narrative and architecture and concerns of architectural translation.

The following were primary references Andre Breton’s Nadja, Elizabeth Grosz’s Volatile Bodies, Martin Jay’s Downcast Eyes: The Denigration Of Vision In Twentieth Century French Thought, Berkley, University of California Press.


commissions, the next few years of design studio teaching concerned the relationship between architecture and landscape. These studios include Bundanoon and Heide 1 & 2. Important references here were Richard Haese’s Rebels and Precursors: Revolutionary Years of Australian Art, Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollack’s Inside Outside Between Architecture and Landscape, Carol Burn’s essay ‘On Site’ in Andrea Kahn’s Drawing Building Text, James Corner’s work including Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture.

Following this period of engagement with landscape, a one-off studio titled Sense and Senseability worked with generative techniques that were both analogue and digital. For this studio I collaborated with Dr Inger Mewburn, an architecture graduate particularly skilled with digital technologies. She was also an educator, at that stage doing her Masters with Pia Ednie-Brown at SIAL. We brought together my drawing skills and Mewburn’s digital prowess to create a studio that worked alternatively between the analogue and the digital. More importantly for me however, was the context of the studio sited at Newman College Melbourne University designed by architect Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin. The Griffins’ work, with its engagement in landscape and expressionism, its plasticity of form and abstracted yet saturated detailing and ornamentation, had always been important to me, and this studio provided the framework in which to explore these ideas further. We drew on Conrad Hamman’s work on the Griffin’s including his key catalogue essay for the 1988 exhibition, Walter Burley Griffin, A Re-View. Malcolm McCullough’s Abstracting Craft, the work of Preston Scott Cohen and Stan Allen, Gilles Deleuze’s The Fold and Henri Focillon’s The Life of Forms in Art.

The last series of design studios, Reciprocity, which I have been running in collaboration with architecture graduate and educator Damien Thackray since 2007, represents the most consolidated of all the studios, bringing together my interests in landscape and architecture, narrative and spatial sequencing and finally an investment in, and commitment to, exploratory modes of representation that engage both the visible and invisible character and history of site. The studio’s site is the Abbotsford Convent complex, with its collection of underutilised and abandoned buildings. Having access to these buildings also results in the student outcomes being the most ‘architectural’ and resolved. Key references for this studio were Carol Burn and Andrea Kahn’s Site Matters, Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies, James Corner’s work again was central, Franco Careri’s Walkscapes, Walking as an Aesthetic Practice, The writings of Robyn Evans and Juhani Pallasmaa were also very relevant for this studio.

In this context of Studio Research Laboratory, I also include my Major Project thesis supervisory role with final year students. I will expand on the particulars of those in the following mapping chapter. Through this PhD process, I have been able to articulate a clear and newfound clarity in the relationships and reciprocities between each mode.

This chapter gives a detailed account of the major process of reflection, the mode of inquiry, that I have undertaken throughout the PhD. I demonstrate the process of mapping each strand and identifying the particular concerns and investigations at the time, whilst tracking the trajectories that have continued throughout my practice and that remain relevant. As an overview, the scroll project is a series of reflective and critical mappings, writings and diagrams of my work, undertaken literally in a scroll format. Begun as an intuitive move to simply reflect upon and reconcile the sheer volume of work I have produced, I developed three iterations that took place across 24 months.

In this section, I will outline the significance of this process for the direction my PhD has taken, and for the particular discoveries made, including a clarification of the working methodologies across my three different practice roles. This is demonstrated by discussing seven examples from each of the three scrolls in the first iteration, a summary of the second iteration, and then a discussion of the third scroll iteration, again speaking to seven specific examples.

Additionally, this mapping process has provided the framework for the major design project for the PhD: The Seven Lamp Project. Finally, this process has also allowed me to establish and define my future practice model of Writer Architect, framing the key architectural thematics and working methodologies.

Each scroll iteration is significant, differing from the next in terms of discoveries and emphasis. The shift between each iteration – for example as a result of a PRS review – is also critical, as is their physical form. The first iteration comprises three very long scrolls, all measuring 90mm wide, and the longest 10.5 metres long, while the last scroll reconciles all three and the various trajectories and points of influence into one larger scale scroll measuring 2523mm by 3567mm.

Defining the first iteration is a linear, distinct and chronological account of the work included in the three practice roles: writer, designer and educator. Each scroll represents a particular mode, for example writing, beginning with a key first project that establishes a trajectory and continuity and then works through the material selectively with particular emphasis on key projects, moments of discovery and development. As I will demonstrate, this first iteration revealed the way in which writing, in addition to drawing, is central to all of my practice as a mode of architectural expression. Significantly, it is also an integral part of my working methodology, design process and mechanisms for review and self reflection.

This first iteration also makes clear and expresses the different roles and voices I ascribe to that
writing. As discovered, in some cases text is generative: transformative, critical or propositional; whilst in others, text is used to construct a narrative. Or alternatively, text is simply descriptive of an observation – more of a conduit for architectural meaning, the architect’s voice or intent translated. This generative and variable role of writing and critique, is formative for my practice model and follows closely ideas explored by architectural theorists including Andrea Kahn, Jennifer Bloomer and Robin Evans24.

Of importance is that this process, viewed in its entirety, establishes the three distinct ‘voices’ that find select purpose across the work. Whilst the first mapping iteration establishes that there were at least two - the narrator and the critic - it isn’t until the third iteration, and after my penultimate PRS presentation, that the most propositional, design-oriented voice emerges with clarity. The first voice, beginning the mapping process, is that of the observer, the narrator. The second voice is characterised by a shift in perspective and therefore viewpoint, from being located within the narrative to the once removed position of the critic, making summations, reflections and assessments. The last voice, only possible after the first two, is that of the maker who declares propositions and design directions. In this last voice, writing is generative and propositional.

This reciprocity between the different modes of writing is central to the future of the practice model and also finds ultimate expression at the broader scale of my practice: Writer, narrator, observer; Teacher, reflector, critic and assessor; Designer, maker of architectural content and meaning. Whilst there is inherent changeability and fluidity across the three modes of expression, the structural or defining characteristic of each has its own set of particularities.

The second iteration, in summary and by contrast, departs from the linear and chronological account of the first, alternately working across all three practice modes, drawing themes and trajectories from each. The resonances and reciprocities between each mode, between content and particular projects, are what drive this next stage. This is further resolved and expanded in the third and final scroll iteration which, along with the particular research from the Reciprocity studios, also establishes the material and thematics for the Seven Lamp Design Project.

3.1 The Scrolls: Iteration 1

Measuring 10.5 metres long and 760 mm wide, the first iteration is produced on Bulky Newspaper held together with white cloth tape. All diagrams are made with a standard Art Line 220 super fine pen. The central narrative voice is also written with same artline pen, while the reflective voice that runs in parallel and to the right of voice one, are written using a thicker black Artline pen. Blue and Red Colour Brush Pental pens are then used to circle old reflective knowledge made at the time and then new reflective knowledge made now. Red is new, blue is old.
My investment in writing began whilst at university, with several essays drawing on the work of Beatriz Colomina, Andrea Kahn, Robin Evans, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and then Gilles Deleuze and Felix Gaulttari. Broadly, some explored ideas of viewing and perception, the work of Adolf Loos, and then other more abstract ideas of deconstruction, ‘folding’ and authorship in architecture. The writings of these authors and my own essays led to an interest in the potential physicality - spatiality - of writing. I became very interested in the generative relationship possible between writing (theory and criticism) and drawing (design) and the concept that theory was generative. Robin Evans, Kahn, and as noted above, Jennifer Bloomer and Roland Barthes were key theorists informing this view.

This first essay, Traverse, the most ‘generative’ and ‘speculative’, as I term it, of all completed from this period, was written to accompany my final thesis project. This project was a design for an extension to the State Library of Victoria on Swanston Street, to hold archives, new digital media and the rare book collection. Following on from Barthes, Bloomer and Jean-Luc Nancy’s writings about desire and the nine muses, my proposition was that writing (and Knowledge) contained a certain spatiality, and like drawing, worked as a place of architectural production and the genesis of meaning.

Desire and Knowledge, an active proposition.


Coordinator: Pia Ednie-Brown.

 Traverse: To turn, to move, to bring across, to alter the position of; To pass through as a weapon, to pierce; to go to and fro over and along, to cross and recross.

Over and though, knowledge and desire are combined and expressed as a double articulation. A proximity confined within the realm of language. Inflection with curvatures reaching inversely into the epistemology of knowledge, and then doubling back in an expanse; a duration that desires to act, be, know. Proceed with the knowledge that knowledge has its history, its formation largely undiscussed. Knowledge is a holistic thing, a perspectiveless object. Knowledge is. But as knowledge is desired and pursued with a studious consistency, something happens in that space of time. Within the duration implicit in seeking and achieving knowledge, transformation occurs. The Desirer changes. And so does the knowledge.

Rigor: Severity, strictness, harshness, a cruel extremity of cold. Strict application, observance.

The cruel hard application of severity and coldness. The strict application of cool.

A note on action… We are always, however, brought back to an asymmetrical necessity to cross from the smooth to the striated, and from the striated to the smooth…Translating is not a simple act: it is not enough to substitute the space traversed for the movement. A series of rich and complex operations is necessary. It is an operation that undoubtedly consists in subjugating, over coding, metricizing smooth space, in giving it a milieu of propagation, extension, refraction, renewal, and impulse. Overcoded knowledge, categorized texts, form a library of possible translations, and mistranslations…creating a digression from decorum. The propriety of language is maintained by the institutionalised power exerted over that information. But that's not all true because each accompanying force <of the subject> that inflects itself upon the virtual space of that knowledge, affects its solidarity and shifts its form such that the knowledge includes the senew vectorial influences that manifest themselves in a series of varying alterations on overall circumference, depth, and dimension…

The entry to the library is a site of potential luxurious potency. With each small measured change in height (and therefore stature), accompanying the accent into the library, the explorer enters with the anticipation of… The proximity of rich red and cool stone confuse a little. Writhing in anticipation, sheets of text like satin exponentially increase her chance of Being, of achieving a Will to Power. The Destruction of propriety can continue with humbleness and the knowledge that creation is difficult and inherently
related to precedent. Destruction is too strong, deconstruction weighted with usage. But deconstruction is useful when visualized as continuity. Paradox.

Knowledge: The historical, cultural signification of knowledge is something holistic, grand and untouchable. And, traditionally this is reflected in the architectural institutionalisation of knowledge. The library, or university is represented as grand, often symmetrical in statue…

That edifice of knowledge is now posited as having an intense sense of carnality, physicality that makes its relation to desire fundamental. Desire here remotivates the institution and thus implies a tangible reincorporation of the subject back into knowledge. Theorist Elizabeth Grosz reinstates the body’s relation to knowledge. She states that knowledge is an activity; it is a practice and not a contemplative reflection. Knowledges are a product of a bodily drive to live and to conquer. They misrecognise themselves as interior, merely ideas, thoughts and concepts, forgetting or repressing their own corporeal genealogies and process of production. The bodily impulses and forces therefore have more significant implications for knowledges than is historically acknowledged.

Books: More books, funny things we collect, ornament, treasure, destroy, open, and close, set aside. The real bodily interaction with books carries through into the literary metaphor of the book. I am outside its containment; its fluidity, (because we all know ideas and writing are fluid.) The desire to be between the covers is titillating, but not for sexual reproduction, but rather an intellectual production and expansion that mentally traverses its interiority. Maybe I won’t understand and the promise of becoming knowledgeable, will collapse back into closure! Maybe the totality of the presence will be too confronting and I will be forced to violate the book, still even more probable my desire for knowledge will force me to frantically read and reread its content. Analysis, obsession, pace, emotion, I bend back its physicality and re-consume it. Through reading the book is destroyed, the meaning is destroyed along with the destruction of its materiality…

Writing can be displayed as both objects and knowledges. Susan Stewart

There is nothing outside the text. Derrida.

The pleasure of the text is to a high degree cultural. Unless for some perverts the sentence is a body. Roland Barthes

Diagonally: Writing is pleasure.

Diagonally again: Objects and knowledge for some perverts is a body.

Critique as creation. The action of moving about the stratification of propriety or the grounds of critique, of even the textuality of writing, incites the imagination to think of
a possible spatiality. Is it the possible virtual, or the impossible virtual that is most readily available in the text? Between the covers of the book exists a continuous shifting surface (with depth); another virtual territory. The ability to move about in foreign or imagined territories is a productive action that starts and continues with the inherently creative force of desire. It is at the level of desire that we will be able to find the answer. It is the very activity of desire and its relation to an abstract thing, or knowledge, that manifests a rich potentiality extending into the discussion of form and content. The double articulation, double expression of each implies an explicit relation. The relation of desire is an affirmation of difference and only manifests itself in creation or production.

Desire therefore has an implicit relation to meaning and knowledge. Desire in its darkness ends up illuminating meaning, and meaning is impossible without some recourse to desire. Desire actively resists classification and in doing so challenges the very systems of classification brought into play. Desire and knowledge are parallel to the extent that they are both ideal states and each have a level of utopian signification. To know all there is to know, and to achieve the object of desire are perhaps both impossibilities. It is here that another continuity is made between desire and knowledge: both desire and knowledge are otherness, unable to be fully gratified.

Desire is the power of machinic heterogenesis, the co-ordination of multiple causes, or the emergence of complexity that cannot be comprehended in terms of the organization of institutional components, nor in terms of linguistic structures and choices. Desire seeks multiplicity and knowledge. Desire seeks, is, can, and cannot. The shift is one of intellectual thought to one of productive action. Knowledge can be described as duration, an action of contraction and expansion. Duration is the contraction of successive moments of time; it is the material expression of a force as well as being a mental expectation. The expression, movement, and force is motivated by desire. And so desire and knowledge exist simultaneously as double articulation. This movement prescribes a refound importance for expression.

Expression.

Depression.

Impression.

The expression is carried in the grain of the voice, an erotic mixture of timbre and language. Its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theatre of emotion, rather what it searches for are the incidents, the language tied with flesh, a text where we hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body of the tongue, the form. It granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes; that is bliss.
Traverse:

Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

Re-examining this piece, its critical and useful function was in establishing a particular mode of writing and design exploration to which I would return. Traverse - although a little naive and bloated - began my investment in writing as a form of architectural design process. That is, the generative mode of writing became integral to my design process at this time, establishing potential spatial and conceptual inquiries I then pursued through drawing and model making.

I understand now that I was establishing an iterative process of translation. Ideas were translated and then retranslated through text and drawing, the spatiality and dynamic I discovered (and made) were also held or at least provoked via this writing. I posit here that the act of writing became spatial, and the narrative sequence of ideas and thoughts provoked through that writing generated architectural meaning and content. Important to note was that this project, despite its abstraction, also opened up writing work. I see now that at the end of this period and upon graduating, I had, in effect, established writing as a crucial part of both my design process and my practice.
A provocative building, this project resonated strongly with my interests in identity, questions of architectural process and legibility, and the beginnings of my interest in architectural narrative. And the invitation to review ARM’s National Museum of Australia was significant. It was the most prestigious review I’d been asked to write, propelling me into the thick of a debate in which, I had been on the edge, bore witness to, been inspired by, rejected by and contemplated for the previous 4 years. ARM’s presence at RMIT was considerable and their work made me reconsider my own drawings, process and indeed architecture. This firm and this building altered my architectural direction and thinking in a pervasive, resistant, slow kind of way.

ARM’s writing on architectural meaning and legibility was particularly critical. However, their formal processes I found more complicated - which to me seemed a refusal to engage the hand (at least transparently) and alternatively defer, or account for, issues of composition and form via a series of procedural operations. My issue was not with their process itself (which I enjoyed), but that somehow one couldn’t declare upfront certain qualities being pursued, which seemed to set precedent for an artificial, or simply inaccurate, portrayal of the origins of form. That is, a kind of artifice of process stood in for a series of decisions that also directly reflected the preferential formal and spatial choices of the maker: the hand of the author.

This refusal to discuss, or at least to acknowledge, these desired architectural qualities - what were really a representation of a certain Zeitgeist being pursued across process driven and digital work, began for me a decade-long exploration of the role of architectural process.
'This is an attempt at a critical architecture based at the fringe, like a prayer shawl with a long fringe hanging over the eyes of the sheepdog, yapping and returning to her vomit in the late afternoon, or like the Man from Ironbark clothing his throat and calling murder, while being irradiated by the open Xerox, copying all rights, pressed against the glass, scratching the surface…with something at the centre, something at the fringe…anyhow, this kind of sniffing, along the old desires making no bones about it, sucking no mirror. This is an analysis from a distance by which time and ideology had cooled. It is this cringe itself, which becomes for us a strategy and an operation of design…once on the fringe we are free from the burden of invention and also to the pursue the benefits of distance…something that provides a special kind of critical distance.'

Post-modern diatribe, bold, brash, even over the top? This writing is taken from ARM director Howard Raggatt’s 1992 Masters by project at RMIT University. It is from this position – extended and played out in brazen gestures tempting criticism and threatening convention – that ARM gives us the new National Museum of Australia (NMA).

Colourful, eclectic, explicitly provocative and, at times, ‘disgustingly beautiful’ this building provokes reaction.

Melbourne-based ARM began as a marginalised, avant-garde local firm who soon became known for their provocation and equally proactive buildings – Storey Hall, St Kilda Town Hall and the Howard Kornberg Clinic for example – operating on typology, teasing open architectural discourse and laying bare the problematic nature of architecture. The NMA brigs ARM to the fore – ironically with a project that demanded political engagement with Australia’s marginalised and required an interpretation of Australia’s ‘tangled’ destinies. The NMA committee wanted a building that would be anti-monumental, that would reflect Australia’s social and cultural history and present Australia as a kind of work-in-progress. This new genre of museum requires an evaluation of the institutions that traditionally house his program. What then, might be the new symbols of this typology?

Here the true irony begins. ARM argues that comprehensible architectural meaning is not possible – that is, there is no inherent meaning in architecture. The question of meaning and legibility is in itself problematic. ‘Historically’, says Raggatt, ‘people have said architecture reflects the human condition.’ While discourse is a means to an end, it isn't substance – it isn't the building. At best architecture can hope to raise for the viewer these questions of intent, meaning or symbolism. And it is this issue of language and semiotics that ARM critically engages. What is architectural language? What are the languages of our culture? How do we understand our community and to whom are we responsible? How can that knowledge be translated and made legible?

The critique of typology and high modernism has its precedence in the work of Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi (among others). Venturi, in *Complexity and Contradiction*, outlines a ‘gentle Manifesto’, an argument against the puritanical moral Language of Orthodox
Modern Architecture. The ideas remain relevant for architects such as ARM. ‘I like complexity and contradiction in architecture,’ writes Venturi, ‘an architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience. I welcome the problems and exploit the uncertainties. I aim for a vitality as well as validity...Elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure’, compromising rather than ‘clean’ distorted rather than ‘straightforward’, ambiguous rather than articulated, perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as ‘interesting.”

Venturi goes on to say that modern architects, in their attempt to break with tradition and start all over again, have idealised the primitive and the elementary at the expense of the diverse and the sophisticated. Similarly, ARM disputes the idea that there exists an ideal architectural solution and that, by default, architects can solve the programmatic of a brief and then embody that with a singular form. ‘The assumption,’ says Raggatt, ‘is that buildings have to have an ideal shape. Why can’t the architecture be an expression of that uncertainty?’ ARM’s alternative starts with a critical assemblage of signs, references and borrowings, ‘like a new text made up not of poignant or esoteric quotations with endless ibids and countless opcits, but of texts taken whole, torn-out slabs and added chapters from elsewhere, but also re-written originals and new bits in between to suit.’

These slabs are taken whole from the architectural canon, from science, and from both popular and marginalised culture. Elements are realigned and recontextualised, thus undergoing a kind of transformation. A direct operation of the original, these slips and cuts become a critique of legibility, ‘a test of proximity and resultant mongrelism, a test of pedigree, perhaps a kind of disbelief, being not completely convinced, from this distance.’ Australia’s distance from the cultural centres of Europe and America becomes another site for operation. What happens in the importation of these cultures, their theories and their objects? ARM ask, ‘how does this prefigure’ the Australian architectural response? In the NMA, Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, replicated and rendered black, becomes the West Wing of the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Similarly their Libeskind reference is another test of typology or translation. Libeskind’s Jewish Holocaust Museum – bitten and hidden away – is buried within the forms of the Gallery of First Australians. The lift is not so much an invitation to compare the NMA with the program of the Jewish Holocaust museum (as has been accused), but rather it is an intentional appropriation of a highly politicised and published architectural form. This raises the problem of signification. In his writings on semiotics and the city, Roland Barthes tells us that the city is a privileged sociological context, a structure of signs that has its relationship susceptible to linguistic analysis. The city becomes a discourse and this discourse is a language not confined to one reading. The implication is that the context and content of Libeskind’s Museum inherently becomes part of the formal quotation, intentional or not.
Signs and allegory are found everywhere in the NMA. The Boolean string, a knot, forms the first ‘diagram’ for the building, the ‘precise tangle’ of Australian History. It is also a kind of ‘naïve’ idea of axis, looping its way through the gallery spaces, leaving dispersed cuts and remnants. The main hall is the negative space of its presence; literally, what is built is the imprint of the knot, its virtual memory. But here again, ARM engages architecture’s historical relationship with mathematics and science. What is the Ideal Villa, the ideal Form? This Knot is also the Semperian Knot – an epistemological graphic for the problematic nature of knowledge.

Alternatively this space, for me, is a baroque church, slightly shifted with its biaxial nave realigned. ‘Baroque space’, Erwin Panofsky writes, is like a ‘lordy racket…unbridled movement, overwhelming richness in colour and composition, theatrical effects produced and the indiscriminate mixture of materials and techniques.’ This is ARM. A revolt against mannerism, a Baroque space intensifies emotional value through a conflict of opposite impulses. Indeed, the NMA does this while also engaging a kind of Baroque humour. ARM are intrigued by Australian wit, a humour deriving from the realisation that the world is not quite what it should be. And not to inspire humour, the Real Baroque Humorist not only excuses what they ridicule, but deeply sympathises with it, even glorifying it, in the knowledge that perfection is unattainable.

But like a Baroque Space, this main entry hall is beautiful. Evocative, sublime – spatially pleasing in the way the buildings it references are beautiful – the Sydney Opera House, Saarinen’s TWA terminal. Here the space and detailing are rich and seductive in a traditional architectural way. Lines, surface, volume and intent resonate powerfully. I admit, its beauty seduced me! Yet somehow I felt guilty responding in such a basic experiential way.

This main gallery, along with the other gallery spaces, is wrapped in an animated surface – tattooed with other languages and languages of the other. Fragments of meta-graphics, allusions to a materiality, lumps, bumps and Braille can be seen from within the Garden of Australian Dreams. A constructed decoration? Or a deconstructed pontification? Venturi and Scott Brown declare: ‘The whole building is decoration.’ The architecture is in the surface. Is this NMA surface some kind of Semperian slippage? Or a text laid out for Eternity, woven like a tapestry, only partially decipherable? ‘She’ll be right!’ If you care to translate the meaning, it’s there.

Like the Angry Penguins of the 1940s, ARM looks to the embedded histories and stories of Australia, while maintaining engagement with international culture and discourse. And the process of reading internationally becomes part of the critique. But, in all the bending, stretching, doubling, superimposing, disengaging and compressing, I wonder whether there isn’t a critical kink. Fredric Jameson argues that within post-modern culture everything’s
immediately co-opted into commodities and images. In fact, he questions the capacity for architecture to be 'critical' and argues that political content in architecture is merely allegorical. Symbolic meaning is as volatile as the arbitrariness of the sign. Architecture in itself is inert. He goes on to say that Postmodernist architecture stages itself as a kind of aesthetic populism – which may constitute a new deathlessness.

Perhaps 'deathlessness' is too strong, but ARM's NMA does stir certain critical questions. ARM are one of the only Australian architectural firms to critically engage architectural discourse, to critique the canon, and to crack open the discussion of architecture's ability to embody meaning. These are architects that challenge architecture's ability to be legible, and in doing so, whose design process explicitly deconstructs the architectural canon and cultural symbolism. And this is a good thing. Particularly at a time when architectural process has become fetishised, sometimes more than then final object. ARM's design process is certainly erudite, but is their strategy so established and identifiable that the resultant architecture, in fact, becomes predetermined?

The strategy relies on a direct assimilation of existing typology and cultural signs (or languages), the building's narrative, surface and form dependent on those precedents. Does this place restriction on what architecture can be in a post-modern world? Can architecture only hope to be a re-assemblage of existing typologies and forms? I don't believe this can be so. Surely the architectural object doesn't have to be legitimised explicitly and solely through the design process. Rossi states that typology is the analytical moment in architecture and it is readily identifiable at the level of urban artefacts. But he goes on to say that type is also an object, not necessarily resembling another, and everything is more or less vague in that type. If this is the very idea of architecture, then surely we need not resist the object so determinedly. ARM invites the viewer to speculate what this museum should have been. What then, should the NMA have been?
and the translation of ideas into form. I found ARM's process confrontational, forcing me to reconsider my own working methods, which at that stage relied considerably on my drawing facility to produce abstracted generative diagrams that inevitably determined, to a greater or lesser extent, the final outcome.

I was also drawn to ARM's explicit interest in civic narrative, and in narratives that drew on material outside architectural discourse: cultural, political and artistic. They considered questions of Australian identity, of place and architecture, and then challenged architecture's ability to render that legible. ARM's process could be almost surgically dissected and annotated, 'laid bare', and the works they produced were not obviously a product of the 'hand' of the maker. My thought at the time was that it therefore legitimated the outcome, by comparison rendering my own process overly self-referential and author driven. My (handmade) drawings at the time were complex, detailed, and abstract (but often looked like diagrams and fragments of these other processes). They were regarded, at times and by some, with suspicion. Rightly so. And so with all these things in mind, I found it very rewarding to conduct my long and intense interview with Howard Raggatt and write this article.
The Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

In essence, I used this piece to tease out what I understood as the critical issues behind ARM's work and this building. I tried to open up and make transparent the discussions about legibility, authorship, and complexity in architecture and the contemporary debate. For me, it was a way of saying: ‘This building is not simply the result of an isolated, rather rarefied architectural process, but in fact has a network of influences, theoretical frameworks, contextual and architectural precedence behind it, meaning the architecture could be discussed through a different lens’.

This piece set up a position, or role, in which I would continue - of unpacking, attempting to make transparent and legible architectural process and content. Much of my current thinking about the architectural object, its formation and process, has its origins and the beginnings of expression from this time and piece. Does the architectural object have to be legitimised explicitly and solely through the design process?’ This project marked the beginning of my ongoing interest in form – and plan form – that carried and curated narrative, architectural knowledge and intent in a sequential, strategic, and in this case, provocative way.

This period also began a more consolidated interest or inquiry into architecture's ability to construct an ambitious narrative that draws on a complexity of issues, histories and site. ARM’s strategy of abstracting, quoting, drawing on and over stories, buildings and collected histories, I found very compelling. This piece allowed for that exploration, and perhaps most importantly, to consider the fundamental questions ARM raise about architecture and its ability (or not) to carry and convey meaning or intent

From this piece, I identified these ideas of narrative and architecture that were then taken further into my own design work and teaching, as demonstrated in the next iteration. This review began an inquiry into the architectural object and its qualities as understood separate to, or at least alongside, process. For me this equates now to a search for a vivid expression that resonates and engages with place, and can be tested not by its direct connection to a particular process or to a theoretical position necessarily, but rather by a set of criteria, qualities and agendas established across the design process. Form is not predetermined, but intent and ambition is clarified through the pre-architectural narrative.
At this time of this next project invitation - to write, in an engaging and accessible style, the story of Sidney Nolan and his life between 1938–1947 - I was disillusioned with architecture, or at least with what architecture was capable of doing and meaning. Positioned a little on the edge of architecture, not employed in a traditional firm (I had just spent 6 months assisting architect Peter Zellner and then Graeme Law Architects for another 6 months). This significant invitation arose to write the story of Nolan during the turbulent times whilst he was in relationship with John and Sunday Reed and painted the Ned Kelly series. Although I was increasingly being asked to write for architectural journals and to teach within RMIT architecture school, this invitation came while I was yet to establish myself and was earning a living working also as a waitress in a small Italian restaurant in Carlton. The connections I made with academics, journalists and various writers, including Peter Craven and Helen Elliot, were invaluable in shaping the direction of my career. Several discussions with Elliot, who was looking on behalf of Michael Duffy, of Duffy & Snellgrove, for a young writer for this project, led to this commission.

Worth noting, for poetic value at least, was that at that time I felt somewhat of an outsider to my own profession. This invitation into another discipline, in which I was certainly peripheral (and green), centred on writing about the elusive Nolan and his portrayal of Ned Kelly, the ultimate iconic mythical outsider. Feeling like an outsider myself provided useful critical distance in terms of reflecting and analysing this new material. The Nolan project was very significant and career-altering in many ways, as I will outline below.

I was introduced to, and subsequently worked with, Duffy & Snellgrove’s then editor, Gail MacCallum (daughter of journalist Mungo MacCallum). Her contribution to my writing was
I am pretty sure it happened like this. A white weatherboard cottage stood out against the blackened fields of Heidelberg and the country night sky. Everything was still; only the musings and mutterings of frogs, insects and the lowing of cattle broke the quiet. A few cows and an old timber milking-shed were all that remained of a once substantial dairy farm.

Inside, cats were everywhere, lying on heaters, prowling around. Their odour filled the kitchen and mingled with the smell of paint. At the far end of the room a refectory table had been pushed hard up against the fireplace. Books, papers, materials and paintings lay around. A man had begun painting, not with oil paint but with an industrial product called Ripolin. And not onto canvas but onto a three by four sheet of masonite laid on the table. His face was distinctive, with rounded features and a high forehead. Although attractive, it wasn’t open or inviting, but was contemplative, even obdurate. This was Sidney Nolan.

A landscape and figure, unconventional and raw, rapidly evolved. The Ripolin had a slippery, glossy, consistency and a density requiring rapid application, so Nolan had to work fast. The landscape he was blocking in, a wide and desolate expanse of desert, could almost be mistaken for a tonal landscape in the Streeton tradition. But what Nolan superimposed upon it was something quite different. The form of the figure was square, black and definite. It was abstract. Primitive. Verging on child art. Its incongruity with the landscape behind it was what made it so compelling. ..

During the autumn of 1940, Nolan prepared for his upcoming exhibition. He had little money, so he used slate tiles taken from the studio roof as painting surfaces and was pleased with the way their matte texture held the paint. By May, over two hundred pictures were ready to exhibit. Included were abstract paintings, drawings, the new tile pieces and montages made from reproductions of 18th Century engravings.

In the style of a French Salon, old fabric remnants, material discards and books were strewn about the exhibition space, covering the old floorboards and pink walls. The exhibition was opened on the 11th of June by John [Reed]. Speaking to the small crowd who had braved the cold weather and rickety building to see Nolan’s work, he said: “To me it is something new, something which this individual artist – whose extreme sensitivity never ceases to astonish and thrill me – is doing, creating purely and simply out of his own unique reactions to the world he lives in.” He concluded: ‘What I would say to you,
however, is that in the last analysis it is the artist who makes the rules and the spectator who revises his accepted theories to make them confirm with those rules.¹

Amongst those present were the two art critics, George Bell and Basil Burdett. Both knew of Nolan’s work. Only a few years previously, Bell had dismissed him. But now he wrote; “He is striving, as many are overseas, at an absolutely pure art – an art in which representation of objects has no place at all. In these examples which are entirely abstract, he is seen experimenting with line, colour, mass and surface texture, significant in themselves as elements of a design discarding all extraneous association of ideas.”²

Burdett was less accommodating than Bell: “Mr. Nolan reduces his expression to such simple terms that all previous local essays in abstraction seem tentative. At times he almost abstracts himself out of existence, leaving only a snail’s trace of a hairy line upon the paper. In the end what Mr. Nolan is really after eludes me, I must confess I failed to find any key to his highly esoteric art.”³

Arthur Boyd also came to see the work. It was the first time these two painters met, and later Nolan recalled: “I remember him coming up to the exhibition in the old studio and saying he was a painter. “Not as modern as this,” he said looking around. He had leggings on I think and was very gentle indeed.”⁴

Few people visited the show and nothing was sold. And some of those who did come violently objected to Nolan’s abstractions. One person vandalized a painting, splashing green paint on the image and marking out two green eyes. The incident, reported in the papers, fuelled the ongoing argument about the supposed evils of modern art.

Soon after the exhibition, Nolan moved into another studio, at 5 Smith Street St Kilda, with a friend, John Sinclair. There he began a series of paintings, figurative and inspired by his Icare work. He began to visit the heavily pregnant Elizabeth [Patterson], but the nightlife, Luna Park and painting remained his prime concerns. Wild and seedy, St Kilda came alive at night with wartime frivolities, parades of ‘victory girls’ and drunken soldiers calling out: “Come here!”

Together Nolan and Sinclair roamed Luna Park or the bay. One night, the crash of surf in his ear, Nolan turned to face Sinclair and saw his friend’s head silhouetted against a full moon. The image struck him as both beautiful and strange. Nolan had a way of looking at things in which an exact memory of a scene was not important. Rather, it was the essence of the image that was crucial. John Olsen, interested in this method, later noted: “The idea is to look at something just long enough for it to be a stimulus to you, so that it feeds your inner life. Only a glimpse. You’re interested in the feeling provoked in you, no more than that.”⁵

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Nolan took the image of Sinclair and with a poetic economy painted Boy With The Moon or Moonboy as it was renamed. Painted yellow, a disc-like head and neck were placed on a deep blue-black background. Simplified and unrecognisable, Sinclair’s head did almost disappear into abstraction.

Moonboy and the Eternals closed the Tent were entered in the annual CAS exhibition planned for August and September 1940. George Bell had resigned and John Reed became the new secretary. The CAS continued to be a major battleground for young artists and patrons. What did modernism mean for the Australian artist? And what, now, constituted a valid painting? John continued his battle over these questions. However, the 1940 exhibition differed in two ways from the 1939 show. Firstly, many of Bell’s supporters, including Russell Drysdale, were not represented…

Despite these liberal changes, Nolan’s Boy With the Moon still managed to enrage. The painting provoked endless discussion over what was an acceptable standard of art. “Few spectators will be able to take seriously Sidney Nolan’s “Boy With the Moon”, wrote the critic Kenneth Wilkinson. Many wanted it thrown out, claiming, “It’s a fraud!” 6 Adrian Lawlor refused to exhibit alongside Nolan’s Moonboy. “My daughter of six could do better than that!” Lawlor rehung Moonboy to a less visible position. Nolan replaced it. The painting was hung and rehung several times and finally, Lawlor announced he would withdraw from the exhibition. John Reed tried to resolve the situation, took the two men aside, and Haese tells us: ‘Lawlor was reduced to a paroxysm of frustration when forced into the impossible position of having to demonstrate what was not a work of art.’7

Moonboy signified a close to Nolan’s purely abstract phrase and the painting also precipitated the rewriting of CAS principals. The new terms set out in for the exhibition catalogue stated “The Contemporary Art Society offers freedom to the Australian artist, imposes no limitations and refuses no work except that which has no aim other than representation… the paramount object of the society is the encouragement of a creative contemporary art. To do this, the Society realises it must show at all stages of experiment and discovery.”8

In 1941, Nolan moved into another studio space at 325 Russell Street. It was at this time that he met Max Harris. Max, four years younger than Nolan, had studied English literature and economics at Adelaide University. He had already published through the Jindyworobak Club, including a credo in the Melbourne monthly newspaper Bohemia that began: ‘Artistically I am an anarchist. I am 18.’ His first book of poems, “The Gift of Blood” was published in 1940. The enfant terrible, as he saw himself, was a passionate modernist. He had given a talk at Adelaide University titled “Surrealism, the Philistines and You”.
With sharp eyes and dark curly hair, Max was brilliant. He had founded and then edited the new Adelaide magazine, Angry Penguins. With ambitions for this publication, he wanted to bring in other radical contributors. He’d heard of John Reed and the CAS, and came to Melbourne in search of them. Max, John and Nolan shared an interest in European modernism, surrealist thinking, radical art and politics. After their first meeting, an instant rapport was formed. John was wildly impressed and told a sceptical acquaintance: “He may be egocentric and bombastic but it just so happens that if he isn’t a genius, he is certainly about as near to being one as Australia has yet produced and he is only 22.” Max returned to Adelaide and declared an alliance between the Angry Penguins and the Contemporary Art Society.

The second issue of Angry Penguins came out in 1941 and included work from Melbourne artists and writers. Nolan’s painting ‘Woman and Tree’ was reproduced and Max wrote an accompanying piece:

‘Very few sincere and interested people will deny that among Australian artists, Sidney Nolan is undoubtedly to be numbered…Trivial critics have accused this artist of impertinence, merely because their inner experience is so limited that they are completely incapable of extending their hidebound sensibility to embrace with enthusiasm the unknown message of the future which is revealed to them.’

Meanwhile, Nolan let his relationship with Elizabeth drag on. Sunday suggested that they all move out to Heide, ‘en famille’. Elizabeth refused. John and Sunday then invited Nolan to spend the Easter vacation with them on a travelling holiday to the Wyperfeld Park in northern Victoria. At this point, Elizabeth issued an ultimatum: he was to break with the Reeds. Nolan agreed, but, frustrated, decided to take his own holiday cycling through Tasmania. He returned to find that Elizabeth thought that the Reeds had ‘engineered’ his trip and were trying to fool her. She couldn’t take Nolan’s promise of reconciliation seriously. Soon after this, she received a phone call from John. She was to come to his Collins Street office. Elizabeth arrived to be told that she should leave Nolan, and that she was a hindrance to his artistic career. John concluded Nolan could never become a proper painter while Elizabeth and he were married.

Early in 1943 John persuaded Max Harris to move the base of the Angry Penguins magazine to Melbourne. John and Sunday supported him, helping him finance the publication. Max remained living in Adelaide, but the fourth edition of Angry Penguins released in February 1943 was a joint Harris and Reed publication.

Nolan was sent work to be read and commented on before publication. One article John sent, by Albert Tucker, was called Art, Myth and Society. It finally came out in the 4th issue.
of Angry Penguins. In it, Tucker described the artist as a ‘creative being’ immersed in the mythology of culture. Myth and its rendition were of first-rate importance, and he quoted Maxim Gorky: ‘Myth is invention. To invent means to extract from the sum of a given reality its cardinal idea and embody it in imagery – that is how we got realism.’ Without such a myth, ‘the progressive artist cannot achieve that integration between thinking, feeling and acting which is necessary for creative artistic action’. Whilst Nolan’s first year in the Wimmera was spent absorbing the landscape, now ideas of allegory, myth and storytelling began to intrigue him: ‘We are obviously now coming on an intense searching where the myth and possibly the actual rendering of it is going to take rather queer shapes. An old cup and saucer may provide a few clues…’

What could the relationship between painting and myth be? He speculated to Sunday: ‘I don’t know about aesthetic achievement being part of making a myth. [It] is perhaps difficult to be conscious of what the myth signifies.’ He continued his musings in a letter to John, concluding; “The acid test… is still probably one of vision and not of concepts. Vision because it exists at the furthest point, independently of oneself, [and it] is the most satisfactory means for entering myth.’

Nolan spent days and even weeks preoccupied with myth and wrote to Sunday: ‘There is the need for allegory…but the sort that Keats speaks of ‘a man's life of any worth is a continual allegory’. The rest follows from that. It is not accidental; the painters will be at one with themselves. Visual art is not dead... There is always a myth but it's not made from other myths. We will take some apocalyptic tonal world from Rembrandt …To paint like that one needs to have thought about other things than just tone. Why don’t they love his courage not his tone?’

Although Nolan had become increasingly preoccupied with mythology, he did remain strongly engaged by the landscape. It was the relationship of the two that he began contemplating. His paintings up to August 1943 portrayed his environment as “a juxtaposition of things as they really are.” But now he wondered how mythology could be brought into that interpretation. One afternoon, with those ideas in mind, he went to the lagoon and then wrote:

‘I went for a walk yesterday afternoon, thinking before I went out about aeroplanes, I could hear them outside, and how the feeling of flight was mixed up with paint…I walked out towards Horsham…there were dark and very bright green trees along the road with three boys standing in unfamiliar attitudes. I followed the bent arm of one into the sky and there in the sky was a big black kite…And further on still against this clear sky a lagoon.. in the centre of the lake three black swans. All the feeling of it - the scene- took its significance from these three black shapes in the same way as the kite.’

16. IBID
17. IBID
The black kite and swans somehow focused his vision. His perception of the landscape was altered and then sharpened by these black shapes. A few days later he told Sunday: ‘A feeling of aesthetic hiatus which does seem to be faintly around, could be worked out using a circle, a long rectangle or even a square.’

In January 1944, Nolan was transferred to Watonia Barracks, 3.6 kms from Heidi, awaiting a possible posting to the front line in New Guinea. The end of January 1944 brought to a close a significant and remarkable period of Nolan’s life. He had fulfilled Sunday’s original challenge to interpret the Australian landscape through a modernist language.

…. In January 1946, Harris and Nolan revived their debate over Ned Kelly. Was he a revolutionary, a criminal, or simply a poet in disguise? Could Kelly be transformed into a national symbol through art and literature? Max continued his psychological reading of Kelly and asked what Kelly might represent for the individual. They were not searching simply for an Australian ‘ethos’, but, as writer and painter Elwyn Lynn wrote, they were interested in the discovery and ‘relation of myths for the tradition-less Australians.’

During one of those conversations, Harris called Nolan “the outlaw”. He continued the tease: “You’re a hunted man, let’s take a walk in the Kelly country and see how it feels.” So they travelled to the towns where Ned Kelly had roamed. They caught a train heading northbound for Glenrowan and Kelly country. This region included the area of north-eastern Victoria extending from Mansfield in the south to Yarrawong in the north, and from Euroa in the south-east to Tallangalga in the north-west. Nolan knew the Australian impressionists - Streeton, Roberts, McCobbin and Charles Conder - had painted this landscape only a few years after Kelly’s death in 1880. These painters had camped in the bush for months at a time, absorbing the quality of light, air and the details of the landscape. Nolan thought that their paintings were somewhat romantic and didn’t reflect the country’s history or character.

He reread his J J Kenneally’s Inner History. On the cover, a helmeted Kelly looked out of a very thin slit in the armour. Nolan was excited at the prospect of visiting the site of the Kelly drama. And having spent so much time at the Wimmera, he was also wanted to see a different landscape. From the train window, he looked out at the countryside and imagined the black clad figure of Ned slipping through the trees. It was wild country, rugged and totally removed from the green fields of Heidelberg. Tall trees grouped together and then spread out between rocky mounds and scrubby bushes. The surrounding hills, densely covered, flattened out to clear paddocks and farming land. Max said later that Nolan had an ‘odd’ way of looking at Glenrowan. He’d taken no sketchpads, camera, or painting materials. Instead, he would look intensely at the scene or landscape. The look would be

18. IBID
quick and precise, and then he would rapidly turn away and not look back. Nolan tried to capture the innocence of the first glance. It was not a photographic vision he wanted to retain but rather the rawness, the purity of the first impression. Albert Tucker referred to this eidetic process as the “blink method”. Nolan confessed: “Memory is, I am sure, one of the main factors in my particular way of looking at things. In some ways it seems to sharpen the image in a way that cannot be achieved by direct means.”

The accounts of what happened next have become as mythologised as Ned Kelly himself. Max recalled that Nolan came back from Glenrowan and “painted the whole of first Kelly series, twelve pictures, in one night, on the kitchen table.” A romantic vision, the genius artist overcome with inspiration and miraculous powers of conception, giving birth to an entire body of work overnight. Although exaggerated, the story revealed Nolan’s sense of urgency upon returning from Glenrowan.

Back at Heide, Nolan remembered particular passages from the Royal Commission report and the Kennelley book. But he also remembered other things: scenes from the Wimmera, ‘the big black kite…pregnant, and perfect, suspended and still against the clear sky’. The landscape with ‘the green trees very bright’ and ‘the blue line of the desert, showing a complete allusion of the sea.’ That day in the Wimmera came back, its shimmering heat, the horizon, and the strange image of the black forms against the landscape. ‘All the feeling of it all came and took its significance from these… black shapes in the same ways as the kite previously.’

Having played the outlaw in Glenrowan, he came back to the home of his beloved, the site of his turmoil, and feverishly painted Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek on the kitchen table. The words of Kennelley lying nearby: “If left alive,” Kelly said, “Kennedy would be left to a slow, torturing death at the mercy of ants, flies and the packs of dingoes.” Therefore he had decided to put an end to the sufferings of the wounded Sergeant and as the latter momentarily turned his head Kelly fired and shot him through the heart.

Nolan wrote, “Matters are not separated here. They are forced right against the eye. Terror and evil so close that no one is seen as a whole; everyone is cut off in both senses of the word. Kelly is cool and natural…no compassion, the natural thing to do.”

The painting technique was raw; not concerned with perfect painterly execution. Nolan didn’t seduce with form, colour and detail, but through an expression of intensity and drama. Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek would finally become No 11 in the series, and it confirmed Nolan’s final decision to paint the whole narrative.


21. IBID


24. Nolan used Kenneally’s narrative retelling of the Kelly Drama as prompts for the each painting Kelly painting. The emotive scenes and action Kenneally describes resonate in the paintings and, for this thesis, I am particular interested in Nolan’s process of working from that textual narrative. KENNEALLY, J J., (1929) The Inner History of the Kelly Gang, Melbourne, J Roy Stevens Printer.

Nolan escaped into his Kelly narrative and on the 1st of April sketched out twelve loose studies. They were all done in pencil, watercolour and gouache on newsprint paper, and formed initial ideas for individual paintings. They were laid out like a storyboard and each captured a particular event or a scene. Like a drama that had momentarily frozen in time and space, some figures were suspended mid fall, bullets drawn individually as they passed between bodies.

The next day Nolan drew one last sketch, showing Kelly wounded and lying in front of the Glenrowan Inn. The Kelly armour is drawn like an empty carapace, a lifeless black puppet.

Nolan used what has been referred to as a ‘child-like’ technique for his painting, and his attachment to Kelly’s defiance is also strangely childlike. He had found a retreat in the Kelly story and took strength from the figures he painted. Tucker remembered being impressed by his confidence and his ability to paint in front of guests and recalled a day when Nolan lined up six 6 x 4 foot boards in a row and painted all six at the same time, laying in the colours for the foreground or sky. Was this bravado exaggerated? A valiant attempt to show the world he was confident and not trapped in some way by John and Sunday?

And certainly Nolan and Sunday continued their sexual intimacy despite their difficulties. She remained close to him emotionally and physically and watched over him while he worked.

On the 25th of April, three days after his twenty ninth birthday, Nolan completed The Death of Constable Scanlan. This painting showed an event that occurred before the action depicted in his earlier painting Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek. The chronology of the paintings does not correspond to the final order Nolan gave the works or how they are now hung in the National Gallery of Australia. The actual narrative of the Kelly story was almost overlaid after the event and the painting process came out in a more spontaneous way determined by Nolan’s own life, both past and present.

The Death of Constable Scanlan showed the fight between the police and the Kelly gang, which ended in the death of three policemen. Constable Scanlan was in the act of firing when Ned Kelly fired back; Scanlan fell from his horse, dying almost immediately. Nolan painted Kelly looking downward, black and large, unassailably confident, with his gun raised nonchalantly above his head. The dying constable was painted frozen mid fall, upside down, powerless, desperately clutching the reins of his toppling horse. The sky was muddy and dark, and the landscape a golden yellow. Nolan wrote: ‘In a sudden, violent accident, time seems to stand still. I have exaggerated the bridle, it must have been long, but that and the levitated horse and constable increase the unreality of violent events. Kelly seems to be present only as a force of destiny.”

27. KENNEALLY, J J., (1929)
In moments of acute stress, one’s sense of event is magnified, crystallized, emotions become suspended. This painting was a snap-shot of an animated and unpredictable scene. “I put all I knew into making them violent.” Nolan said later.

Over the next few months Nolan continued painting. Kelly and Horse which shows Kelly over-scaled, fearsome and completely filling the picture plane. His eyes were black dots in the slit of his amour, ominous and threatening. Another completed in July, Landscape with Windmill, showed a dark and foreboding landscape, no Kelly to be seen.

In the month of July an exhibition was organised to show the latest works of Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker and Arthur Boyd. The exhibition was held in the Rowden White Library at Melbourne University. Advertisements scrawled in chalk across the university asphalt path written by Tim Burstall read, ‘Ned Nolan!’, ‘Tramway Tucker!’ and ‘Biblical Boyd!’.

Meanwhile, Nolan, John and Sunday struggled to manage their situation. Sunday was not willing to leave John for Nolan, but she didn’t want Nolan to leave Heidi. They tried to keep their lives very private. John was remembered for his calmness and reserve. It would have been out of character for him to respond with anger or jealousy; it would have been ‘below him’ to do so. Letters written then and later, however, suggest he was deeply upset by the situation. The relationship between all three was traumatic and John suffered terribly. Artistic talent and some idea of genius were placed above all other considerations. For those reasons, and perhaps others, John tolerated the relationship.

Perhaps Nolan feared what he felt for Sunday or feared the world outside Heide where he had to justify his existence, justify the artists and poets he admired, or even his own painting. Nolan turned inward and looked for inspiration. He remembered Rimbaud and Malley, who both gave him confidence. He recalled later: “Without Ern Malley there wouldn’t have been any Ned Kelly…It made me take the risk of putting against the Australian bush an utterly stranded object.”

On the 26th of August, Nolan began a bold painting, simply called Kelly. He painted a defiant Kelly, black as if there was not other colour in the world. Astride a horse, Kelly rides off, away from the viewer and towards a distant horizon. Centered in the picture and seen from behind, he resembles a centaur: half man, half horse. The landscape shown recalled the dry, golden Wimmera, an expanse limited only by the horizon. The sky was blue and vibrant, a few white clouds shown through the empty eye slit of the armour.

This cruciform Kelly was rendered iconic and pure. The horizon line cut the picture in two and ran behind the middle of Kelly’s body. Emblematic; like Picasso’s minotaur, De Chirico’s mannequin and Giacometti’s walking man, Nolan gave Kelly a universal strength. And that helmet became the black kite of the Wimmera, the Black Square that ‘had been

29. Please note, if this project were to go ahead again I would need to go back to these letters and my notes to find some exact dates of letter and refine quotes. The project was halted at a certain moment and I have not gone back to complete certain aspects of it. Which, I think would now would include a major rewrite. REED, J & S Papers, Melbourne, State Library of Victoria
floating around in modern art for some time’.

The composition was resolute and strong, but the armour was empty. There was no person inside the black carapace; only space showed through the eye slot of his helmet. Space was something Nolan didn’t have.

Another [in the Ned Kelly series], The Encounter, no 16 in the final series, showed Kelly still at centre stage, but mounted and ready with a gun, his armour’s eye slit burning yellow. Nolan painted more yellow-bellied clouds and another dry summery landscape. A trooper stood fearfully in the bottom right hand corner. ‘Should a constable encounter one of these outlaws, he should apprehend him with maximum efficiency and devotion to duty.’

Nolan wrote: ‘Many of the policemen did not want to encounter the Kellys. Kelly was a wrathful myth in his own day and the frightened policemen got out of the way in the corner of the painting and gave Kelly centre stage…’ Strategy and pursuit; an encounter skillfully avoided. The skilled Aboriginal trackers were sometimes intentionally not used, in the hope Kelly wouldn’t be found. Kelly was afraid of the ‘blacktrackers’; they were the only ones whose knowledge of the bush matched his own.

In his next painting, The Chase, Nolan painted Kelly fantastically, magically. Still centered, Kelly’s squarish armour was painted with yellow and red stripes and no legs. Kelly held an elaborate shotgun, while galloping across another desolate landscape pursued by a trooper.

Movement, indecision and pursuit. The trooper looked fearful. The horses and figures had a strange stylised pose, animated like a Rousseauian drama. The eerie scene was frighteningly fantastic in atmosphere. The form of the horses and men in the chase resembled 15th Century images of the God Mars in his chariot. Was Nolan intuitively relating his narrative to broader mythological stories? Kelly’s identity was doubly masked in The Chase, once by the armour and again by the patterned stripes. ‘Kelly had been black but I put the stripes as though he may have played Australian rules. Events casting their shadows before them?’ The policeman goes the opposite way… wisely’.

In these last three paintings, Nolan painted the troopers, the authority figures, small and powerless.

Angry Penguins 9 was published in October, suffering ‘crippling financial losses’. Max was the only Angry Penguin with work in the magazine. The issue centered on a concept of ‘postwar disillusionment’ and the emergence of a ‘new artistic hierarchy’. The 8th Contemporary Art Society Annual Exhibition also reflected the ‘cultural malaise’ Max

31. KENNEALLY, J J., (1929)
33. KENNEALLY, J J., (1929)
lamented.  

A month passed, and Sunday planned to leave for John and Queensland. The climate at Heide changed to one of anger, destruction, and fear. Nolan began a new set of Kelly paintings; their narrative, style and tone shifted accordingly.

On the 12th of October, three days before Sunday’s birthday, Nolan painted Mrs. Rearden at Glenrowan. “I came into the yard and screamed for the police to have mercy on me. “I am only a woman; allow me to escape with my children.” The outlaws will not interfere with us…” Nolan painted a woman and child standing outside the burning wreck of the Inn, their backs glowing from the flames of the fire. The burnt timbers he painted abstractly, recalling the plane crash he saw at the Wimmera. Oddly, the stripes of the Kelly armour were now the stripes of the Inn’s still standing fireplace. The sky was deep blue and a trooper stood facing the viewer in the bottom left hand corner of the painting.

About the woman in the painting, Nolan wrote: “She thought she was trapped. There was a sort of truce, but she was fired at…. I put the silly, self-amused policeman in the corner. All is in chaos…” Who was the woman he painted? Elizabeth with their daughter, or Sunday?

The next two paintings, Burning at Glenrowan and Siege at Glenrowan, to become no 25 and no 24 respectively, showed the climax of the Kelly saga. This followed the final showdown between Ned Kelly, his gang and the policemen; and the Glenrowan Inn engulfed in flames. Ned Kelly had planned to derail the train carrying police and blacktrackers from Benalla, but the day went by and no train arrived. Police fired continually at the hotel. Mrs. Readen then ran outside with the baby thinking the police would hold their fire. But the police thought it was Dan Kelly in disguise and shot at her, a bullet going through the baby’s shawl. The fight went on, until finally the police set fire to the hotel. Distorting scale, Nolan made the policeman small and pathetic.

In the cold month of July, the Reeds took Nolan to Essendon airport in Melbourne where he boarded a plane that would take him via Sydney to Brisbane. Nolan left Heide and the Kelly’s paintings behind him and he traveled on to Fraser Island with poet Barrie Reid. The Reeds continued to support him for almost an entire year after he left Melbourne.

He travelled through the same locations that John had visited the previous year and he wrote to John, “The old and obvious desire to explore this world together, it has been lived through now, but I continually return to your time up here and realise, in yet a different way again what it must have been to have no let up in the letters coming from there.”
On the 22nd of August, he wrote

‘I do not want to hurt you that is all I know… I am aware of how desperately you are both living at Heidi but it is because of that I am now fixing my living into some directness… I want to break through that part of our living which has been inadequate. There is the need to know and see Sun out of the cycle that she has been forced into… It is just plain tragedy to say things without being them…’  

Two weeks later, still from Brisbane, he continued:

‘My thoughts had not taken me towards returning to Heide, whatever else comes or goes that has been a reality constant for me since I left. I did not know what the next step would be but I know I cannot live again next to Sun, unless to put it simply, it is next to the reasons for being born.’

38. IBID
39. IBID
considerable and highly influential for the development of an engaging, clear expression
and well-paced narrative. The intense process required for the project – the research and
interviewing of relevant people, including art historians Bernard Smith, Janine Burke, Richard
Haese and then artist Jean Langley, previous resident at Heide and friend of Nolan and the
Reeds, Michael Keon, and wife of artist Albert Tucker, Barbara, and film director and writer Tim
Burstall for the project was also significant. As was pointed out by Michael Spooner in one
of the PRS presentations, my role across my writing has also been that of an interviewer. An
interesting comment: I interviewed the architect, the student, the academics - but also, in a
more abstract way, I interviewed the site and context within design occurred.

My relationship and then friendship with Burstall (despite his staunch right wing politics, and
a certain idiosyncratic outspokenness) was also very important for his contribution to my own
interest in narrative. That is, how was I to animate facts, circumstances, historical evidence (and
later, site and architectural elements) and transform that into a robust narrative? How was I to
curate the characters, the scene and the experiences, of the particular events in the story whilst
remaining true to the historical facts? Whilst Burstall referred to these strategies required to
make the book a ‘real page turner’, I found it important conceptually, and of ongoing value for
my writing, teaching and architecture.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

Although not explicitly architectural, this Nolan project has been one of the most significant completed because it shifted how I looked at things, and then how I reframed the process of looking, the material and experience for the reader. Whilst the project required me to bring this story to life, communicating certain historical facts and giving insight into the history, the process changed the way I saw and then reviewed architecture. Indeed, the dramatic shift in the way in which I viewed architecture translated into shifts in my own design and design teaching. The fact of having to read Nolan’s paintings through the lens of his intimate life details, through what he was looking at and thinking - through his narrative - demanded that I bring that content to the fore. The material and events needed to somehow resonate on the writing’s surface. And so Nolan’s life with John and Sunday Reed, the pressing need to see Australia through a newly discovered European Modernism combined with the Ned Kelly story – itself so loaded – had to animate the text and the reading experience.

As a critic, this required a clear shift on my behalf, from the more conventional critic position of being located outside and above the object, to being within it and within the process of conception. This is a more intimate position from which to write, but one I now feel is very interesting, because the potential is that the reader can experience the work in a kind of suspended real-time way – or at least has a more proximate experiential relationship with the work. The potential is that within the space of the critique, the review collapses to being one that is experiential rather than just informative. Could the work be experienced whilst reading the review? Did the meaning – content – occur and gain form in the text and in-between the text and the object or drawing? This point I discussed with Paul Minifie following a PRS and I will elaborate on it in further chapters.

In this same line of thought is an observation about the way I wrote about inanimate objects in the Nolan book. In the tradition of anime, I explored a depiction and engagement with objects as if they have life. I now see this feeds into an important idea about object quality – gesture and architecture - that I have raised earlier and will discuss further. Situating, or charging the object with ‘life’ as a mechanism to privilege its qualities, charges the engagement with the reader/observer. This is a mechanism that aims to bring the object and reader into a more intimate engagement and collapse the third person critical distance, and therefore the distance between object and subject.

The next and also significant observation concerns narrative itself. Whilst I had been musing about narrative in different ways prior to the Nolan project, I understand now that it was the very fact of having to write the material in a narrative form, and engage with that narrative,
that sharpened my interest in narrative as a thematic concern. The narrative arc of the whole story was of course important, but at the scale of Nolan’s individual paintings, my intention was to draw out the narrative of each work and engage that material in the retelling. It reinforced an idea for the potential for narrative to be a structuring device to pursue architecturally. The ARM review had begun that trajectory and this Nolan project allowed for a test of narrative formation.

Particularly relevant, and of ongoing relevance, was the investment and interest of Nolan, the Reeds and the Angry Penguins in myth and allegory. Especially influential for me was their reflections concerning the Australian landscape and how the modern perspective – both modernism as a movement, and the cultural and political activities occurring in Europe prior to 1940s – could offer a kind of paradigm shift to understand this landscape and what occurred in it. Nolan’s discussions and musings around placing an ‘utterly foreign object’ into the landscape - one that might register with embedded myth - was also highly influential. Could a landscape be animated via its relationship to a seemingly ‘foreign’ object? This is an idea I have pursued and explored throughout subsequent design and teaching work. It also led me to the readings by Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollak:

Insertion can operate by importing something foreign into a site, or by foregrounding some quality that was already present but not apparent… …Insertion can also engage temporal aspects by exposing previous urban layers, in order to reveal continuities and disjunctions between past and present.31

This juxtaposition of somewhat roughly executed abstractions - crude but loaded objects - onto the landscape, as evident in the Ned Kelly series, and in Nolan’s earlier work, Moon Boy, I found interesting. It made me reflect on architecture from a very different viewpoint. Powell’s De Stasio Residence, Nick Murcutt’s Tathra Residence, Edmond and Corrigan’s work, Kai Chen’s Somers Residence: all unfolded in a new way for me post Nolan. An architecture of relationship – of reciprocity and contextual engagement – did not mean an imitative approach, or necessitate a particular formal vocabulary. Conversely, the act of bringing in allegory, of history and context through abstract insertions, and via a curating and new spatial sequencing to engage landscape, seemed more relevant. This was something I pursued in my teaching and design work.

This Nolan project also opened up several other trajectories, including a reflection upon the introduction of modernism to Australia, such as Russian Constructivism and the European avant-garde. Additionally, questions of modernism and the Australian landscape, the identity of the place: what were this country’s histories and mythologies? And what could this mean for making architecture in Australia?

This invitation was another significant moment in my writing career. I publically voiced a series of thoughts, reflections on the current state of architecture and criticism. The invitation followed several years of intense and regular engagement with architectural criticism and review for Australian architectural journals including Architecture Australia, Architectural Review, Houses Magazine and Monument. Typically, commissions involved very large, high budget houses. The public (and particularly students, as noted in a letter to the editor for Monument) enjoyed my reviews because I contextualised projects, the architectural language and intent through a clear discussion, including one of precedent. However, I was often personally critical of these projects for their lack of engagement with site or context and for the often-times knee-jerk formal response that made vague reference to modernist idioms and occasionally a type of tin-shack Australian vernacular.

Increasingly I found it difficult – ethically and professionally – to continually to write about this architecture that engaged thinly with context and site, and that was excessive both materially and spatially. Additionally, because these houses represented the dominant ‘type’ of architecture being written about at the time, they therefore represented what architecture was and could be for the public. Why was it that this was the type of project that was predominantly published? This question, combined with the difficulty in critically reviewing architecture in these journals, was, I felt, problematic for the architectural profession and for architecture’s acceptance and engagement with the broader public, beyond the very wealthy. What could architecture offer socially, publicly in a more generous and expansive way? Even aside from questions of sustainability, environmental, social or otherwise?
I'm sitting comfortably in the architect's big black convertible. We're off to look at his latest completed house; my task is to review it. So we start driving and he talks about his practice while I listen and look out of the car window. He tells me the house is about the manipulation of space, materials and careful detailing. “Is there a particular idea or thought about building domestic spaces, houses, for Australians that comes into it?” I ask. “Well… really it's about simplicity. Making a house that comes from materials, takes advantage of the views and adapts a colour palette taken from site.” Uh huh. Enveloped in this car, I feel a slippery sense of déjà vu. Something feels familiar. Haven't I been here before?

A while later we arrive at the project. I look around, it's another incredible site with views out to the ocean that less than a handful of people could afford. And there it is: huge, monumental, nuzzled into the landscape like some giant predatory cat waiting to pounce. The mark of the smiling architect. We walk in. I notice the first of what will be several 'framed views of the landscape'. Inside there are no people, no books, no mess, in fact no signs of life at all except for one rather elegant indoor plant. My own domestic space in mind, I remember the green vine I should trim (but somehow don't) that has crept in from the garden and curled its way through the bathroom window.

Looking into the kitchen, I see my face reflected in black granite bench tops. My fingers leave a smudgy trace on stainless steel appliances and living accessories. A moment of guilt. I notice things I should notice: the intersecting geometric wall planes, bathrooms for every bedroom, all with imported ceramic tiles and sculpted tap fittings. And then glass and more glass, capturing floor to ceiling views. I imagine those views doubly framed by the camera recording these moments that will look even better transformed into glossy images for design magazines.

The image. Architects communicate, show and make through image. And something of the anticipated final image is present in these houses; they seem designed to be photographed, flattened into the pages of publication. Roland Barthes wrote, ‘I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes; I constitute myself in the process of ‘posing’, I instantly make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.’ For Le Corbusier, the house was a camera; the house a frame for a view. ‘Click! A frame all around it. Click! The four obliques of a perspective.’ Here the house is the body, framed, caught and transformed into an image before the moment of inhabitation. But what do these houses reveal about living and building in Australia? Are they specific to Australia? Or to a class of Australians eager to demonstrate a particular type of success and financial luxury?

Or, as critic and architect Robin Boyd wrote in The Australian Ugliness, a particular degree of superior taste. Although writing in the 1960s, Boyd's critique of Australian domestic architecture still seems relevant: ‘Absurdly proud, alone in a vacuum, each new Australian
building sets out to create an isolated, competitive grain of beauty, like a roe carried on the wind, unconnected with the living bush, like a hank of seaweed drifting in tide of fashion.”

“How Australian is it?” asks critic and writer Ihab Hassan. Perhaps a problematic question given the difficulty of identity politics. Whilst a number of architects practicing in Australia engage in the questions of what and how to build in Australia, the majority of the architecturally designed houses I have reviewed do not reflect that engagement. They bear little reality to the ways the average Australian lives or to a considered idea of a sense of place.

Is this ‘non-criticality’ also a consequence of Australian architecture and design journalism? To be honest, to be critical, to engage in a discussion beyond the envelope of the building is not easy. Who will be offended? The architect, the client, the magazine publishers? What is it really possible to say? But hang on, who reads these magazines? And who are these articles written for? The architect? Other architects? Or the “academy”?

Rigorous discussion is critical for architectural debate and is a thing subject to a process of interrogation – to another process of critical discourse. In the 1988 Bicentennial issue of Transition, Tony Fry, in a piece titled “The Architecture of Criticism” stated, “criticism is in fact in a critical condition” – in a state of uncriticality.” Three years later Drawing Building Text was published, edited by Andrea Kahn. Included was a piece by Miriam Gusevich called “The Architecture of Criticism”, discussing the architectural canon. By in large, it is criticism, that determines architecture’s inclusion into the canon. “The significance and status of a building as architecture is not dependent on some pre-established set of attributes, on some essential features, but on its status as a cultural object established through critical discourse.”

Earlier this year, Arcilab 2002 led the first international symposium on architectural criticism. One conclusion from it was that criticism had to engage with practice and work towards contributing to that ‘arena’. Professor Leon van Schaik delivered a paper titled ‘Conditions and Challenges of Present-Day Criticism’, in which he commented that many architects are ‘working to aesthetic systems that have not been externalised and to which few in society are party.’ His principal of ‘criticism in action’ leads to the conclusion that ‘issues of shelter are political before they are architectural and that architecture is about a level of cultural production more subliminal and less accessible to the immediacy of the intellect than is political debate.’

And so, returning to the site of investigation, driving away from the house, I look out to the landscape: big, expansive, in many ways difficult to grasp. Artists including Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Frederick Williamson, Howard Arkley, Rosalie Gascoigne, Gorden Bennett, Rick Amor and Phillip Hunter to name a few, have engaged with Australian culture and a sense of place completely, critically, passionately, as have certain Australian
writers. But have Australian architects done this as successfully? A friend and fellow architect, Marcus Baumgart, commented that: ‘Historically it has been Australia’s painters rather than [her] architects who have better understood and engaged with the landscape, particularly in the 20th century. They have responded to that landscape with a searching, inquisitive intelligence more freed from the limitations of the ‘picturesque’ or the quaint and less prone to a mythology of the bush imagined almost exclusively from within our urban landscapes.” David Malouf has said that life in Australia in the 21st century is ‘a raft on which people have scrambled, a new float of lives in busy interaction’. Perhaps this is true, but what might that mean for the design of domestic space ethically, passionately and critically?
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

The impact of the Nolan project is evident in this piece. A more considered understanding of the landscape, how to think about it and think through it, is evident. Perhaps more significant is the shift in my writing, which occurred not only as a result of working with professional editors, and with Burstall, but also as a result of simply writing a lot more. While still not perfect, my expression is clearer, bolder and more confidently expresses my point.

However, looking back at the piece, the ongoing trajectories of my speculations and thinking about architectural journalism and criticism are strengthened. Not only is criticism generative, but it is also highly significant and critical for architectural discourse, for the architectural profession and education. My role as a critic, as a critical thinker, emerges here more strongly than at any other previous point, and this was certainly increasingly reflected in my teaching.

Secondly, however, my growing interest is evident in questions of Australian domestic architecture, the house and its potential relationship to an idea of domesticity, sustainability, but also encompassing a thoughtful engagement with context, identity and the local conditions. Certainly, this piece led to a more considered reflection about the vernacular, the local and architectural engagement with place. This found expression in the thematic of my teaching with a studio co-taught with Marcus Baumgart, ‘House Studio’ and then the Bundanon and Heide Studios.
Between November 2002 and 2006, I was invited to review three Edmond & Corrigan projects: The Niagara Galleries (completed 2002), The Victorian Arts and Play Centre (completed 2005) and the Athan House (completed 1986). During this time, I was also appointed Monument’s feature writer, working alongside editor Fleur Watson. This was a very productive and rich time for my writing career. In particular, the Corrigan pieces were very significant and gave me an opportunity to look closely at his work and his architectural thinking. This work, coming off the back of my Nolan project, would have an ongoing influence on my practice. These projects and this review would contribute to a trajectory shift and a refinement on a series of reflections and ideas that up until then, I had only tentatively explored.

Niagara Galleries, a fantastic and dynamic building, raised many issues and questions for me concerning architecture and again, its ability to convey meaning and absorb content and influences outside the issues of detailing, immediate site and architectural precedent. Corrigan’s work was the antithesis of the highly mannered, controlled digital work of the late 1990s and the early 2000s, but also to the pseudo modernist over-scaled, over-budget houses I had been reviewing. Corrigan’s work was something else again. It offered a dramatic alternative to an idea of what Australian architecture could be. Although it was similar in some aspects to the ambitious and fiery expression of ARM’s work, unlike ARM, Corrigan was simply not interested in publishing and making clear and transparent any idea of architectural process, much less a neat, easily identifiable process. I found this extremely interesting and engaging. The work was difficult, demanding a complete sensory, intellectual experience and engagement from the viewer in order to appreciate it.

Corrigan drew upon a broad source material: from local Australian low-brow culture like
Example one:

The approach to the rear of Edmond & Corrigan’s latest project, an addition to Niagara Galleries on Punt Road Richmond, brings to mind Sidney Nolan’s New Kelly series. It is particularly reminiscent of *The Chase*, where Nolan placed Kelly centre stage, mounted and armed, galloping across a desolate Australian landscape pursued by a Trooper. The outlaw’s square, abstracted armor is bold, painted with yellow and red stripes: “Kelly had been black but I put the stripes as though he may have played Australian Rules,” remarked the artist later. “The same stripes occur as the wallpaper in the burning Glenrowan Hotel. Events casting their shadow before them?”

This new Edmond & Corrigan building is equally bold and brash and just as compelling. Twisted and folded, its black and white striped body of the addition strikes out and over the existing Victorian Terrace building. Black and white, the colours of the Niagara Galleries’ business card and those of Collingwood, the AFL team supported by the client William Nuttall. But the underbelly of this form is a brilliant red, a somewhat ‘audacious’ colour for an art gallery, Corrigan comments. It’s also the colour for the galleries’ signage with ‘Art Does Matter’ printed on it.

Across the road the Melbourne cricket Grandstand rises above the landscape, a signature Melbourne building. Whilst the Niagara Galleries addition is placed defiantly into the old Victorian buildings of Richmond, none of its drama is evident from Punt Road. Only from the rear of the gallery are the theatrics and the richness of this building revealed. Peter Corrigan designed this project while Maggie Edmond ran the construction process. Together they bring art and sport together in a way that revives the site and challenges its gentrified, conservative urban context.

Nolan abstracted mythology and rendered Kelly a Malevichian black square, and then placed him against a tonal, roughly painted landscape. Making a similarly vivid expression, Corrigan juxtaposes a stretched cubic form clad with metal deck – tin shed detailing – into this urban setting. Nolan used an industrial paint called Ripolin, while Corrigan uses a similarly ‘low-brow’ material for the exterior of his building.

In these times of ‘pluralism, doubt and irony’, Niagara Galleries has the advantage. Corrigan is a somewhat elusive figure in the Australian architectural scene and this latest project adds to the mystique. The architect is complicated, erudite and brilliant, but also difficult – much like this building. ‘Architecture should be difficult,’ says Corrigan, ‘you can’t have a good piece of architecture about nothing’. Good architecture has got to be about more than just ‘compositional issues, historicism, concerns of texture, and the fetish of the detail or cocktail architecture.’ Continuing perhaps, Robert Venturie’s criticism of architecture as building beautiful.
The business of designing buildings, according to Corrigan, is and should be difficult. It should also be political. What are the politics of this building? It's brazen, it doesn't fit in; it eludes planning regulations and planning codes. But it is also an ‘assertive confident statement about selling art.’ ‘Historically,’ the architect states, ‘there has always been something covert about the selling of art. It's something that was done behind closed doors.’ And so, to use Corrigan's expression, this project is also a robust statement about art and architecture.

I distinctly remember Corrigan's design studios as a student at RMIT. He showed us material that was bold and daring in its expression, usually colourful and complex, and always resolute. Often the work had a strong moral or critical narrative drive. What then, is the moral of this story? “Bravery.” answers Corrigan – and specifically the bravery of William Nuttall, the Niagara Galleries director. A modest but highly skilled and visually perceptive man, the gallery Nuttall established is one of the most well-known galleries in Australia, representing artists such as Rick Amor, John Kelly and Noel McKenna to name a few.

Corrigan has been involved in the arts, particularly theatre, for most of his career. Yet, aside from some interior work for the National Gallery of Victoria, this addition is one of the few gallery projects he has completed. This seems remarkable, given the investment Corrigan has made in the arts and the importance he places on it as a cultural artifact. “This project is also a story, about art,” he remarks, ‘What might art mean for the community? What does art mean? What is the politics of art or architecture?’

Edmond & Corrigan's work stems from a complete involvement in the discourse of architecture and its engagement with broader cultural, social and political issues. Historically, the firm has been regarded as one of Australia's radical architectural firms, operating at the fringe, whilst proposing a revolt against convention and conventional readings of suburbia and the city. Following the trajectory of Harold Desbrowe Annear, Sir Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg, Edmond & Corrigan's work challenges the mainstream and generally accepted 20th century architectural expressions of order, reductionism, stability and the mass production of form. Their work is pluralist. Historian Conrad Hamann tells us that pluralism was a minority tradition; it looks for the ‘relationships between forms rather than the forms themselves.’

According to Corrigan, we live in ‘cautious times’; I would add oddly conservative times. ‘There is a lack of confidence in history or historical precedent in the world. What will be the outcome of late capitalism?’ he asks…In the relentless search to find ‘a few simple relationships,’ Corrigan offers a project that is optimistic and rich in its resolution. ‘Whereas the Miesian glass box solution’, Corrigan argues, ‘is an appalling simplification of complex problems; a heroic attempt to describe our life within containable limits.’
Ironically, he and other radical architects in Melbourne – like ARM – have become, at least among the student body, the producers of desirable design and fashionable architectural language.

Edmond & Corrigan's, as Hamann writes, can be credited with bringing the existing life and character of ordinary suburbs or a newly central passion to Australia's architectural culture. However, their work also provides an alternative way of building in the suburbs and the city. It is hybrid rather than articulated – a decorated Tin shed?

The work of this form is usually discussed within an Australian or American context. It is regarded as being uniquely Australian and coming from an analysis of the nation's culture. I would argue, an equally consequential trajectory can be drawn from the architectural culture of Europe at the start of last century. That is, the work of Edmond and Corrigan also has its roots in the avant-garde beginnings of 20th century modernism, particularly the so-called expressionist work taking place in Germany and the constructivists' experiments in Russia and Europe. For those Utopian or Expressionist architects, the community building was the principal element in the city, and evidence of a unity between art and the people. As with Corrigan's work, the engagement between the arts, theatre and architecture was critical. The Work Council For Art was set up in 1918 by Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, and Adolf Behne. They proposed that 'Art and the people must form an entity. Art should no longer be a luxury of the few but should be enjoyed and experienced by the masses.' The aim was an alliance of the arts under the wing of architecture. This seems relevant when I think of the delightful optimism of Corrigan's Niagara Gallery. The angles, the abstracted sculptural elements of this gallery addition recall the bold forms of Hans Scharoun, Fritz Hoger and the other expressionist architects. Similarly, the constructivists are identifiable in Corrigan's work – particularly in the daring application of colour, El Lissitzky's black, red and white. 'Beat the whites with the red wedge!'

It is the strong desire for colour and form, and the serious community and political commitment evident in Edmond & Corrigan's work that is invaluable for tackling 21st century angst and uncertainty. Their Niagara Gallery addition is without doubt, 'a real humdinger!'

Example Two: The Castle': Review of The Athan House for Classic Houses, Monument 73 June/July 2006

Athan House, Edmond & Corrigan Architects. Anna Johnson.

Edmond & Corrigan's Athan House of 1986-88 made a backdoor entry into the Australian architectural scene. Although regarded by many as one of the best houses in Australia, it was almost begrudgingly acknowledged as an important building among the architectural community. The house is included in Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Australian...
Architecture and then David Dunster’s Key Buildings of the 20th Century but, like much of this practice’s work, the project received a mixed reception within Australia. There’s no denying that in their hometown Melbourne, the work is highly regarded. Corrigan’s teaching within RMIT University, his contribution to both architecture and the theatre is recognised as remarkable, significant and passionate. Corrigan, more than any other Australian-born architect, has translated in a sophisticated manner, European culture including Russian constructivism, and German expressionism into this country. Of course Venturi is in the mix too, but the lasting impression of Edmond & Corrigan’s work is the seemingly effortless manner in which the buildings extend and develop a theatrical expressionism unique to Australia, that also responds with genuine passion, to the local, the everyday and importantly, the everyday Australian.

What is perhaps known but not discussed so much is the very particular relationship Corrigan establishes with his clients. Richard Munday in his seminal Passion in the Suburbs, (Architecture Australia February/ March 1977) identifies this in Corrigan; ‘Part of the job is to acknowledge the values of the users’ and Leon Van Schaik in his review of the Athan House in Transition 1989, notes the role these ‘characters’ have in the formation of the architectural narrative. Corrigan’s understanding of human nature and personality is profoundly astute. His ability to draw out the unique qualities of the client, their histories and their role in society, and to then emphasise and translate those particularities into form and spatial narrative is enduring. The Athan House is a poignant and arresting building, one of the reasons being the deep admiration and understanding both client and architect have for each other.

The client, Sophy Athan, (Sophy’s husband Luis recently passed away) still lives in the house, and while the children have grown up, the house resonates with vibrancy and life. Corrigan recalls his first meeting with Sophy had taken him quite by surprise. ‘I remember her charging into my office, catching me off guard saying that she knew all about Norman Day, Greg Burgess, Murcutt, Daryl Jackson …and she didn’t want any of them. And for reasons that eluded me, she had come to me... She knew a lot about architects and culture and had some firm ideas… she was a very charismatic type of individual who had the ability to make decisions and carry everybody with her. I admired those qualities and then the way in which they purchased the land, camped on it and proceeded to build a bridge over the creek, put in the access road, cleared the site and in the process, decided on where they would put their vegetable gardens and where they wanted the house.’

Sophy knew about Corrigan and particularly his engagement with theatre and the arts. She’d read an article in the Age where the journalist described Corrigan as a ‘maverick… and a larrikin’. ‘These are qualities I like,’ she says, ‘I didn’t want a conformist... My only concern was would Corrigan be interested in doing a domestic project?’ Corrigan was invited to dinner with the clients and their family, ‘They produced liqueur in a very formal
fashion’, he recalled, ‘a particular wine for soup, another one for the main course and for
desert, and then liqueurs. I had made up my mind to show some appreciation for this type
of enthusiasm so I was hoeing into everything put in front of me…and to my surprise
everyone seemed to be laughing gaily all around… There was a long discussion about what
the house should do…and I remember sitting entranced as I heard all these options about
what each particular member of the family wanted…they all had opinions… eventually I
sprang to my feet, slightly intoxicated, and said “I will build you a City of Hopes!”…there
was this silence and then a round of applause…and I sat down and thought to myself in
absolute shock, I am going to have to do it! It's like that French proverb - never marry
the girl your heart desires - I was sort of trapped in a wild promise…this city of hopes…
and in a way that's all I have been building ever since…cities of hope.’ As Corrigan points
out, the Athan house is a precursor to RMIT Building Eight, and like Building Eight; it is a
fortification, ‘a little castle, with none of the pretence of modernism’.

‘We were all individuals,’ recounts Sophie. ‘We wanted to have our own space, do our own
thing, but be together…and we talked about a whole range of things …our academic
and scholarly backgrounds, which Peter liked, our European lineage and the history of
traditions…. We wanted to make as little impact on the environment as possible, but we
also didn't want to blend in to the bush, because I don't think the Australian bush is a
blending thing…so we looked at how to integrate, interface with the bush and bring about
a European culture into this setting in a way that made a statement.’

‘We needed seven bedrooms and rather than going up, we used the slope. Peter created
levels and interests as he went… There are beautiful passages like galleries, and balconies
and decks. It recalls an old castle…an old library.’ The fortress quality is established
from the first south facing view of a ribbed brick wall. Sitting high above the driveway
with angled balconies leading to the blue-striped tower form this elevation creates
the first impression of the citadel. Once around the tower, the north elevation is an
assemblage of elements composed of a small bridge to the entry, then decks, and angled
windows and brightly painted eaves. Once inside and past the curved entryway wall, the
interior continues this labyrinth expression. Passageways lead off and up to bedrooms,
or alternatively, to living areas and studios. Window frames are painted in dusty shades
of magenta and pink, kitchen cupboards are gold, the lino used for the flooring is green
and blue, and then in the studio, bright orange. And at the apex of the house a darkly lit
staircase twists its way up to the study. ‘I have a responsibility to look after the house, it’s
historical and should be maintained and preserved for generations to come…. It is unique,
a one off. And despite what I regard as the conservative Australian context, we won at the
RAIA awards.’

The Athan House has a strong following, particularly among the younger generations of
architects and students. Given the residential lineage over the last 25 years, the house is
outside ‘the usual cast of characters and the enduring modernism’, as Corrigan says. ‘On the one hand, it’s a building that sits uneasily in the countryside and on the other, could never really be in an urban Australian environment. The paradox is of some interest given that buildings are supposed to sit in the landscape, particularly in this country and follow that whole picturesque tradition. The marginal nature of the building has some appeal to me where in this country there is not much room for the marginal and the ongoing awards process where it is a prerequisite that you have a view across water and spend nothing less than a couple of mil.’

For Sophie, Corrigan ‘has the courage to come out and say, “I understand the dynamics of how Australia works and has had to change because of the European influence”… To deny that is to be deluded. We are Europeans in Australia, not Australians becoming Aborigines…and it’s avoided because it’s not politically correct.’

The history of residential work and place-making in Australia typically includes architects like Glenn Murcutt, Richard le Plastrier, Brit Anderson, Troppo, or alternatively those architects that have pursued the modernist project in an Australian context. There is a certain approach and aesthetic that has been canonised within the profession, which largely excludes architects like Corrigan – an architect also deeply invested in the Australian context and questions of a valid architectural identity, but whose architectural expression is vibrant, startling and raw, and includes both the local and the history of European settlement as part of the debate. The Athan House is an extraordinary example of this endeavour and of architecture itself.
football; to the European avante-garde; Russian Constructivism; theatre; politics; and then, quite touchingly, the very personal narrative and personality of his clients. For me, this made for something desperately optimistic and invigorating. Unlike some of his contemporaries (including, to an extent, ARM), Corrigan took his architectural moves beyond those references. His work was therefore transformative, abstract and generative. This was also critical architecture. What he did and didn’t do with architecture offered a firm resistance – a firm critique of a particular 21st century mannerism pervading architectural thinking. The fact that it worked as a both a critique and as architecture, completely engaged and critical of local and international architectural discourse, I found deeply inspiring and exciting. The work was inventive, ambitious and demanded a serious engagement.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old KnowledgeRediscovered:

Reflecting on this period, the issue of authorship and architecture/architectural process emerges as very significant. From these Corrigan reviews, I considered questions of accountability and content as it affects and is manifest in the final architectural form. What relationships can the architecture curate? What dialogues does it establish? Is the form ambitious and vivid? Is it complex in its references, ambitious architecturally and as programmatic solution? Inherent to this concept, is the notion that the resolution and ambition of Corrigan’s ideas are equally important, if not more important, than details. Process is simply not as important as the final outcome in terms of what that object is and does. I reflected on this fact for my own teaching and work, a deeper reflection again about the test of the architecture. What qualities were the architect and students searching for? What content were they engaging? How did they do this? The question is perhaps: ‘What does the project do?’ rather than ‘Where did it come from?’

The trajectory of expressionism evident in Corrigan’s work was also influential for my work. Corrigan shifted my reading of suburban Australia and the narrative potential within it. From this period, I drew a set of formal strategies that I worked with in design and teaching. These include abstraction, juxtaposition, amplification, narrative engagement and spatial formal sequencing. As I also understand now, I also absorbed Corrigan’s almost traditional architectural investment in relationship of inside and outside, façade and interior and the thresholds between. In addition, I absorbed the narrative of interior and exterior being played off against the backdrop of inhabitation, particularly as it is expressed in both the Niagara Galleries Addition and the Athan House.

Corrigan’s Athan House was profoundly influential for me, and the opportunity to write about it was extremely interesting. I visited the project and interviewed both client and architect. And in this case, the story of the client emerges strongly in the final piece, another instance in which narrative was becoming strongly apparent in my architecture writing. In the context of the houses I had been reviewing up to that point, Corrigan’s Athan house was like breath of fresh air: exhilarating. I enjoyed the intellect, formal expressionism, provocation, and hope he brought to architecture and building in Australia. Additionally, the plan for the house was great and complex, bringing together a multitude of references and trajectories. That this building was then set against the Australian bush I find a wonderful response to site. This period reinforced for me the importance of European culture, modernism, constructivism and expression and how that might also resonate with Australia; indeed, how it suggests a different trajectory and tradition of place making and a different take on questions of identity.
This invitation, which came through Katrina and Patrick Bingham-Hall of Pesaro Publishing, was to complete a book, *New Directions in the Australian House*. I was to author all text, including an introductory essay and the 25 mini-essays corresponding to each selected project. The book, a follow-on from Phillip Goad’s *New Directions in Australian Architecture* (2001), was to select 25 residential projects that represented ‘a new direction or new directions’ in the Australian House. The book was successful, with another edition published in 2006, which I also wrote, called simply *The Australian House*. This involved some new projects and a revised essay.

The project’s significance came first and foremost from being exposed to such a great range of houses, and interviewing the architects. I visited almost all of the projects. The book was an opportunity for me to evolve my thinking about domestic architecture. I reflected upon the question of domesticity in Australia, of excess, of what vernacular might mean for Australia beyond cliché? How important was an idea of identity and contextual engagement? What was domestic for Australian culture? My ongoing interest in architectural language, its origins, and process was also a central inquiry for me in this book.

[I include the second version of the essay that was published in the second edition of this book as it includes additional material.]
Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series, painted in 1946 and 1947\(^2\), can be seen as one of the first local translations of early 20\(^{th}\) century European modernism into an Australian context. One painting, simply titled *Ned Kelly*, shows the defiant bushranger - black as if there was no other colour in the world - astride a horse, riding away from the viewer towards a remote horizon. Nolan places him solid and abstract in the centre of the painting… a centaur - half man, half horse. The dry golden landscape is an expanse limited only by the horizon. The sky is blue and vibrant, with a few white clouds showing through the empty eye slit of Kelly's armour.

At one level, this series of paintings is a simple retelling of the events that led up to the execution of Ned Kelly in 1880, a story of an outlaw clad from head to toe in metal armour. But they are also landscape paintings. Nolan painted a coarsely executed tonal landscape, depicting an unmistakable vision of Australia: a flat horizon, a bright sky and the bush. Onto that landscape Nolan placed a solid black abstraction. This dominating figure is both Ned Kelly, threatening, impenetrable, mythologised, and the pure modernist black square - half supremacist, half Picasso. The landscape is given significance through its juxtaposition with the abstraction, and this compelling image is now central to the ‘idea’ of Australia.

Although this new collection is inclusive of projects less concerned with form *per se* and more with relationship, with ameliorating environmental and social issues, nevertheless these words, written nearly three years ago, remain relevant. The image of Nolan’s modernist abstraction against the dry Australian remains potent, relevant and undoubtedly representative of a dominant preoccupation evident in the collection: architecture strongly formed and boldly placed against landscape.

Nolan’s original black square is an imported figure, and interestingly, it is also Australia’s increasing cultural diversity that is addressed by this new generation of architects. For these practitioners concerned with appropriate placemaking, the reality of Australia’s identity and her multiculturalism are important. Replacing rural typologies, sheds and blazing sunlit plains, is architecture that speaks to these issues and particularly the increasing Asian population and heritage.

And so Nolan’s’ Kelly is perhaps a prophetic image of a foreign bold geometric abstraction, pluralistic as its referents, placed against a dry, drought stricken landscape.

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2. Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly Series comprise 27 paintings completed between 1946 and 1947, of which 25 were given to the Australian National Gallery in 1977. *Ned Kelly* was painted in 1946 while Nolan lived lived with John and Sunday Reed at Heide Bulleen, Melbourne. For further information see Elwyn Lynn’s *Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly* Australian National Gallery Publication, Canberra ACT, 1985.
NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSE

First and foremost, new inclusions to this collection of Australian houses are defined by the growing awareness and implications of global warming and the essential need for new architecture and building to address this reality. Whilst sustainable placemaking has been practiced by some architecture – like Troppo – for several decades, its imperative for the discipline of architecture and building has never been as unanimous and all-consuming.

This imperative has translated into a serious investigation of technical invention and implementation of sustainability, but also a range of strategies that extend beyond the architectural envelope to the community and surrounding infrastructure. Some of these examples emerge directly from context, whilst for others, formal expression also involves the rethinking of what environmentally conscious ‘green’ architecture should look like. Here, this new form is expressive – defiant – and fits well into the thematics of the first edition of this collection.

Nevertheless, a marked emphasis upon the theme of the monumental – a return of the idea of architecture as object – continues to define many houses in this book. These houses represent an evolution of the pursuit of a local tradition principally concerned with rendering visible a dialogue preoccupied by notions of reciprocal relationships with context, which often culminates in the architectural ‘non-object’. The ‘new’ approach has other concerns: form, typically dense, plastic and often massive, is resolved and expressed as an autonomous object. And context, rather than being synthesised or embodied, is rendered distinct and separate through its juxtaposition with the monumental. This is not to deny the significance of context but rather to bring into play other ideas of relationship - new and alternative readings of context and building arise through this configuration.

Another significant revision to this edition is the prevalence of the alteration and addition project. Here too, the formal devices demonstrate expressive tectonics, but of particular interest is the informative role context and existing buildings serve for the evolution of the new structure.

In addition to the concerns of sustainability, there are two central points of origin for this direction, both with roots in the Modernist project. One - characterised by orthogonal cubic geometries, planar surfaces and pavilion hybrids - has a direct lineage to the high modernist period, from Le Corbusier to the International Style, and especially to the Californian Case Study Houses. The second category - expressionistic and experimental in form, and more regionally particular - continues a trajectory coming out of the European avant-garde of the 20th century; German expressionism and Russian constructivism through to Alvar Aalto, Jose Corderch, Hans Sharoun, Eero Saarinen and the later works of Le Corbusier.

Aside from the investment in form, materiality, boundaries, relationships of interior to
exterior, and a particular affluence, certain consistencies of approach and exploration can be seen across this collection of houses... a further series of commonalities emerge. In contrast to the plasticity of the forms - whether monumental, abstracted or expressionistic - the materiality used expresses a density and gravitas. Whether built from masonry, timber, rammed earth or concrete, the surface becomes an unadorned skin: hermetic, often impenetrable, and blatantly divergent from the commonly (and internationally) held perceptions of Australian architecture. And with the exception of a few, if masonry is not used, the cladding - whether timber, metal or copper - articulates an envelope that is subordinate to the formal geometries defining the house. Rather than offering a lightweight solution, where the inside and the outside are in a relationship of reciprocity, the interiors of these houses possess an identity often separate from that explored by the exterior.

This work emerges from a certain worldly affluence – both economically and intellectually – and the houses do not speak specifically of a regional architecture... their context is as much international as it is national. And where the dialogue does engage with local histories and context, it is strongly grounded in international precedents and dialogue.

**Sustainable architecture: the new imperative**

Sustainability and ‘green’ architecture are by no means new, however global warming as a lived reality for 21st century politics, culture and society is unprecedented. The essential need to rethink consumption, behavioural patterns and ways of life has dramatically altered architecture’s relationship to the environment. In this collection we see this expressed in several alternative directions. Most immediately and directly, all houses now accommodate basic environmental, climatic and solar requirements, and in some cases like Chindarsi’s exquisite cabinet-like Winter Cottage in South Australia, sustainability is the central preoccupation. Evident across the collection are a generation of architects seriously invested in building responsible, sustainable architecture. Peter Stutchbury, Andresen O’Gorman, James Stockwell and Elizabeth Watson Brown have well-established practices invested in the exploration of sustainable placemaking for the Australian context.

At one level - albeit superficially – these issues have led to investigations of the image, the appearance of ‘green’ architecture. What should these buildings look like, feel like? Architects like Charles Wright in Queensland and Paul Morgan in Melbourne have designed houses that are entirely environmentally responsive as well as proposing a radical rethink of the aesthetics of environmentally sensitive architecture. Both architects employed contemporary processes of architectural technology and representation that has resulted in highly figurative buildings startlingly divergent from commonly held perceptions of sustainable site specific architecture.
The term sustainability has come to have an increasingly broad and ephemeral meaning, referring to a myriad of ideologies and technologies. For some architects represented here, including Deb Fischer and Elizabeth Watson Brown, sustainability is as much about the social and the cultural potential of architecture as it is about building technologies. Formal expression and traditional notions of architectural tectonics are not central. Alternatively, what emerges is issues of reuse, of placemaking that involves careful consideration of contextual social conditions, local identity, and patterns of usage, and habits formed over time. Dwelling is not defined by the architectural envelope, but rather by a series of relationships, passages and felt experiences that the building and its system of pathway, landscape and program, orchestrates.

For architects like Iredale Pederson Hook, the idea of sustainability extends to an investigation of the suburbs and the contextual social and community network. Through forensic analysis of the suburbs and the specific adjacent conditions, a series of tools and strategies are derived for regenerating existing conditions. And whilst for Watson Brown and Fischer form is almost secondary, for IPH form and its origin is essential. Their resulting architecture, formally rich with expressive gestures and material selections, is inventive programmatically and though its reconfiguration of the existing.

Abstract monumentalism: the house and context

Architecture as a sculptural, monumental object - of both symbolic and visceral intent – has its historical antecedents in the shaping of civic space, and allied to this role was the unequivocal demarcation between the gravitas of the civic realm and the mundane domestic one. Modernism altered this. One of the key and lasting provocations of modernism was the appropriation of the elements and devices of civic monumentality across a wide and diverse range of programs – factories, workers clubs, theatres and incinerators - and, critically, the house. From the end of the 19th century and then particularly the beginning of the 20th, the modernist program found increasing expression through and identification with the private dwelling. The new and burgeoning middle class, with its affluence and its appetites, proved a persuasive and liberal partner.

There are precedents for this 'monumental' approach within the body of 20th century Australian architecture, but they are generally exceptions to the dominant trends, rather than the rule. The particular and confident assertion of monumental, abstract and frequently expressionistic houses is a more recent development. A striking aspect of many of these projects hinges on ideas of legibility and identity: many of these houses do not look like a house, or as a house might typically be read and understood. They typically present with an equally defined exterior and interior, which do not always follow as one from the other, and here the exterior performs the role of active, forceful
threshold between inside and outside in a manner which convincingly divorces the two realms. Ambiguity is common, with an external masking of the location of the entrance or even as to the exact nature of the building. This is further amplified by abstracted and sculptural qualities, which are even more divorced from the usual and reassuring signifiers of dwelling. Only the suburban context speaks directly of program. The functionalist idea that the architectonic must somehow embody program and transparently represent its function is the antithesis here. With many of these ‘new’ houses, the image that presents to the street is far removed from the extraordinary spatial and formal gymnastics that unfold within. These delights are saved for the inhabitants and their visitors: a private experience not to be claimed by surrounding onlookers. Many of the houses have unassuming, decidedly modest frontages, and whilst this is partially a result of various planning and heritage regimes, the strategy is intentional, and this ambiguity serves to heighten the sculptural and abstracted qualities of the houses. By contrast, at James Russell’s Sanctuary Place House, the exterior is rendered monumental and almost civic in its scale and materiality. In contrast to other examples this is a dominant assertion of a protective shell, a clear demarcation of architecture against landscape, that internally is then inverted to become an open, flexible and inclusive gesture.

This phenomenon is not specific to urban settings, as idyllic rural and coastal sites have become another location for such experiments. It is on these sites that this approach is most spectacular, thus challenging the assumption of an Australian architecture that must ‘touch the earth lightly’, merging as a ‘non-object’ into its context. McBride Charles Ryan’s Klein Bottle House, and Denton Corker Marshall Cape Schank House and Studio are startling examples. Abstractions floating against the coastal landscape, these houses neither recall the ubiquitous beach shack nor the adjacent ‘architectural’ houses where roofs mimic the undulations of dunes and waves. Here in essence is Sidney Nolan’s strategy of placing an abstraction onto the landscape, through which one’s attention is drawn to the particularities of the site. These houses are not alien insertions without regard for context, but their methodology and approach aspires to a different experience and sensorial response. Through dissimilarity and otherness, context becomes heightened: thrown into relief.

**Redefined Boundaries: exterior as object, interior as dwelling**

Legibility is further tested and provoked through experiments with scale or rather, scalelessness, where the object emerges from a manipulation of form and material that could exist at a range of scales, resulting from explorations not initially dependent on program. Dale Jones Evans uses the term *origami*, Charles Ryan MacBride quote the *pixel*, and Wood Marsh the *fold* in their discussions of process and origin. All terms that
imply the miniature, and incidentally, the delicate. The architecture is thus the action of rescaling – and overscaling - that original gesture. This manoeuvre is not quite that of the postmodernist artist or architect - Claes Oldenberg or Robert Venturi - as the intent is located in the potential of form itself, in the gesture rather than the symbol. More like dressmaking than pop art, this is a process of finessing the three-dimensional resolution and expression. A distinguishing feature, however, is the focus is on that gesture and not on the crafting of a highly refined object, where structure, detailing and materiality are an end in themselves.

The intent - the ‘meaning’ - has more to do with abstraction, as the object in totality relies on sensorial, experiential engagement rather than a comprehension dependent on linguistic or referential signifiers. And, in doing so, these buildings achieve a unity, a completeness of gesture. At the same time there is an obvious intellectual richness to the work and the process of form-making and planning within which the architects have engaged. The concerns of these Australian architects are deeply anchored in cultural and architectural histories and precedents, and this architectural dialogue is markedly more international in its emphasis. Even in the examples where regional concerns and preceding local architects are particularly relevant, the architecture is always cognisant of and engaged with broader architectural discussions.

**The interior: ritual and the domestic realm**

Boundaries and thresholds have been reinvested with new emphasis, and ‘interiority’ is allowed its own unique identity, a separate and alternative formal and spatial presence to that of the enclosing container. Lacking a seamless transition between inside and outside, these houses often emphasise separation and distinction. Within, whether plastic and malleable, or darkly atmospheric, the dialogue is not concerned with a ‘blurring’ between interior and exterior, but with the assertion of two distinct architectural experiences. What determines the interior - aside from airflow, sun angles and views - is a domestic narrative reinvested with ideas of ritual and layered spatial progressions. For example, in a manner reminiscent of ‘old world’ configurations, the experience of passage is not always a linear and direct one. The passage is now ritualistic and episodic, directed by movement past thresholds of entry, through and into differing domestic territories. Journey takes on a new importance, or a regained importance, engaging a mode of dwelling that shifts across a series of domestic territories and imaginative acts. This sense of passage through and into, recalls the primacy of the idea of an architecturally mediated journey from the familiar into something removed and other.

Allan Powell asserts this difference particularly clearly. The interior of the Coldstream House describes a narrative quite distinct from that of the exterior, which presents an intriguing antidote to the prevalence of the ‘view’ in much Australian architecture: where
the interior spaces are designed around the views and that view is then folded back into the
interior as a cinematic experience. Instead Powell directs the viewer inwards, and the most
powerful space in the house is a dark gallery that runs the entire length of the house.

Alternatively, Deb Fischer’s Machans Beach Cottage, through the insertion of external
circulation, creates a fluid interior both indoors and out: the domestic realm expands
to include the garden as the spatial journey moves through discrete thresholds from
streetscape to house, and from house into garden–cum–living spaces. In doing so,
the private realm and social gatherings are privileged over the ubiquitous seaside view.
Kerstin Thompson’s Ivanhoe house similarly explores the possibility of a looping internal
progression that circulates through the various domestic programs and around a central
courtyard. In the Thompson house, reference is made to both Harold Desbrowe Annear
and his Chadwick House number 2, and then Roy Grounds Hill Street House where the
passage of movement is fluid and modulated.

Sculptural expressionism: a new plasticity

‘Monumentalism’ as an idea is experienced in many of these houses, denoting a sense of
density and mass, and is liberated and animated by an expressionistic plasticity of form.
Almost without exception, this direction is characterised by non-orthogonal, non-cartesian
geometries. John Wardle’s buildings, twisting in plan, have a suppleness and muscularity
about them as if they were composed of flesh and had a bodily presence. The copper
armature of his City Hill House builds a convincing image of a gleaming, sleek physique.
His Vineyard House expresses a similar animation and formal agility, but the mass of
a rammed earth wall anchors the gesture more directly back to the landscape. Tony
Owen’s Wave House with its dominant fluid wave gesture is another clear example of this
trajectory. In an entirely different genre of project and architectural lineage, Rex Addison’s
Rowntree Street House expresses this same plasticity of form, although the moves are
preserved for the interior alone.

Another series of ‘new’ houses, and perhaps the most ambitious – Durbach Block’s
Holman House, McBride Charles Ryan’s Klein Bottle House, Wood Marsh’s Barro House,
Stutchbury & Pape Springwater House, Allan Powell’s Coldstream House and Denton
Corker Marshall’s Cape Schanck House and Studio take this exploration of expressionistic
abstraction to another level. These projects, mostly concrete constructions - with the
exception of the steel framed and metal clad Cape Schank House and Studio - display
architectonics unprecedented within Australia. Highly sculptural, abstract, and spatially
rich, they almost defy critique. These are bravura projects, imbued with a singularity
of resolution, and with an assertive autonomy that define their own field of reference.
Inspired by Spanish architect Jose Antonio Coderch’s Casa Ugalde, (1951), the plan of the
Holman House, a weaving serpentine figure stitched across a cliff edge, describes separate ‘wings’ of the building, and this curvature continues in the third dimension, pushing out and away from the site. The Barro House is a similar sculptural abstraction, and while the language is formally resolved and representative of a singular holistic idea within the terms of the project, references from Palladio’s Villa Rotunda (1566 – 1571) to Corbusier’s Villa Savoye (1928 – 1929), are woven throughout.

Such houses have been influenced by the architecture that emerged in the later years of modernism. These works were not representative of high modernism’s reductionist mantra of universality, restrictive formal palate and prescriptive social agenda: they were more regionally responsive and more experimental, both formally and structurally. Along with the Coderch’s Casa Ugalde, the later projects of Le Corbusier, including Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp (1950 – 1955), Adelberto Libera’s Casa Malaparte (1938), the work of Eero Saarinen, the geometric monumentalism and material explorations of Louis Kahn, and the development of German expressionism by Hans Scharoun - as seen in his Berlin Philharmonic Concert Hall (1956) – have been influential.

Architects who sit just outside the dominant modernist canon, such as Alvar Aalto and Rudolph Schindler, form another important reference. Although Aalto went through an early period of Functionalism - culminating in his Paimio Sanatorium (1929-33) where form followed function and ornamentation was redundant - by 1938, with his Villa Mairea, he had moved away from that orthodox modernism and into what was broadly termed Regional Modernism. Aalto’s work became increasingly engaged in the traditional architectural and materiality of Finland, in addition to his continued contact with the modernist idiom. For architects such as Durbach Bloch, and BKK, their interest in Aalto is as much to do with his fluid, relatively ‘expressionist’ forms, and in building skins that become hermetic surfaces following curved or splayed plan forms and sections, as it is to do with their regionalist agenda. Similarly Rudolph Schindler’s West Hollywood Studio/Residence (1921–1922) expressed a more particular, textural and humane architecture, which has drawn the attraction of many Australian architects. With its interior structural system of exposed timber ceiling and wall members, and rich expressive detailing, Neeson Murcutt’s Box House expresses such an affinity.

Another undeniable influence for this expressionist work – shown clearly in the work of Dale Jones Evans, Charles Ryan McBride, Wood Marsh and Tony Owen – are the theories and styles in architecture that developed and became representative of a certain zeitgeist in the 1990s. The French poststructuralist theoretician Gilles Deleuze, following hot on the heels of Jacques Derrida and the Deconstructivists, wrote The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque in 1988. The resulting movement, embraced by artists and architects alike, admittedly uneven in rigour and quality, was known as ‘Folding in Architecture’. At best the work was conceptually and formally innovative, and sculpturally beautiful, and at worst, a paper

3. The Academy Additions Book of the same title Folding in Architecture (1993) was an inspirational text for many. The result, visually at least, was a collection of buildings that adopted rather literally, Deleuze’s idea of le Pli (the Fold).
thin metaphorical translation of the verb to fold. The influence of this movement on recent Australian houses is more concerned with the architectonic language than the theoretical position of Deleuze. The resulting expressionistic folded language also finds precedence in the minimalist sculptural work of Richard Serra, the work of an European avant garde - including artist Kurt Schwitters and his Merz movement, and especially his Merz Bau, a fantastically constructed interior project (1923 – 1947) - and German expressionist Architecture from Bruno Taut to Hans Scharoun. Developing at a similar time to 'Folding in Architecture' were the experimentations with, and the rapid development of, digital technologies. This concurred with a returned interest in mathematics, geometry and more recent highly complex models of behavioural patterns. The influence of this work on architects such as Wood Marsh, Charles Ryan McBride and Ashton Raggatt McDougall is primarily about a formal exploration of this type, as digital technologies, particularly three dimensional modelling, enable the pursuit, the testing and the building of complex geometries and skins in a way that has not been previously accessible or economically viable at a domestic scale. These technologies also enable abstraction to emerge as a layered totality.

New Vernaculars: The Heavy Lightweights

Whilst the domestic architecture of Troppo and Rob Brown as seen here, represents the continuing exploration of a well known, and certainly more exported Australian Vernacular – an architecture of timber, steel and iron beautifully crafted, climatically responsive and with direct reference to rural buildings, another sophisticated evolution of timber buildings shown here represent other histories both national and international. The work of Andresen O’Gormans, Richard Kirk, Kirsten Thompson, Charles Wright, BKK and then Elizabeth Watson Brown, Donovan Hill and James Russel, variously display a series of themes, also evident in the masonry buildings, of assertive form and supple skins. One series of houses including those of BKK, Charles Wright and Kerstin Thompson, display expressive architectonics and a plasticity of form and space comparable to that found in the masonry examples. A dominant timber skin hermetically wraps form into which openings and screens are then sliced. For these projects the heroic work of Roy Grounds, and then Harold Desbrowe Annear and his Arts and Crafts inspired Chadwick Houses with their highly modulated timber clad interiors and expressive exteriors are important precedents.

Another theme represented by Andresen O’Gorman, Richard Kirk, Donovan Hill and Elizabeth Watson Brown is demonstrative of a trajectory, concerned with issues of placemaking and Australia and the very essence and qualities timber construction offers. For over three decades Andresen O’Gorman’s work has carefully explored the potential of Australian hardwood timbers. To this they bring preconceptions with harmonic rhythms and mathematical proportions refined to become an ordering device. Director

Brit Andresen's Scandinavian heritage and the influence of Alvar Aalto is also present, as well as her interest in the flexible interiors of traditional Norwegian and Japanese domestic architecture.

Along with Andresen O'Gorman, Donovan Hill and Elizabeth Watson Brown, the screen is invested with a particular focus and becomes a filter, a filigree demarcating programatic and spatial threshold conditions. Whilst this architecture asserts its presence within context through orthogonal geometries and modernist proportions, the porous and semi transparent qualities of walls – often screens – and structure renders the final object highly mobile, ephemeral and delicate.

Integral to this trajectory of timber architecture is the work of Kerry Hill, and then of mid 20th century Queensland architects Eddie H Oribin and Hayes & Scott. Oribin, a highly inventive architect who worked in far north Queensland, was responsible for a series of houses and small buildings from the 1950’s and 60s - notably his own studio in Cairns - and then later churches including St Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1961) that reflected his study of Frank Lloyd Wright and his ‘organic’ exploration of timber and stone. Influential too for the architects in this collection is Oribin's investment in and inventiveness with local materials, structure and craftsmanship. Meanwhile, the post war houses of Hayes & Scott - in particular the Jacobi House of are critical for the introduction of modern principals specifically those from the Case Study Houses, to Queensland. Hayes & Scott brought their knowledge and understanding of 20th Modernism, - or structural efficiency, rationalism, economy of means and geometric purity, for a reinvention of the traditional Queenslander.

The work of Stutchbury Pape, with its holistic engagement in sustainable placemaking in many ways epitomises this evolution of the Australian vernacular. In particular their more recent work as seen here in the Spring Water House is representative of a monumental, rather sculptural building form that encapsulates fundamental ideas of relationship to place and particularly the Australian context. Stripped of lush and expensive finishes, this house is pared back to pure ideas of shelter and speaks of essential poetic dwelling. The direction represented in Stutchbury's work, the recurring influence of monumental modernism, the direct yet inventive treatment of materiality and the commitment to an idea of place and landscape in many ways replaces the prior Australian vernacular of corrugated iron suspended over glass pavilions.

**Modernism: the global language.**

One of the central points of origin for these new Australian houses, particularly for those architects pursuing orthogonal monumentalism and abstraction, is the period of high modernism, of the International Style and of the Case Study Houses of California.

S. Wilson, Andrew, *Hayes and Scott: the Post War Houses*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2005 pg 46
Le Corbusier's domestic work of the 1920s and early 1930s, culminating in the Villa Savoye (1929-1931), remains an active source of inspiration. Le Corbusier's essential language of white planar surfaces, cubic forms raised on *piloti*, a promenade directing movement and a horizontal strip window choreographing (some would say domesticating) the landscape, brought the exterior within the house and drew the inhabitant to the building's periphery. Similarly the impact of Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe's and Phillip Johnson's glass pavilion typology, as seen in Glenn Murcutt's work, has played a significant role in the development of Australian architecture, especially for those houses located in rural or beach settings. The transparency and simplicity of the pavilion type has allowed architects working in temperate climates to engage with those environments, and its systematic constructional and formal characteristics lend themselves to a variety of roof forms, ground planes and plinth structures.

In addition to these canonical examples, the less well known, but equally influential domestic work of Craig Ellwood, Richard Neutra, Charles Eames, Pierre Koenig and the houses of the Californian Case Study House Program (1945 – 1966) are of profound importance. Initiated and sponsored by John Entenza and his influential magazine *Art & Architecture*, the Case Study Program oversaw the design of 36 ‘experimental’ domestic prototypes, most of which were built. These architects continued the modernist social agenda of rethinking contemporary living and the house. Influenced by the International Style, all of the houses explored open planning and experimentations with standardized elements, including steel, brick and glass construction. Marsh Cashman Koolloos Bellevue Hill House and Brett’s House by Craig Rosevear are direct descendents of the program.

The influence of modernist architecture on Australia has a rich history. The post-war period of Australian architecture witnessed a particularly intense period of importation and translation of modernist ideas and aesthetics. Swiss architect Frederick Romberg arrived in Melbourne in 1938, while the Austrian Harry Seidler arrived in Sydney from the USA in 1948, having studied at Harvard's Graduate School under the influence of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. Seidler's house for his mother, the Rose Seidler House at Turramurra (1948–50), is a complete importation of the International Style: white, taut, and without eaves, the house was not overtly responsive to Australia's climate, but was tremendously influential. The Lucas House of 1957, by Bill and Ruth Lucas in Castlecrag, Sydney, was a lightweight, open styled, pavilion house in the trees, directly inspired by the Case Study Houses.

Regional modernism, a more climatically and contextually particular strand of Australian modernism developed strong foundations in Melbourne. Along with Romberg, Roy Grounds and Robin Boyd were zealous in establishing modernism and a regional modernist style during the late 1940s and the 1950s. This movement was particularly influenced by architectural developments in northern Europe, especially in Scandinavia,
and by the Bay Regional Style of San Francisco, of whom William Wurster7 was the leading exponent. Roy Grounds met with William Wurster in Los Angeles and was drawn to the architecture of light-filled, open planned timber houses that were less mechanical in their resolution and materiality than the earlier modernist work.

The Adey House by Ashton Raggatt McDougall and the Box House by Neeson Murcutt, have engaged in discussions of identity and relevant architectural models for Australia, but explore a rather different process, using rhetorical and whimsical devices. In these two projects - both holiday homes - the architects engage in a critical appraisal of earlier Australian models and collective memories of what it is to live and holiday in Australia. For Ashton Raggatt McDougall this involved looking at the history of post-war houses and holiday homes found near Melbourne, particularly on the Mornington Peninsula, and combined this architectural study with nostalgic memories of the beach holiday. Nick Murcutt, particularly well versed in the history of architectural placemaking in Australia, works with a critique and development of the Sydney School and the Pittwater Set and their various ambitions to blend their architecture with the landscape. The constructional methods and materiality of the Box House recall that lineage, whilst adopting structural systems and formal explorations more akin to the domestic work of Rudolph Schindler, Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier. Juxtaposing these two influences results in an unusual but successful hybrid that speaks of the influence and the continuing relevance of modernist architecture, and of specific models for the climate and rural environment.

Contextual Additions: the alteration and addition

A further selection of projects, a series of alteration and additions, are demonstrative of another type of architectural invention. Increasingly prevalent in an era that must consider issues of density, re-use and preservation of historically significant precedents, these projects are subject to a complex range of regulations and difficult site conditions not typically found in the freestanding dwelling. Within these projects another series of thematics emerge. Context, whether an intact Victorian streetscape, an individual building of architectural or historical context, or the wider context of the suburbs becomes a critical design informant. For architects like IPH, Fiona Winzar, Rex Addison and Elizabeth Watson Brown architects it is the fabric and materiality of the surrounding context, and its operation as a system, that is integral for their processes. At the level of tectonics, strategies of manipulation, abstraction, extension and exaggeration characterise design operations. Adjacent rooflines, rhythms of openings and structure or materials become reconfigured such that they speak of the contextual surrounds and to contemporary architecture. Underpinning these formal moves however, is a series of investigations that engage broader issues of placemaking, reuse, and sustainability. In these examples the existing house is altered to accommodate modern lifestyle, and the climate and light conditions, but also importantly, to acknowledge and contribute the network of the surrounding urban conditions.

7. William Wurster was a Californian architect whose residential work during the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s was particularly influential. Wurster offered an alternative to the International Style and developed a more rustic style of house named the Bay Regional Style by Lewis Mumford. In these houses, the relationship between inside and outside was made less definitive, windows were designed to capture views, and interiors and exteriors were largely unadorned. His work referenced regional building types and used local materials.

8. The Sydney School refers to a body of work, also known as the ‘Nuts and Berries School’, that developed partly as a reaction to the importation of the International Style during the late 1960’s. Its influences, among others were the Arts and Crafts movement. Leading exponents of the style include Ken Woolley, Sydney Anchor and Michael Dysart. The Pittwater set, of which Richard LePlastrier is the ‘father figure’, includes architects working in that Pittwater Region of Sydney and further north, including Stutchbury Pape, Rob Brown. Glenn Murcutt, while also a significant influence, sits just separate from both schools of thought, although some of his architecture does have affinity with the work of the above-mentioned architects.
Alternatively Jackson Clements Burrow's Tyson House in Richmond offers a critique of the planning and heritage regulations. Their answer for the necessity to pay heed to the surrounding streetscape and the existing building's Victorian original facade was simply to provide a one to one image superimposed on an otherwise entirely contemporary architectural solution. James Russel's Brookes house is also a rather confronting but entirely successful solution. His new dwelling, a delightful timber structure, is literally grafted opportunistically onto the side of a church. One exterior wall of the church thus forms one side of a central courtyard, and sitting so close to the church raised above the ground, the dwelling service to further activate the public forecourt area and its community functions.

A further series of projects that includes Louise Nettleton's Point Piper Residence, Dimity Andersen's House 42, Bureau SRH's Perham residence, Tonkin Zulaikha Laurence House, and Donovan Hills Tibet Gallery, simply reveal the potential of making contemporary dwellings within the constraints of existing buildings. The central tension with these projects becomes dialogue between new and old and the resulting spatial narratives weave their way in and out of the new and old, where often heavy masonry structures form a counterpoint to lighter timber and steel additions. Andresen's House 42, alternatively, is about offering a dwelling of equal mass and weight to the existing but giving it planning, orientation and a relationship to the outdoors that is open, flexible and more in keeping with 21st century living.

An expressive monumentalism has emerged, with trajectories diverging into both modernism and abstraction, and with roots in European and Australian precedents. The complexity of these houses goes beyond their formal expressiveness, and in many ways the most ambitious projects defy categorisation, and whilst precedents can be located for each, the architecture transcends its references. In the words of Allan Powell, these houses move away from the mundane terrain of conscious reasoning and logic, towards something more atavistic, more deeply and richly subconscious. The knowledge, ability and experience of the architect is such that the best of this 'new' architecture emerges from that sophistication as a distinct object with its own identity.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

The process of looking back at this book project reinforced its size: the simple fact of working across and looking at so many projects was very significant. I was far less interested in the projects that had a stylised driven formal outcome. Rather, I looked to examples with a formal openness, where the work operated across a number of references that had a strong narrative drawing it together and giving it legibility.

I noticed that, following this project, the complexity of form that I had previously searched for I now found less interesting. I now found conceptual or inventive engagement with site, context and program more stimulating. The inventive rethinking of these things, as may be expressed in form and spatial narrative, I found the most intriguing of all. The same went for intense and juxtaposed relationships with site rather than a ‘blending in’ with the landscape. ARM Adey House, Nick Murcutt’s Tathra Residence, Allan Powell’s De Stasio Residence and Durbach Blocks Mosman House were all strong examples of this.

Additionally, ongoing influence has been wielded by the architects and projects to which our selected architects looked for inspiration. Via Alex Popov and the influence of Jorn Utzorn, I discovered Utzorn’s Majorca Can Lis (1971) and also, and unbuilt project Silkeborg Museum (1963). And through Durbach Block, I developed a much closer understanding of Jose Antonio Coderch’s la casa Ugalde (1951).
This invitation followed soon after completing the second Australian house book and a monograph on Sydney based architect, Alex Popov. These were interesting invitations, not just because of the immediate subject matter, but also because they were architects not well regarded in Melbourne, and particularly at RMIT. The opportunity to look at architecture from outside the dominant Melbourne context in which I had previously learned and worked was a useful one. Along with writer and architect Stuart Harrison and Sydney based academic Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, I was invited to contribute a critical essay to this book.

My essay explored the evolution of the architectural language and formal strategies of COX architecture, specifically in terms of their interest in placemaking. I began with a discussion of the Sydney School work and then the ways in which Norburg Schulz’s seminal work on Genius Loci could be applied to the Australian context. Of particular concern were the ways in which those ideas were expanded to accommodate a vision of Australia tied to global economies and cultures. The discussion began with one of Cox’s early projects Tocal (1966) as an exemplary case study, and as a project (along with select others) that established them as a major Australian firm and one of the founders of the Sydney School. Material was drawn from Phillip Cox’s writing on Australia’s colonial architecture and his thorough studies of the building strategies and materiality of these early buildings.

The discussion of Tocal was expanded to introduce other influences and also other themes and motifs of the work, going beyond the dialogue with place and including explorations of sculpture; artistic ideas that engage the Australian relationships with the landscape as evidenced through art and literature. I was inspired by Cox’s affinity with the Griffins’ work in Australia, particularly Newman Collage, and its relationship to the landscape that is less...
Australian architecture should be a no-nonsense architecture which reflects the Australian character — the fairdinkum ozzie — with a no-nonsense attitude. The Australian character has been described as Doric in its infancy not Doric in its prime — and there is a certain roughness, a primitiveness, even a crudeness to the Australian character which reflects in the architecture; it lacks a certain refinement; it’s gutsy, self-evident, self-confident, yet responsive to the landscape. One thing that is very profound for our literature, art and architecture is the influence of the landscape. Rather than having a cultural or intellectual disposition, we are ruled by that landscape, the vastness, and our climate to such an extent that it is very pervasive in our cultural expression.

Phillip Cox

Architecture of Place: Local Contexts and the Sydney School

In 1976 Christian Norberg-Shultz published his seminal book *Genus Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* that consolidated and expressed his work to date on phenomenology, architecture and place. *Genus Loci*, he states, refers to the very essence of place, the spirit and qualities that define and embody a given location. This work emerged as part of a growing discontent with the strictures of modernism and its potential to obliterate the particularity of place and identity. Kenneth Frampton’s equally influential text ‘Critical Regionalism’, and the divergent arguments of Robert Venturi all worked to resist and indeed to critique modernity and the ubiquitous international style. These theorists gave architects across the world material and impetus for new directions that might engage more sympathetically and more consciously with history, tradition, individual cultures and building techniques. It was the local and the particular that was important, rather than the global. Although these ideas have undergone revision, the basic impulse to resist modernity and pay heed to unique qualities and characteristics of place and region remain important for many contemporary architects. For Australian architects this political and cultural investment in place resonated strongly for people who were questioning and evolving relevant architectural and cultural expressions. These issues are still of profound importance: what constitutes Australian identity for a place inherently multicultural, even adolescent, in terms of its western history, and struggling to reconcile connection with its indigenous past?

Nearly a decade before Norberg-Schultz’s essay was published, Phillip Cox, then in partnership with Ian MacKay, completed his first major institutional building Tocal (1964). Known formally as the C.B. Agricultural College, the project was a boarding college for over 150 students and 40 staff that included a hall, chapel, dining hall, administration and teaching rooms, theatres and dormitories. Overlooking the lush Paterson Valley in northern NSW the buildings, with their solid expressive brickwork and dramatic bolted timber structures, explored a vernacular expression that drew from and then expanded on the local building traditions, including those found at the nearby Tocal Homestead.

1. Cox, Phillip, Interview by Anna Johnson and Stuart Harrison, March 2008

The project, as Cox reflects, ‘was a genuine appreciation of what had gone before and an attempt to continue that tradition and then also celebrate Australian timbers and hardwoods.’ It was this project, which later received the Sir John Sulman Medal (1964) and the Blacket Award (1965), that comprehensively and confidently encapsulated Cox’s desire for an architecture of place that resonated with local context, its histories and the Australian landscape. This building clearly represented the ambitions of the Sydney School of which Cox was a central figure. It was also a clear expression of an architecture that resonated with context and yet was expressive and sculptural in its own right. This was architecture whose identity and architectonics went beyond the contextual argument and began a dialogue with landscape that was poetic, wondrous and satisfying on its own terms.

Tocal established Cox as an important architect capable of evolving an architectural language that was specifically Australian without resorting to metaphor, revivalism or wholesale image-based appropriation. It is this pluralistic quality of COX Architects & Planners’ (COX) work – to be entirely committed to the Australian context and cultural expression but also sculptural and poetic at a more phenomenological, more experiential level - that makes the work so valuable and of continuing relevance. This plurality is a quality that is evident across the practice’s entire oeuvre, from the larger scale sporting complexes to the smaller scale residential work.

The origins of this pluralism are twofold at least. In part it is a result of Cox’s collaborative approach to design and the practice of architecture, whereby authorship is attributable to several hands and influences. Central for the understanding of the origins of the work and the diversity of expression within the practice is the manner in which the individual offices work. Whilst there is overriding similarity in interests, pursuits and design agendas, authorship of projects and so the expression of individual projects reflects the particular ‘hands’ of each design team leader. It is in the Queensland office, under Michael Rainer, that the expressionistic tendency has found particularly strong and delightful expression in their recent works, while in Melbourne a more urbane and modernist expression has emerged. Equally important, – and of relevance to this essay – is how Cox’s very particular and learned interest in the history of Australian building, art and culture has shaped his desire for an architectural expression which acknowledges that history.

Cox regards himself as an artist in the broadest sense and pursues multiple expressions and media including painting, drawing and writing as well as architecture. This, combined with his almost forensic interest in Australia’s ‘vernacular and industrial’ buildings, results in a rich and varied body of work that is both erudite and expressive. Books like The Australian Homestead, the Australian Colonial Architecture (1978) and in particular The Australian Functional Tradition (1988), reveal Cox’s passion and comprehensive understanding of these histories. The images presented in both the Functional Tradition
and also the Australian Homestead document buildings that have a clear and distinct relationship with the landscape – not a 'blending in', nor a merging in any sense, but rather an economical, yet powerful relationship of structure against landscape. The poetic comes from that 'rude' construction – considered, relatively unadorned and expressive of the material and construction, placed against the vastness and the rawness of Australia. These buildings, whether industrial, rural or domestic, that pre-date any 'high style' are what Cox finds inspirational, and they have become a source for his work. As Cox expressed in his 1984 AS Hook Address, the aim of architecture is to express 'the purpose of the people, their hopes and aspirations and their view of the world at that given point of time.'

Place and context for Cox Architects is unquestionably and critically also about sustainability, and incorporates social and cultural as well as environmental concerns. The later part of this essay will look at a suite of recent projects such as Thuringowa Riverway Arts Centre, Albany Entertainment Centre and the Arts Space at Mackay that actively promote rehabilitation at both an environmental and a social level. This relationship to place involves a complete investment in questions of environment, community and sustainability, and is an ongoing agenda throughout the work – from the Ayers Rock village of Yulara (1982) where the dialogue is with indigenous cultures and place, to the Eureka Stockade Interpretative Centre Ballarat (1998), which encapsulates a particular historical moment.

Sculptural Beginnings and Structural Expressions: alternative strategies for placemaking

Tocal, now a well documented and much-loved building, has a clarity of expression and intent that makes it a cogent example to revisit when considering questions of placemaking and the evolution of Cox's architecture. Tocal reveals the plurality of the work, as well as design strategies that are not reliant on a metaphor nor on simple replication of tradition or vernacular. Consistent with the true meaning of vernacular, these strategies embody and demonstrate ideas about development and evolution - a series of layers continually transformed over time.

The individual college buildings are loosely organised about a three-sided quadrangle with a series of open spaces and courtyards that draw on farm and rural building traditions. The planning is additive and therefore flexible enough to be expanded and modified as needed. Located just off-centre is the most dramatic of all the buildings, the chapel with its soaring spire and roof form that cap a low and massive rough textured and angled brick base. It is in the interior of the chapel, the main hall and then the dining room where we find the timber experiments with local vernacular and timber building extended beyond traditional technique. The internal structural bolted timberwork begins with the robust –
rude – timber detailing found in farming buildings but multiplies and becomes a web-like network. This in turn contrasts the much heavier massive brick structures with their deeply recessed windows. On the chapel's exterior, the textured brickwork laid with overscaled mortar joints pays homage to the local brick building tradition while the corners are articulated with bricks laid in a crosshatched arrangement producing an expressive lattice-like pattern.

This tension between heaviness and mass, lightness and relief, is continued throughout the college and becomes spatial in the rhythm of expansion and compression moving through and under low ceilings, following circulation spaces around and through the buildings. These details, the rhythm of the deep fenestration in heavy-masonry walls and the spatial progression throughout, recall the work of the Griffins, and in particular Newman College at Melbourne University; in each case the architecture is concerned with a spiritual connection to place. Tocal, a Presbyterian college, is also more obviously ecclesiastical with its configuration about the chapel, the axial planning and the rhythm of circulation. However, there is an affinity between the architecture and strategies for relating to the landscape that does not engage a direct relationship with vernacular. Like Gothic architecture, the dialogue with landscape and place is made through an abstraction of form and ornamentation that recalls nature. For the Griffins, it was ideas about crystalline form that find spectacular expression in Melbourne's Capital Theatre.

While these earlier COX projects are not so overtly expressionistic, the way in which a detail is taken and then developed beyond the essential to become an elaborated moment expands the reading of the work. This tendency develops and becomes intensified in later projects, and it is demonstrative of alternative methods for connecting to place that are ephemeral rather than literal and part of a serious and ongoing exploration.

Tocal was one of the first projects to explore ideas of identity and Australia’s building tradition beyond the domestic scale in which other Sydney School architects had by and large been working. For this reason it is a milestone for the development of a uniquely Australian architecture; it not only rethought the idea of what an institutional building could be – ironically by breaking it up and making it more domestic – but it also expanded the possibility of what the Sydney School could do in terms of scale and program. Tocal extended the possibilities of place-making and presented a valid contemporary Australian architecture that was relevant, but not derivative and went beyond the vernacular without recourse to metaphor or analogy. It revealed the beginnings of the expression and influences that now characterise COX’s architecture: the learned interest in Australia’s building history and vernacular traditions, the Australian landscape, sculptural expression, structure, and the possibilities of pure engineering.
Evolution: Community context to material modernism

The evolution within COX’s architectural language of sculptural expression as a response to place is a central trajectory in this essay. This argument is based on a very particular selection of projects and is not expanded to incorporate the practice’s work with sporting complexes, which is explored elsewhere in this book. The first thread within this evolution is the expressive architectonics and strategies of placemaking that occur in projects such as Thuringowa Riverway Arts Centre, National Wine Centre Artspace MacKay, Albany Entertainment Centre and the WA Maritime Museum. Here the sculptural expressionistic element is expanded and largely replaces the more direct references to local vernacular. Placemaking remains of critical importance but the strategies are expanded to include increased community involvement, precinct and contextual revitalisation through appropriate programmatic insertion, and sustainable landscape and building strategies. In these projects we see a more overt experimentation with the landscape itself, landscapes are wrapped over and interlaced with the architecture. Another set of projects that include the National Wine Centre, WA Maritime Museum and Albany Entertainment Centre work more literally and metaphorically with context as a strategy for placemaking. Local elements are rescaled, abstracted and used to inform geometries that are again expressive but are more identifiable with local context and culture.

A second thread, which follows a series of projects from Tocal that includes Haileybury College, Chisholm Institute of TAFE and CSIRO Black Mountain Library, explores the evolution of that abstraction – but here the architectural expression becomes more orthogonal and crisp, influenced by the European modernism of Louis Kahn and contemporary European architects invested in the evolution of the modernist idiom like Herzog and de Meuron, Sauerbruch Hutton Architects and the contemporary Spanish and Portuguese architects. Prismic volumes with flush skins and windows pushed right to the building’s façade characterise these works. The articulation and expression comes through the crafted materiality; elevations are treated as a continuous skin; in the case of Haileybury this is brick but in the more recent works the materials are lightweight, more transparent and more luminous. Placemaking occurs through the relationship and siting of buildings in their context, accommodating and responding to existing conditions. In these examples, the dialogue with the vernacular transforms and becomes more about the articulation of skin and the relationship of the entire building with landscape. Chisholm TAFE and CSIRO Black Mountain Library, for example, are dominated by a unifying lightweight skin with rectangular openings marking out a rhythm across the surface.

Chisholm Institute of TAFE Dandenong Campus, Building G, the only example from this thread to be discussed at length, is dominated by luminous lightweight cladding skin with rectangular openings punctuating the surface. The vision of this project, a landmark for
the Dandenong Campus of Chisholm Institute, is to signify the Chisholm's desires for a more ecological, contemporary and prominent building that is also strongly reflects their philosophies of leaning environments centred on ideas of the progressive, transparent, flexible and sustainable. At one level, these ideas translate directly into a dynamic architectonic clad on the exterior in a semi transparent polycarbonate. The form itself reads as two gently twisting rectangular volumes that is shifted and split along its east west access. This shift serves to open up a circulation void space – an 'internal street' – that also operates as a thermal chimney to provide natural ventilation and also a daylight well for the centre of the building. This internal void, in contrast to the hermetically sealed exterior, is massive and dominated by raw heavy concrete surfaces upon which the daylight reflects. Characteristic of Cox and Partners, the materiality and structure is left very evident. This space too has affinity with the contemporary phenomenon of the massive interstitial volume epitomised by Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum Berlin. In the case of Libeskind that volume is a place for reflection and remembrance, but in this project the zone is activated and reminiscent of the arcade. Nevertheless, its scale and materiality and geometry give it a startling profoundity. But like the Jewish Museum, the contract between external cladding and the internal workings of the building creates a provocative tension. At present this ground level internal street allows connections to the surrounding theatrette spaces and administration buildings, while in the longer term this space will become the main entrance and administration centre for the campus.

The site and context is instrumental for the orientation and manipulation of the overall form and the subtle shifts and rotations are informed by the site's contours, levels and connections to the other campus buildings. This relationship to place and to the landscape extends to a series of 'fault lines' and forces that affect the building's façade and overall geometry. Along the southern elevation the facade follows these twists and rotations, while on the eastern elevation the gentle rotations work to distort our sense of perspective and orientation. This project, perhaps more notably than other of Cox and Partners’ work, makes connection and affinities to projects and practices outside Australia. The work of Herzog and de Meuron, Sauerbruch Hutton Architects invested in materiality, structure and more abstract connections to the landscape and context and importantly to a contemporary evolution of European Modernism are relevant precedents. Of particular relevance are projects like Herzog and de Meuron's Laban Dance Centre and Sauerbruch Hutton's Pharmacological Research Laboratories Biberach, where the architecture is defined by the precise articulation and refinement of a transparent cladding system's tightly fitted clean but gently shifting volumes.
Expressionism and Placemaking

Thuringowa, a small dormitory city adjacent to its more well-known neighbour Townsville, is part of one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia’s tropical north. However, like much of Australia’s metropolitan and suburban areas, it is placelessness, rather than an overt sense of place, that characterises these communities. The 21st century phenomenon of placelessness, a consequence of urban sprawl and the destruction of the landscape and environment, is one of the major issues facing Australian architects. In this suite of projects, COX extend their placemaking strategies to include larger scale master planning and revitalisation strategies that are literally about making place, or, more precisely, re-making place after the process of colonisation and suburbanisation destroyed natural and indigenous landscapes. This approach requires thinking that goes beyond form and extends past the building envelope to community, infrastructure and the landscape itself. What is particularly successful about COX’s Thuringowa Riverway, and pertinent to this essay, is that the architectural language – the very syntax of form and space itself – becomes intensified and extended into the landscape design. The architecture is amplified to become more expressive, more satisfyingly sculptural, than before.

Three elements - The Arts Centre, Lagoon and Eco-Active Centre - are part of COX’s master plan for Thuringowa Riverway. The project is an environmentally sustainable development that includes renewable energy strategies that play out from the structure of the management plan to the design and implementation of individual buildings and landscapes. The design strategy emerged as part of a community and local council consultation process that proffered that the architecture could be conceived as ‘land art’. The idea that the buildings could intrinsically be a part of the landscape challenged typical divisions between architecture and landscape, and created, for this community, a new and engaging expression of civic identity.

The buildings, landscape and water lagoons are literally intertwined in a relationship of reciprocity. For the cultural centre, the landscape appears to fold up and becomes a geographical formation - a roofscape in the form of a bermed amphitheatre. The folded language continues in a series of facetted planes that enclose space, direct movement and wrap down to the ‘fingers’ of the swimming lagoon. Another building, the Eco-Active Centre, is a river edge pavilion that becomes a dynamic and expressive element that makes transparent Riverway’s daily energy performance and its application of alternative energy sources – namely wind, solar and biofuel technologies. The landscape design continues and expands a language of fluid planes and folded geometries to become a series of swales, bunds and berms that encircle the playing fields and then finally resolve in the amphitheatre form that encloses the auditorium. At Thuringowa, traditional divisions of landscape, planning and architecture are reconfigured, and as a consequence the social and
programmatic divisions are also altered, softened, and made more accommodating and flexible.

The language of folded planes, faceted geometries and the strategies of placemaking and regeneration continue in Artspace, Mackay and at the Albany Entertainment Centre. In these projects, placemaking strategies rely less on direct relationship to vernacular, using instead the strategies of consultation, planning and programming to both respond to the particular desires of the context and community, and also to promote development that counters the phenomenon of regional placelessness.

Albany Entertainment Centre presents a very different formal exploration. The project operates as a unifying building that forms a catalyst for waterfront renewal and local community engagement, but in contrast to earlier examples, it explores a singular formal idea - one that works across the project at a range of scales and perspectives and serves to give unity to a diverse program of entertainment, performance and convention facilities. Abstract and expressionist tendencies find complete and uncompromising expression in this project's form. The crystalline form is re-scaled and sculpted to become a diamond-like structure of glittering, angled and rotated geometries manipulated to respond to the undulating harbour context and changing light. Placemaking here occurs through the function of the project and its role as a social and community hub. The building stretches out lengthways across the waterfront, allowing it to be appreciated as a sculptural icon against the green rolling hills beyond – literally a postcard experience.

COX Architects and Planners is now well-known for such harbourside developments and buildings that literally create a new place, a new way of occupying waterfront edges. And whilst the architectonics of these projects are diverse, several commonalities emerge. An obvious one that characterises most of COX's architecture is a delight taken in structure and the way in which this can be expressed. Equally identifiable is the way in which COX projects continue a dialogue with the Australian functional building tradition. Projects including the WA Maritime Museum, the Museum of Tropical Queensland and of course the National Maritime Museum are clear examples of the practice's commitment to reference and expand the Australian industrial and wharf building vernacular.

All of these projects demonstrate both consistencies of intent and ambition as well as the plurality of means and technique deployed by the makers of architecture within the practice today. This reflects, in part, the already identified qualities and realities of collaboration and “many hands” which have characterised the work of the Cox practice historically and which continue today.
This essay has begun to explore the relationship between the early “defining” projects of Cox Architects and the contemporary work of the practice, and suggests that the “expressionistic impulse” that is embedded in thinking about place continues to define the work of Cox Architects. It also identifies qualities which may in fact differentiate the work of the different Cox offices around Australia – an interesting and perhaps critical question for the current leaders of the practice.

The architecture of COX Architects goes beyond common perceptions of the architecture being solely about structure or alternatively about place. The work of the practice presents a pluralistic expression grounded in rigorous structural resolution and relationship to place but one that pursues sculptural expressions that resonate with place in abstract and ephemeral ways. Structure in COX’s architecture is elaborated, extended and expressed beyond constructional necessity to become a formal language in its own right that holds both contextual and sculptural value. The original ideas and strategies to address the particular Genus Loci of place and ideas about Australian identity are necessarily being expanded to accommodate a more pluralistic Australia that is tied to global economies and culture. It may be that in the era of the global economy, one of the real challenges for the individual offices and studios of COX is to embark on a vigorous exploration of ideas about local engagement and expression - and resistance to the dissolution of place.
about vernacular traditions and more about formal, abstract dialogue with place. I particularly noted that the work goes beyond common perceptions of the architecture being solely about structure, or alternatively about place. Alternatively, I believed that it was a more pluralistic expression, grounded in rigorous structural resolution, relationship to place but also the development of a more sculptural abstract expression that resonates with place.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered:

Not surprisingly, a deeper reflection and understanding of architectural place making, of the vernacular emerged from this period. This carried through into my teaching, as I demonstrate in the third scroll iteration. From this period I worked more consciously with an idea of architecture curating site, developing a reciprocal relationship between site and architecture. This coincided with a closer study of the land artists, including Robert Smithson, Andy Goldsworthy, Maya Lin, Mary Miss, Christo and Richard Serra and with increased engagement with Richard Black’s own studio in my regular role as critic; and also Richard and Michelle Black’s own architecture. My concept of ‘landscape’ expanded to take on the local context of buildings, formal and informal occupation, and the ephemeral conditions of site; as well as historical and cultural narratives. My exploration of Cox’s ideas of place – an architecture of genius loci – involved a close reflection of these ideas, particularly when considered against ideas of myth, abstraction and European avant-garde, I had taken from Corrigan and Nolan.

As I have also reflected through this PhD process, I realise that I have used drawing – or diagramming – as a form of writing more than I had been conscious of at the time. I diagrammed constantly as a way to understand content and form, while looking at the projects on which I was to write. My drawing and sketching, as used in my teaching, had also been observed and then discussed by architect graduate, and now director of research training at ANU and young research educator, Inger Mewburn in her own PhD titled Constructing Bodies: Gesture, Speech and Representation at Work in Architectural Design Studios32 (2009). I give a longer introduction to this material in my Writer Architect chapter where it is most relevant. However, of note now Mewburn was interested in the gesture(ing) of what was communicated through my literal hand gestures, and through the pen and the drawings it created. She observes about my use of drawing while teaching:

Anna loved to draw and did so almost continuously while teaching; her preferred teaching style was characterized by listening carefully to the students than drawing and talking simultaneously as she gave them feedback. These drawings became a record of the conversation on which she would write notes, names of architectural precedent and suggestions for further work. The students would collect her drawings and keep them as a record of the conversation, sometimes bringing them out in subsequent classes for discussion.33

I include a further discussion regarding my drawing and teaching and Mewburn’s work in the Writer Architect chapter.


This first project is a key example introducing the generative role drawing played in the beginning of my design process and for my exploration with poststructuralist theory. The project called for a public mixed-use civic building that would replace the old boxing club on Dudley Street North Melbourne. En route to the Docklands, this was a gritty industrial site with considerable kinetic charge from the traffic and trains. The project was to span across the major railway lines feeding into the CBD. It was the first project I completed in the Masters program at RMIT after moving from University of Canberra, and occurred at a time when I had just begun to read and explore ideas of deconstruction and poststructuralist architectural theory.

Encountering these ideas of deconstruction for the first time was hugely interesting to me. I was taken with the very simple proposition of ‘opening’ something up, to reveal alternative meanings and derivations; both unfolding an idea or theory, and a lineage of architectural thinking or formal strategies. My own tendencies, as also expressed through my writing, were to be analytical, to look beneath the surface and behind the appearance of things, attempting an understanding of the genesis of meaning, of form in order to understand the way that meaning and architectural form could relate to one another.

Michael Benedikt’s, Deconstructing the Kimbell: An Essay on Meaning and Architecture was an early important reference, as well as the Academy Edition's Deconstruction Volume One. This first project took place at a time when postructuralism was having a considerable impact on the disciplines of arts and architecture, although predominantly this influence resulted in a stylised formal response, rather than a careful consideration of postructuralism. At this stage, it is possible that my own response fell somewhere in between. Appropriately, for my own practice, deconstruction has its origins in philosophical and literary analysis. Without giving
an overview of this theory here, central deconstructive ideas including difference, hierarchy
reversal, the relationship between marginality and reversal, and the iterability to meaning, were
the ideas I began to explore at this time." Broadly for architectural theoreticians, these ideas led
to rethinking the relationship between architecture and philosophy, practice and theory, and
essentially meaning and architecture.

My form-making at this stage betrays a naive innocence. I was very influenced by precedents,
including some of these ‘so-called’ Deconstructivist Architects: Zaha Hadid, Bernard Tschumi,
Peter Eisenman, Coop Himmelblau, Lebbeus Woods and Neil Denari in particular. Whilst I
simply found the formal expressiveness of that architecture very exciting, I was also influenced
by what these architects said and published regarding architecture, and the way that they
dynamically opened up the possibilities of architectural representation and language. The
inherent reflexivity of deconstruction I found interesting, as it resonated with my own analytical
tendency. These architects were also rethinking issues of architectural program and type and
aesthetics – and fundamentally rethinking what architecture was and could be.

More specifically, Bernard Tschumi’s work using deconstructive theory as a tool, a strategy
to open up and challenge the architectural profession, its limits and also formalism, was
important. His three introductory essays, ‘Architecture and Limits,’ to an issue of Artforum,
the New York art magazine dedicated to architectural theory (1980-82) broadly questioned
what uniquely characterised the architectural discipline. Was the building to be understood
as a function and how were architecture’s boundaries established? Tschumi asserted that it
is at the limits – the edge of the discipline – from which critique can be made. As Kate Nesbitt
writes, his use of the term ‘limits’ was ‘fundamental to the poststructuralist and deconstructivist
thought, both of which posit that the contents at the margins (of texts or disciplines) are more
important than their location indicates’. Tschumi’s discussion of ‘event’ and architecture, and
his rethinking the body’s relationship to time and space, was also influential, as were his ideas
concerning the interstitial conditions between these things, and the spatial sequencing that
derived from his work on Sergei Eisenstein and culminated in his Manhattan Transcripts project
of 1988. Also influential for me were his idea of cross programming, ‘disjunction’ as explored
in his winning 1982 Parc de la Villette Competition, Paris and also in his book Architecture and
Disjunction.

Alternatively, Peter Eisenman’s explorations of a pure architectural language, of an architecture
that was apparently freed from the convention of program, service and function, and that was
more like a text is of obvious relevance to my work. Projects including House VI, were written,
as Eisenman proposes, like a text. However, I differ from Eisenman in his interest in generative
processes that removed the maker, the complications of origin and indeed ‘diminished the
presence of the author.’ Alternatively, it was the drawings, inventiveness and complexity of
architectural language explored by Lebbeus Woods and Coop Himmelblau that I was most drawn to, rather more than their writings.

At this time, I also looked to artists, particularly the Russian Constructivists and Gorden Matta-Clark as a way to rethink architectural composition, construction and architecture. The Constructivists, Bernard Tschumi and Lebbeus Woods, would remain relevant precedents throughout the next decade. I would go on to do an invited workshop with Woods the following semester. (In which I made a model from Vaseline and hair and drew it rather extensively)

Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This period really cracked open the beginnings of my thinking about the potential relationships between idea and architectural form. I invested heavily - but innocently - in drawing as a generative design process, and as an attempt to translate text and here particularly this poststructuralist discourse and architectural theory into form. There was not a precise method for translation, however I had a strong sense at that time, that a formulaic generative process that might stand in for that theory, was not the answer. I tried to engage the qualities of the text – literally translate the spatial and qualitative aspects of the text itself – and also use those ideas as a way of rethinking conventional architectural issues, of site, program and form. Whilst I now have a very different attitude towards these readings and the process I was attempting, at the time there was something very tangible and exciting between the energy generated from the theory I read, what I then wrote and the resultant very rapid and dynamic drawing process. This was the project where drawing emerged as my dominant 'site' for architectural production. It was unashamedly intuitive and very interested in formal composition.

From here emerged a very particular set of formal relationships and analytical tools that I pursued quite solidly for several years. Particular asymmetries, juxtapositions of formal and geometric types, an architectural vocabulary of relationships, of gaps and sequences, and the curation of drawn out extended sections. Something that at the time I wasn't able to articulate, was that generative influence of theory reading and writing, which revealed a new system of thinking that I found tremendously exciting. I looked at and drew into my practice, ideas of plurality, complexity, the open work, critique and that somehow things and forms constituted a layered multiplicity. Of note: it was very hard to escape the obvious literal translations of these discoveries; nevertheless, the theoretical content exposed to me at this time had an effect of setting in place a certain critical framework. As can be seen in publications from the time, including two AD monograph’s The Deconstruction: omnibus volume edited by Andreas Papadakis, Catherine Cook and Andrew Benjamin (1989) and then Folding in Architecture edited by Greg Lynn (1993), much of this poststructuralist theory was given a rather literal formal interpretation. The Fold found expression in folded forms, deconstruction in destructed compositions of known architectural types. However, in the case of the Fold, it was the resonances this work had with the Baroque that found expression in my work. At the time, along with many other practitioners, I speculated on the potential misreading or oversimplifications of the original ideas.

Upon reflection and counter to critique from a few tutors at the time, a key reflection now has been that these drawings did not exclude site, nor were they a dismissal of site. And in part, it
was the particularities of site that led to this early formal arrangement. The breaks and striations in this project shown were a direct response to the railway lines below – and the tough industrial form was also a contextual engagement, informed by formal language of Lebbeus Woods and his ideas of a parasitical architecture.

Of particular note was a discussion made in my first PRS about these drawings and their potential relationship with (or distinction from) site. Nat Chard raised the issue of the site drawings undertaken years later with Shane Murray and Nigel Bertran, asking if they really engaged site any more usefully than my site abstractions? This led me to reflect that there was something in my drawings that was indeed a site response, an abstraction of the observed site conditions and qualities.

Additionally, I now understand this project was the beginning of my exploration of an architecture of relationship - where forms may be strung out episodically. This project - a sequential arrangement of form across site, whereby the dynamic qualities of the site, movement paths, trajectories and the industrial language, were absorbed by this configuration - marked the beginning of a serious inquiry concerning architectural process, the generative beginnings of architectural projects and the possible mechanism for translating ideas, content and site into an architectural response.
The context of this next project – a bridge gallery sited on the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge in Canberra - was also a response to the context and criticism of the last project. The previous project was ultimately very productive; the reality was that the final drawing and models happened very quickly. In fact, it occurred far more quickly and with more detail and expression than I had anticipated. And the unprecedented resolution – no matter how naïve – was tremendously exciting. However, the intense drawings, the final model size (1.5 metres long) and the commitment to a certain architectural expression a little unengaged with the local Melbourne culture, and my inability to talk clearly about it, aggravated some. I took their criticism seriously, began what I thought was a considered search for a way to legitimise my formal moves. I continued to pursue architectural and poststructuralist theory at the time, and was also reading Martin Jay’s Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in the Twentieth-Century, along with Roland Barthes’ Camera Obscura. The excitement of reading this material continued to have an unquestionable effect on my drawing and creative drawn work, specifically what was revealed to me about the processes of seeing, vision and the image in particular carried into the formal arrangement and strategy for this project.

However, this project was fuelled by the above-mentioned anxieties around criticism of my work, and of what to do with my generative drawings. The studio framework in which this next project took place adopted a very abstract process of a matrix, which I found problematic. Issues included the overly abstracted and artificial design process - a mechanism to access form – which was not really engaged with anything other than geometry. For me, this made it difficult to engage with. Perhaps I missed the point!
tracks enclosed and folded around galleries.

surveillance boxes
outer gallery - frame for view, for intervention, for inhabitant.

moving box galleries.

surveillance boxes
The brief for a gallery project located in Canberra’s Parliamentary Triangle, combined with my reading on theories of vision and with the ongoing influence of Bernard Tschumi – led me to repetitively keep drawing and redrawing a strange arrangement of extended mechanical objects, that engaged literally with the “act” of viewing. This ‘machine thing’, with its moving parts and kinetic potential again forming an extended formal relationship, reflected a particular fascination at the time with machines, an architecture that had the potential to move and respond literally to contextual views and movement.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

Again, I have now reflected on these drawings and their relationship to site, precedent and to things I found impossible to unpack at the time. The certain geometric order of Canberra found expression in my strange mechanical drawings of site. Whilst I now have many issues with my overly metaphorical approach, the final plan form again embodied a narrative, spatial sequencing and form with some interesting moments informed by Tshumi, the Russian Constructivists, the photographic work of Bernd and Hilla Becher, and the surreal context of Canberra with its slow rhythm of the large scale Brutalist and modernist inspired buildings.

From this period, one of the strongest trajectories to emerge and continue was theories of seeing and vision as informed by the writings of Jay, Barthes and also Beatriz Colomina and other feminist writers at the time. For these theorists, looking and perceiving was relational and mediated via prior experience, circumstance, history and cultural situation. Object perception, by turn, was filtered through that experience. My subject position as a woman was not in itself relevant for the work I produced from this time and still isn’t. My interest in this material was that it opened discussion concerning the processes of looking and reading objects.

The other dominant research trajectory that continued was with architectural language. Part of this reflects my avoidance at the time of a real interrogation, of the three dimensionality of form. Marks made at this time were perhaps too derivative of particular stylistic examples and limited by my own mechanisms to interrogate and test them. However, in my final scheme I drew a strange formal anomaly at the end of the plan, that I find interesting now because I see it represents a strong image of the next generation of formal architectural expression, particularly as expressed in the emerging digital work. In my scheme, this folded complexity was drawn slightly separate from the main body of the architecture. Was this a reflective critical distance I had intentionally designed? Regardless, it did reveal a certain ambiguity about my architectural direction and architectural language. I recognise now that at this time, I felt a growing sense of a need to articulate a stronger position regarding an architectural alliance.

Nevertheless, a general formal parti pris had emerged again and would find subsequent, ongoing expression across my work. The extended drawn-out section established a spatial narrative, a series of thresholds to be negotiated, and an overall assemblage of elements that juxtaposed different types, geometries and references. The representational mode I explored attempted to bring the theoretical ideas of viewing into the drawing. Although graphically compelling, and in keeping with architectural drawings current at the time – including those produced by architects like Diller & Scofidio42 - ultimately my drawings were a graphic illustrative representation of those ideas and theories rather than a spatial engagement and test.

My own critique of this project, that it remained two dimensional and that it sustained a certain
distance from the reality of site, would greatly affect later instructions to my own students.
Siteless, briefless and without an overarching obvious thematic, this studio provided the space to distill ideas and search for form. It did, however, demand a formal accountability and resolution. The directive was to find form in the world, beginning with a given photo of an open window looking out to a clouded sky. The other limitation was that the project required resolution at 1:20. Unexpectedly I found this process of using photographic techniques to search for form—qualities, characters, atmospheres and things in the world—very interesting. The studio prompted a particular commitment to my drawings and to my process of mark-making.

This process led to the first image shown in the attached drawings... This quite poetic image of what I saw as an inflection I found, and still find, powerful. It was during this time that I read (and reread) Deleuze's The Fold. This project became an investigation of this text and of interrogating my drawing process. Deleuze's proposition of the continuity and relativity between things in the world, punctuated by moments of intensity—monads—I then found very interesting. For me, with my interest in narrative and an architecture of relationship, I found this material an interesting way to conceive of architecture and space. The central idea of the project was driven by the conceptual idea of inflection—a continuous change of state—occupying a threshold that was itself comprised of another series of thresholds. Deleuze and Leibniz draw on ideas from the Baroque43, as has been well documented, and this greatly fuelled my own growing interest in the Baroque and Baroque architecture.

The house in this drawing, I therefore called the Dream House. It explores, if a little metaphorically, Deleuze's idea of the fold and inflection, along with ideas drawn from Baroque architecture and art concerning desire, theatre and emergence. Gian Lorenzo Bernini's sculpture

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The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (1647-52), was a key reference. Bernini’s sculpture – that captures an episode of religious ecstasy of Teresa of Avila, as she describes in her autobiography The Life of Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582) I found extremely stimulating for the sheer desire - ‘ecstasy’ - that is so beautifully depicted by this sculpture positioned in front of a gilded surface of sculptured sunlight rays, but also, characteristic of Baroque art and architecture, gives form - ‘gesture’ - a physical presence via an investment and translation of a narrative, and here, one of intense emotions. Becoming one of my inspirations for this project, the sculpture depicts the moment for Saint Teresa is transformed by the ‘thrusting’ of the ‘long spear of gold’ into her heart – so much so such that it pierced her ‘very entrails,’ and left her in a state of being filled with ‘fire and with a great love of God and a pain so great that it made me moan’. Also influential were Erwin Panofsky’s writing on the Baroque and Francesco Borromini’s wonderful baroque Church The Church of Saint Charles at the Four Fountains (1646).

Something in this project, the architectural Parti of the extended spatial plan and the language of curvilinear geometry, broken or enclosed by the orthogonal slices and frames, is present here and had ongoing influence. Important to this project also, was my attempt to step outside pencil or pen drawing and use alternatively, models, ink and other mediums I thought would more accurately capture the gesture I was trying to resolve. Gesture, a term derived from Brecht’s idea of Gesture, refers to specific qualities and character I wanted to bring to the project – an architectural idea held by gesture that resonates in ‘qualities of the form. Finally, however, I was still bound by section and plan, and didn’t very successfully capture this concept three-dimensionally.


Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This project is significant because a couple of drawings I made, sections in particular, I felt were very close to achieving something about which I was completely satisfied and excited. Something in the composition, the tensions, relationships I made, I found – and still find – compelling. The sheer physicality of architecture and architectural drawing sometimes exceeds language and the ability to exactly account for it and appeals, alternatively to a deeper sensory perception. This as I understand it now, is my first strong tendency towards an idea of architectural gesture. This idea is less concerned with a backward looking justification or account of the object via process. Instead, the discussion is forward directed as well: What is it, what does it do and how does it engage? This was a major shift for the way I also thought about student crits and design teaching. Undoubtedly, this work also began my interest in ideas of Desire – for me understood as a physical expression to know, to act, a motivating force of becoming which contemporary theorists now might call emergence.

I have reflected upon a comparison between my generative diagrams, drawings and the process of translating them with digital processes and the resulting translation. Both processes ultimately demanded something from author in terms of quality, intent and formal accountability. Whilst this seems obvious, my critique of digital and process architecture is that it has sidestepped these difficult questions.

The critique is not what the process does and doesn't provide in terms of outcome, but rather the denial of the role of authorship and of the qualities, the vibrancies and particularities that are being sought after. More useful and interesting, is where these things are laid bare upfront. These concerns, agendas and intentions can then be altered, revised and modified, affected by the unexpected provoked by process, research, and site. At the time I completed this House Project, I did not understand Peter Corrigan’s architectural inquiries and process – but I see now that his direction was much more aligned with what I was thinking.

This was also a period when I embraced the Baroque, and, as I now understand, Baroque narrative, desire, and the theatre embodied in form typical of Baroque material. The form worked to curate the experience of that material. I was drawn to the fluidity and complexity of the Baroque. Structure, wall and surface collapsed, and ornament, surface and wall now had an interchangeable or less defined relationship.

Being siteless, this project forced an unusual engagement and commitment to formal expression and to an albeit indulgent investment in architectural form and the translation of ideas. A formal parti, or relationship that I kept drawing, and have since continued to explore, is
a system of juxtaposing geometries: a tension that arises from the bringing together of alternative geometric systems. I was interested in the orthogonal and curvilinear – the fragment and the network- unified by a spatial-organizational narrative. I looked to the work of Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Hans Scharoun, Enric Miralalis to develop this idea. It is the intersection of this with the context of site, landscape and histories, the local particularities and patterns of occupation, in which I am still interested and have explored in recent work and teaching.

This is the first time I actively asked myself: What is the test of the building? This is a question I have since considered at length in my teaching and writing.
This next project, titled The 9 Muses, was a self-guided exploration set up as research project for my final RMIT thesis major project, the Extension to the State Library of Victoria. The project came out of several interests and concerns. Its ultimate significance I have only understood during this PhD process. At the time, I saw the successful completion of the next design project as the ultimate test of this research project. It was driven by the motivation to find alternative modes of representation or design media to ideas. In essence, I was trying to find another architectural process that did not rely solely on drawing.

I had returned to theoretical readings, and particularly Barthes on the image, text and desire and Jean-Luc Nancy on the Nine Muses; I also read Michel Foucault on Knowledge, and continued to read the Kahn text Drawing/Building/Text: Essays in Architectural Theory. Again I went through a process of finding a way to translate that text into space and form – rather unsuccessfully. In fact, the final thesis project was in part an attempt to give form and space to very textural and theoretical ideas. It was the first time I set up a formal agenda, including a process for declaring quality, before designing. This was also accompanied by looking at very particular precedents, including Michelangelo’s Laurentian Library Florence (1525-71) with its parti of long rectangular reading room, tempered and rhythmic, set against dynamic and sculptural vestibule.

I also continued to look at the Borromini churches. For the first time, I also studied design projects that had worked explicitly as a translation of a textural narrative into architecture. Giuseppe Terragni’s Danteum– an unbuilt monument intended to celebrate the Italian Poet Dante was a key reference. Conceiving of the project as an allegory of the Divine Comedy, Terragni began with the journey from the dark woods of hell and pegatpory towards paradise,

**Rising / Proclaim**

**Shedding The Halo of Blooming**

**Fissured Fragments**

"The muse got their name from a root that indicates agency, the quiet untapped resource that keeps you in suspense. Desire, or anger, the sort of tension that urge to know and to do."

Jean - Ian Nandy

**Fissured**

The muse animates once in, written and soared. She was wince fortuitously over form. Piles are given in multiple Oceans; the mass will change to several: there are several, one and not one.

**Active**

**Puzzled**

**Revealing**

**Forcful**

**Architectural Characterization**

"Beltane ancestral drive - impression of a unique gesture."

Jean - Ian Nandy

This is the potential booming of the project.

This is the embodiment of desire and knowledge in a multiple simplicity.

This is the curiosity of the project.

**Question**

What will it be?
Architecture

**Textual Fragments**

"Architecture as a discipline, like philosophy writing, activates it’s own interior knowledge without reflecting on the apparatus that makes its epistemology viable in a particular way. In the intensification of writing and architecture - which is where theory and philosophy negotiate their terms - what begins as a material/spatial structure becomes figurative or metaphorical."

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Georg Simmel.

"The place of architecture is in the gap between boundaries, where things seem close to touching. This architecture is not disciplinary but self-disciplinary. It serves out of its capsule and blends into the interstices, the intervals among the dissolving walls of other captures: philosophy, science, literature."

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Jennifer Bloomer.

**Properties**

" Allegory: text read through other texts, fragmentary, partial, historiographic, anachronistic, paradox, paradox, palimpsest, vested in the involvement of a misreading."

"In the crypt. It is a dark place, the underground moment, the vessel, the secret plate the plot of secrets. As he could see the other, who covered the paper so thinly it was difficult to discern the vacant space between them. "Read it," said the office. I can’t read the sailing lines. Yet its clear enough, said the office."

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Jennifer Bloomer.

**Architectural Characterizing**


Delineating a place between territories. Not Virtual, not real. Always allowing to work, to the potential. Always suggesting a possible virtual.

Created under the force of the masses. Created with the act of reflection. Created with the criticism of symmetry. Created with the act of invention. Created with the act of design. Created with the desire for knowledge. Created with the text. Created with openness.

**Process**

Can’t let it.
Text

"Hallo!" Beautiful voice. The ease of poetic inspiration and expression.

Fragments

"Language is the house of being. And in its room we dwell." - Hans Magnus

"The structure of architecture and writing do not tolerate each other, yet that architecture only contain the content of the writing where the writing itself is nothing but a figure - a figure of the text in a text - a figure of the text in a figure in a figure." - Derrida

Proposition

"The expression is carved in the grain of the voice, which is poetic nature of time and language; the line is not the ministry of language, the theatre of poetry, rather what it contains for art is the positional incitement, then language lived with flesh, a body where we can hear the grain of the throat, the puling of the conscious the sublimation of the image, a whole visual semiotics; the articulation of the body, of the tongue - it enables us to express; it creates; it makes; it moves; it turns; it mixes; it brings; it knits; it hand." - Badiou

Architectural Characteristics

Text and architecture collide each other, occupy each other. They metaphorically contain each other. Within the word of architecture whilst the radius contains the philosophy.

Architecture is the material expression that stands for ideology and the metaphor of hierarchical and structured thinking.

"The surface - where nothing actually happens, contains a space where traditional oppositions such as inside-outside, internal to external, subject and object is a kind of suspension." - Derrida

Supervised: Structural, Open, Labyrinthine.

Question

To what extent are Architecture have a legitimate Distinctivity? 
To what extent can text have a legitimate Architectural?
Destruction

“Deteriorization is always double. It implies the co-existence of a major variable and a minor variable in simultaneous becoming (the two terms of becoming do not exchange places).”

Derrida

Properties

Destruction as positive action. The concealing or working over of transition, weighty propriety. Derrida: Where is your deconstruction? I like the consequences of that text. Berardi: Don’t question your roots. Certainly not your city, your institution, your piece of learning. Double articulation again. The destruction literally of site, of boundaries is also the becoming of architecture, creation and generally the progress of the project.

Active

The potential for subversion.

Architectural Characteristics

Violent, Dynamic, Assistance upon action, movement, regrowth or at least reforming, reterritorializing. Illustrates both the fluidity of development creation and the action of destruction of site, of propriety. Structural elements, repetitive strong enough to support the change and encourage the fluid regrowth.

Again paradoxical, perplexing: Inherently unstable, actively a potential.

Humbleness.

Question

What stays forever? Why the continual search for the new?

Can never manifest itself quite fully in a creative action of partial deterioration, adaptation. (Even as, transformation produces only a small but significant originality.)
Desire

Desire is often described as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is characterized by a feeling of wanting or needing something or someone that is not immediately attainable. Desire can manifest itself in various forms, such as sexual attraction, romantic love, intellectual curiosity, or a quest for knowledge.

Desire is often associated with the concept of longing for something that is beyond reach. This longing can be both exhilarating and frustrating, as it challenges the individual to strive towards their goals.

Desire can also be seen as a driving force in human progress. It is through desire that individuals are motivated to overcome obstacles, learn new skills, and make discoveries.

Desire is often described as an abstract concept that is difficult to define. However, it is clear that desire plays a significant role in human experience and behavior.
Reflection

"Synthesis: Density, dynamic density. How delusion is dense.

Virtual Fragments

"To find the fantastic form, or the engram, in its unison and
woven movement: keep together as possibility, whether it is what we
consider true or what only appears to be, which is now the object of
fantasy or the knowledge of the imagination" (Virtual Fragments II).

"The engram is the pure event of the sign of the point, the
Winkel. Equality the excellence. The inflection moves through
virtual transformations according to Bernard Cande they are:
the first are virtually and quasi by symmetry, the second
as of transformations in perspective: such transformations convey
the possession, the internal space, of internal spaces denoted by
hidden parameters and variables of simplicity of potential.
Thirdly the inflection cannot be separated from an infinite
variation on an infinitely variable curve. It resembles an infinitely
developed op infinity world containing more than a line and less
than a surface." (Oubare)

"Invisibility must form a base, convert evidence and new understandings.
When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the concept that will
necessarily be part of a rupture in the order of things. To anticipate the marginalities." (Kipax: Invisibility Machine)

Properties

Active. Both the conger and mediator of difference and the
social position of those points of change. A collection, a library of
transgressions. A network of vectors shaped among
other subjects by desire and knowledge. Inflection is a mesh,
conduit and a surface. It is a formal strategy to activate
unauthorized information. Inflection describes multiple territories.

Architectural Characterization

Fluid, complex but not necessarily formally. Inflection describes
not only physically but also an explication intellectual
multiplicity. Inflection resists itself is a doubling shift in
perception. As a genetic condition it can be understood
mathematically, however its character can similarly be understood as
an abstract intellectual action. Inflection is a traversal of
territories.
Knowledge

Knowledge is the product of a body driven to live and to conceive. They articulate themselves as intertext, merely ideas, abstractions and concepts, forgetting or expressing their own corporeal penumbrales and process of production.

Elizabeth Jane

Properties

Historical, political, narrative, dramatic, structural, systematic, ontological, temporal, analytical, problematic, cognitive. Both attractive and fearful. Invisible, apparently rigid but actually fluid. Both historical and transformable — through use.

Architectural Characteristics

Paradoxical.


"The idea of the book is the idea of a totality, finite or infinite. This is profoundly alien to the power of writing. The book is the encyclopedic reflection of theology: the destruction of the book becomes the surface of the text. that necessary violence, responds to a violence that was no less necessary. The metaphor of book are metaphors of containment, of extensority and interiority, of surface and depth, of uncovering of exposure of taking apart and putting together."

Jacques Derrida

Question

Again, how is the abstract described materially? How is it to be known, conveyed, the etiology of intellectual or cultural representation? To be profiled in some transduction, a transference of beginning collapsed into closure, and at the same time, closed out? — An illusion of closure largely created by the book materiality. It’s cover.

Jacques Derrida

Can more really finish?
Anno

Documentation

Nestled delightfully, and tenuous, patrimony of joy and pleasure.

Literal Fragments

"It is ornament that defines space."

"There is a gap, a lack, a break in the structure of the work that must be filled by ornament."

"In such an event, as in any event, it is what is never seen as material, worldly, earthly; it is included from the outset as abstract, a mysterious object of desire, dangerous because desirable."

"Philosophy understands itself as a grounded structure which is threatened by the concept of will."

Henry Clay

Properties

Sublime. Beautiful.

There you go. I have stated what we don't want to discuss, or at least what was not made plain to them. Isn't that sad? Don't we value a beautiful quality in architecture most perhaps excessively attractive but definitely sublime

Sublime is a beautiful word; try it slowly, see how it feels.

Theorists.

Architectural Characteristics

Rational.

People and disinterested, because of its form and the delivery of its threads, how it appeals as much of holes as of threads' meaning.

These are the most striking qualities belonging to liberty:

1. The picturesque nature of its fabrication.
2. For locomotion
3. Its use of natural, religious and mythical objects.
4. Its ability to relate natural objects.
5. It's very work provides us with
6. The importance of unity... mode in composition and feature

Revised Fragment 10M

Doesn't document, leaving a trace in French in 18th Century Enlightenment.

Edition
Symmetry

"Symmetry is the avoiding of difference and variation."

Greek text

"Symmetry facilitates the work of the mind, it enables the appreciation of the whole by viewing a fragment of it. Symmetry creates harmony and peace and is the very image of the human organism. The soul is entirely in harmony with the material structure - the very homogeneity that it discovers becomes" "purification, does not impress by reason itself."


goethe

Symmetry

A fluid double articulation, strongly coherent. Maybe identifiable symmetrical in this manner... Symmetry exists between desire and knowledge. Symmetry as the action of the dialectic.

Paraclinical geometry.

Symmetrical about a structure, mathematical, geometrical. About study of knowledge - science. About a phase of desire.

Architectural Characteristics

Active

The symmetrical building alludes to a structure, to a narrative that has all begun, and to a single dimension that follows the" "building's axis. The building like a single entity, the" "building itself." The symmetry is experienced in the filament of the project or in the overall" "classification. Symmetry enables the work to an underlying structure, force, strongly distinct. The pure beautiful symmetry activates doubt, what is the underlying structure? But in the same move ( move ) because I know it - my history has taught me to respond accordingly.

Questions

Does a symmetrical building have to be symmetrical?

What is the symmetry assembling and what does it attract?

What is its poetic consequence?
to curate a modernist labyrinth, a sequence of architectural moments and sequences."

Bernard Tshummi’s architecture and his Manhattan Transcripts remained important – although I didn’t use them as well as I could.

The idea was to use the Nine Muses as a way to filter or translate the brief of my library archive project and set up the architectural intentions or qualities. They were filtered into a set of concerns, each of which fell under one of the particular nine muses. I then made a series of nine qualitative images, alongside writing and assembling a textual account of those concerns. For the first time, I was making images and writing simultaneously. I intentionally avoiding drawing and tried instead to establish particular relationships, adjacencies and systems through this image/text work. All these relationships were spatial, but varied according to what was drawn into the image and how it could be interpreted. One set worked more directly with formal and spatial ideas, albeit in a diagrammatic way, attempting to capture a set of particular architectural qualities. For example, in one called Melpomene: The Muse Of Tragedy (Destruction), the desired relationship is one of contrast between an idea of the propriety of the institute and the raw desire for knowledge and learning. Demonstrating this push of one idea against the other, a rich red material oozes out of the vestibule to the Laurentian library. Another set, Erato: The Muse of Love (Desire) looking at gesture and the body and their relationship to architecture, places a body into site and adjacent to the existing building.

The last iterations are more metaphorical, but suggest form. In Clio: The Muse of History (Knowledge) explores an idea of the library as books, containing books, but reconfigured as a result of the digital and its consequence for libraries and the act of reading and learning.

The muses and their bodily presence represented a relationship between form and idea, form and meaning. Each figure was a personification of knowledge and the arts – a mythical, but bodily, inspiration. At the time, I foregrounded their role as a representation of a tangible, active desire to know, do and act. I brought word and image together, naming the visual and curating unexpected or provocative adjacencies, used as a mechanism for revealing key relationships of site, context or formal particularities.

Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

The Nine Muses project was presented along with a series of drawings and a carefully choreographed and equally weighted relationship between text and image, as my proposition for the State Library Thesis Project. This was the first time that I gave writing (text) and imagery equal weighting in the design process and in the final representation, and it came about very intuitively. The Nine Muses and then my State Library project beginnings, are now what I see as the beginning of an investment in allegorical process and collage used to explore a particular spatial or architectural quality. It is also the project that most potently began my reciprocal or intentional use of writing and drawing as an architectural process, something that I have explored again in this PhD's Seven Lamp Project. In part, this was an attempt to move away from drawing as my primary mode of architectural exploration and a response to criticism regarding the primacy of the drawing in my work.

This was the project that opened up text as being operative, generative to me in a new way. For this period of work, architectural and post structuralist theory was still important, but as a result of the shifts occurring in my own writing, thinking and my design work, I attempted to alter the role attributed to those readings. Rather than using it as a type of legitimating device, (something which, as I have noted earlier, I later became very critical in other practitioners’ work) I actively tried to reframe it and its role in design methodology. Rather than being a direct translation, theory and writing were used to capture a set of qualities or as a generative expression; an idea from which observations are made and riffs generated. Additionally the operative, transformative power of text and critique, of observation and naming, made through text, was becoming a powerful design device and interest for me. This was more an attempt to collapse the distinction between text and drawing, as described in my Traverse essay.

The mistake I made, as expressed in the next project, was not committing more to very specific architectural qualities and ideas. The ideas I proposed as spatial (like knowledge and desire) were too broad to make architectural without another layer of qualities and interrogation.
While, as I reflect below, there is a certain flatness to this project in its final form and certainly a lack of three-dimensionality, there are formal systems and expression that summarised explorations in the previous three speculative studio projects. Evident is the extended section, the rhythm of thresholds, open and closed volumes, voids, architecture working to frame site and itself and moments suspended between architectural forms. There is a definite sequence across the project that attempts a metaphorical account of learning, of consuming knowledge and the associated process of intellectual transformation. At that time, I was very driven by the idea that architecture could express intellectual or emotional processes: processes and states of transition that could manifest in a physical expression.

By contrast, given my interest at the time in poststructuralist theory, the work here is almost phenomenological in its intention. I was trying to design an architectural framework that resonated with experiences other than immediate physical experiences, including seeing, hearing or touch - but which was also perceptual, sensory and intellectual. The ambition, as I understand clearly now, was that the building became a series of notations, points of reference, of relief or contrast for those intellectual shifts. More simply, the building would be a series of enclosures, thresholds and openings - physical experiences - that resonated with the complexity of learning and knowledge. At the time I found this very hard to articulate and therefore found the building very hard to resolve.

There were long discussions with my supervisor at the time, Shane Murray, about the exact origins of lines and line work I drew. What did they mean and where did they come from? I have reflected considerably on those discussions for my own teaching. In hindsight, rather than focus on the individual lines, I feel the discussion would have been more useful had it...
been directed towards the ambitions for individual architectural moments, or the sequence of spaces, or the scale and the way it resonated with site or engaged site. Again, this feeds into a critical trajectory concerning retrospective architectural processes that represents a concern for where lines and form came from over and above what they might do and how they align with ambition, ideas and intent for the project, or architectural quality and relationships to context where appropriate.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This project marks a very definite moment in questions of authorship, process and the role of drawing in my work and how I could test my research and generative material. It confirmed for me the problems with some of digital and process based work – for example the work of Greg Lynn – where process stood in for and legitimated the outcome, without clear discussion of architectural intent and agenda in terms of form or strategic relationship to ideas and sites.

However, the project also revealed certain struggles and failures in my own work up to that point. This State Library project has a certain flatness, and clumsiness that reflects my struggle with translating my own drawings, and then trying to draw precedent into it. Because of my facility with drawing, and the fact that the drawings I made were “beautiful” - several critics wanted to direct my research interest into drawing as a subject in itself. These critics felt that I could draw, therefore I was interested in the subject of drawing rather than interested in architecture and the drawing was simply being a way I could get there. Even Murray’s discussion of my thesis project in the major catalogue privileges a discussion of drawings over the ideas I was trying to explore. I am not interested so much in a discussion of drawing itself, but more in the ideas that are attempting to be explored via the drawing. However, what was revealed was that I needed some other mechanisms for testing these drawings and my design ideas. At that stage, I felt it this might be in the digital or film realm.
Just prior to beginning my Sidney Nolan book, and just following graduation I enrolled in a masters with Pia Ednie-Brown at SIAL. This research, influenced by Ednie-Brown’s interests in Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Brian Massumi, Wilhelm Reich and emerging digital technologies, I decided to focus clearly on two things: the potential of the drawings themselves, and then a filmic exploration drawing on my interest in narrative and the digital potential of architecture. For several reasons, that research direction, only lasted a year. Most importantly, I came to find research into drawing for its own sake - mine or anyone else’s - uninteresting and a conceptual dead-end. This, combined with my growing frustration with highly abstracted theoretical readings, which at the time I felt did not help my architectural explorations or translations of my drawings, led me to this change. The intense abstraction was not useful and in fact could serve to distance me from what was needed to push the work into a more resolved and complete expression.

However, the drawings I produced at the time, I found compelling, and interesting. They have had an ongoing value for my practice. This series attempted to work more directly with a kind of Deleuzian idea of the drawing as machine – in fact, as a translating machine. I began with a generative sketch, a series of declared qualities and attempted a translation and refinement process on them. This process was relatively successful. A more successful drawing, was one in which I had already considered a spatial sequence - a narrative - that simply aimed to describe or capture more precise qualities I had been pursuing in earlier projects. These included the extended section: a series of open and closed spaces, and voids framed by architecture. Drawing also on Alvar Aalto and German Expressionism, this sectional drawing described a spatial progression that moved through a series of thresholds, conditions of varying thickness,
materiality and spatial quality.

Ultimately, however, taking them to another level of resolution was not going to be achieved through reading Deleuze. At the time, I couldn’t quite articulate what they were about or what to do with them. However, I had a growing sense that the answer was in looking more to the world, to site, to architectural example as a way to crack open a stronger resolution, or at least stronger understanding of the direction my work was taking.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

The PhD process has allowed me to clearly understand why I saw these drawings as lacking. The key here is translation. The material, and in some ways my drawings themselves, were too closed, too self-referential, and in my mind failed because there was little being translated. I should have spent more time integrating the latent ideas in them, even the formal and compositional ideas, which I now see were present. These ideas included the episodic section, a layering of thresholds and degrees of compression and expansion, and the undulating but flexible surface as a tool to engage site and program. At this stage, and perhaps to counter what I recognised as a tendency for abstraction in my own drawings, writings and reading material, my intuition was to look for practitioners and theorists much more solidly grounded in the real; in questions of site, typology and the civic. In this way, I felt those interests in ideas, desire, in poststructuralist thought, and in filmic narrative, would find a more tangible, meaningful expression.

I knew that a shift of my work was needed, but this became difficult because of the increasing writing commissions I was receiving. I that these were valuable and they also gave me a way to explore architecture and my interests although they limited my time to draw and design.

This stage was the beginning of a key stage in the evolution of my work: my positioning of the drawing as translation device, and as a mechanism for capturing, abstracting and translating qualities, including site. But what were the qualities to be given priority and what are the criteria by which translations are assessed? This is explored below, in the chapter on my Seven Lamps project, in which each lamp is declaration of a particular interest and architectural intention. Additionally, at the time, I saw very interesting parallels between these generative drawings and some aspects of the emergent generative digital material. The work discussed here occurred at a time when I completed several papers critiquing the digital processes and raising these questions of authorship.

One was titled Found Diagrams, Ready-made Objects: Between the Sphinx and the Chimera and Towards a Post Digital Design Praxis. The abstract reads:

Mark Jazombek, in Ready-made Traces in the Sand: The Sphinx, the Chimera, and other Discontents in the practice of theory, works beneath the skin of contemporaneity laying bare ‘the remnants of unresolved and forgotten debates that have over time been realtered, reshaped, and repressed.’ Jazombek takes us to the archotypical problematic residing at the heart of these ‘oppositional debates’ using Gustave Flaubert’s 1874, The Temptation of Saint Anthony and the antagonistic relationship between The Sphinx embodying ‘everything
conventional, doctrinaire, inflexible, and totalitarian’ and the Chimera ‘everything disruptive. facile, fleeting, and vapid.’ This paper is located within this context, taking for its subjects the equally problematic relationship between the digital, digital processes and their accountability within broader architectural discourse. Specifically discussed, is the way in which digital procedures and digital architectures are discussed in terms of their origins, resultant forms and their historical relationship.

The paper will develop threads specifically discussing digital architectures - their forms - and the authorizing processes, taking the critique beyond the technological, beyond the software. Specific programs and their operative potentialities will be discussed including Surface Evolver, Rhino and Cartia. One trajectory will trace the contemporary preoccupation with movement back to Heinrich Wolfflin, as discussed by John Macarthur in The Picturesque Movement-Effect: Motion and Architectural affects in Wolfflin and Benjamin and Wolfflin’s work on the Baroque and an architecture of becoming. My aim is to discuss proposals for additions to architectural curriculum locating these processes, projects and accompanying discourse within a broader historical framework of critique and discussion.
The next stage of design accounts for the period, in attempting to address perceived gaps in my work, when I switched my Masters enrolment from SIAL to the then UAL Masters with Professor Shane Murray and Nigel Bertram. I also began a self-directed digital education to find a more satisfactory and resolved three-dimensional expression for my work. There were three design research projects that comprised this work sited at Broadmeadows and Docklands in Melbourne, and then St Arnaud in regional Victoria. These were undertaken primarily with Nigel Bertram, following Shane Murray’s departure to Monash University. As a note, Bertram would then also join Monash 18 months later, at which point I changed supervisor to Professor Leon van Schaik and upgraded my Masters to a PhD.

This research focused on the identification, analysis and then design within what I term the middleground of urban and regional places. This condition of middleness, as it exists within urban environments, could be a place, environment or building - a condition that oscillates in and out of focus and resides within an indeterminate zone, but that is integral – necessary - for rich spatial and programmatic activity. By its very nature, this state is reciprocal, operating in relationship to context, activity and site. It is both a visual phenomenon – literally the middleground – but also programmatic or social phenomena. It is a condition that in its banality, its formlessness, may interrupt, somehow disturb or not align with preconceptions of an ideal civic or public place, but that upon closer inspection reveals itself to orchestrate and facilitate a rich and dynamic urban experience. The proposition is that this middleground - essential and compelling, somehow almost not there - is erased or marginalised within contemporary urban developments.
Through the identification of this condition, I aimed to develop design strategies and approaches for urban and fringe suburban contexts with the ultimate aim of isolating this condition of middleground through example. By understanding the way in which it operates, I developed design strategies that could be applied to fringe suburban places such as Cranbourne, Victoria. More broadly speaking, the research concerns urban design within new and fringe developments that resists a top-down blanket approach to urban design solutions.

Whilst I had begun to consider more directly questions of site and context through my teaching and writing commissions, this research was a radical shift for me. Most challenging was Murray’s and Bertram’s formal discipline and approach to site analysis and mark making. Very distinct to my education and my own work at that time, Murray and Bertram demanded an almost agonising precision in architectural form-making. Lines and forms needed to be accounted for in a particularly rigorous way but also particular to their architectural ideology. Generative drawings – or abstract drawings that might represent something more ephemeral - were not encouraged. Similarly, site investigation was very particular too.

This research was considerably different from my research to date. However, the shift also paralleled my increased thinking and writing about site, the landscape and architecture’s relationship to it. Along with my increased teaching and collaboration with Richard Black and Professor Sand Helsel, this period brought about a deeper understanding of site, site analysis and ways of observing site.

I learnt considerably from Bertram following Murray’s departure for his Monash position, and my last two projects were undertaken solely with Bertram. I strongly admired Bertram’s architectural projects with NMBW and also his teaching methodology. In particular, his clarity and demand for precision in what was said and done, what was studied, how that was recorded and drawn, had an ongoing influence across all my practice.48 Bertram’s focus on the particular, avoiding the general and attempting to approach site or place without prior preconceptions or judgements I found useful and interesting. From this research, I took with me Bertram’s precision of studying circumstance and behavioural site patterns as a way to understand the particularities of place. Characteristic of bottom-up design research methodologies, this practice of studying sets of relationships and behaviours is something I took into my own design studios and own research.

48. See Bertram’s discussion of precision and urban strategies and ways of looking in his PHD (2010), Making and Using the Urban Environment: Furniture, Structure, Infrastructure, RMIT.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

While the site analysis, research work and drawings across the three projects was strong and rewarding, the resultant design outcomes were not as successful. At the level of planning or idea they were compelling, but at the scale and resolution of individual buildings, my overall assessment is that the work is not as strong. However, several formal moves and strategies emerged, pre-empt particular interests, trajectories and ideas I would explore later via design and also in my writing and my teaching. In the Docklands project my juxtaposition of large scaled, quite abstract and orthogonal form into site as mechanism to disrupt and establish a new pattern of relationship, and to establish the missing middle ground. From St Arnoud in particular, I was very interested in the abrupt juxtaposition of typologies, the proximities and different building scales and types observed, buildings that operated as one type at the front and another at the back. I have drawn upon these ideas in subsequent design studies and teaching.

A comment I have previously mentioned, was made during a PRS by Nat Chard asking ‘how much more of site did I really understood by, for one thing, the UAL method of very precise line drawings made of context, or the photos?’ The panel discussed the potential that I had possibly misstaken the UAL site strategy, as the only site strategy. Or more precisely, that I was blinded by the rhetoric and attitude that accompanied what was a very particular methodology. As I have discussed, the panel and then myself, asked what was captured in my own more abstracted drawings about site? From this, I have considered that in the act of drawing, certain translations were taking place. Did my generative drawings, as a mechanism for site translation, perhaps work as mediator between my observation and my qualitative intentions? Were they not dissimilar to digital processes of mapping site that produced abstracted networks and fields? My hunch, not realised until the Reciprocity Studios and this PhD, was that the solution for my design work was to use my drawing process, and my particular qualitative character ‘sets’, and bring these together with interest in narrative, allegory and contextual relationship.
The agenda for my first series of design studios, ‘You and Mies’, and then ‘House Studio’ 1 & 2, (taught in collaboration with Marcus Baumgart) came directly out of what I perceived at the time as a crisis in architectural theory. At least, a crisis in how architects and critics speak and write about architecture, and how architects account for their design work. What was claimed for the architecture, process or architectural language, and what was evidenced by the building itself seemed to me to be at odds. I observed that it was problematic to talk about architectural language, what it looked like and where it came from. As I have noted throughout this PhD document, theoretical positions often taken from disciplines outside architecture were used to stand for or legitimise a particular ‘aesthetic’. I drew on Gusevich’s essay again where she writes: ‘The architect seeks to legitimate an aesthetic preference by using (or abusing), a controversial theoretical posture (position)”

In summary, these studios began with canonical architectural precedents and an examination through diagramming model making and writing of the work itself, whilst simultaneously examining what was written about the work by the architect and by critics. Working critically and analytically (and then later generatively), they were to come to terms with the building’s form, formal language and what that did and didn’t do, and how it related to context. Students were then to reflect and consider that in terms of the discourse around it. How could an architectural language be defined? What criteria could be used to test and assess those moves? How were deviations from the rhetoric of that language, accounted for? And were they, in fact, to be exploited?

YOU AND MIES
An Architecture Studio by Baumeister & Johnson

As working through the series of structural exercises the student has had to be exposed to the richness and diversity of Mies’ architecture, formal to confront the perceptual presence of both preformed simplicity and ordered complexity in the work.

The research undertaken in the exercise series has formed the basis of a proposal that has now been carried through to detailed resolution in the final part of the semester.

The Studio Program

First Week

Dissertations to the Studio methodology

- Establishing the bases of analysis and methods of interpretation
- Establishing relevant drawings & modeling standards that students must meet
- Establishing the expectation of structural critic's critique

The Archimedes of Husk, Greek and Philosopher

- The context
- The structure
- The nature
- The proportion
- The significance of Mies in the history and recent history of 20th Century architecture

Three Luminous Constructions (clerestory to be continued)

- Each modern reduction in a new analytical study of the problem to the Field Museum
- 150 – very large model
- Conceptual plan at large scale with section, plan, elevation
- 3D model with internal change in the computer as designed by student

Special Series: A final of primary expression

General principle

The studio have been required to undertake a series of exercises designed to explore the following aspects of Mies' work, or in order to be defined:

- Redeployment
- The inflection
- The improvisation
- The structure
- The surface
- The volume
- The division
- The proportion

The Final Proposal

The site is in Norway, a stretch of land between the old Town hall and the free harbor. Up until 16 months ago the site was occupied by a Mies site. With this imminent taking the old site buildings and occupying all of the site.

The Program

Is based loosely on Gaudin’s Gaudin’s plan to propose a site with a new “cultural project,” we have elaborated and simplified this to an artist in residence facility, with space for working, living and exhibiting.

Through the constrained structure outlined in their order to present the student’s have been asked to carry a project through to a realized resolution using the methods, models, and techniques explored early in the semester.

This has been a difficult studio for lower grade students.

YOU AND MIES, Johnson & Baumeister
KWW lower pool architecture studios.

Exercise 1

An introduction

A. Design the front elevation of a house. For this exercise you are to adopt the Mexican language. What ever you might think as at this stage, the Mexican miniature, and the architectural language at this point, however required from the knowledge you have so far.

Present this elevation as a collage on A2 paper. You can use computer or hand techniques.

B. Draw a plan of the house you have designed for part A.

Again continue with your Mexican language. This time pay particular attention to how Mies works in plan and how his language is presented in plan.

Present this plan in ink on A2.

C. Draw a Charcoal drawing of your scheme on A2 again responding to Mies.

D. Prepare your verbal presentation. State your theme and aims clearly.
A Fluid Analysis

You have been given a plan of a house by Frank Gehry. You must also a plan of the Barbara Pavilion.

Firstly:
• Use the scale on the Gehry building to scale the plan. This is a 1:200 scale. Measure a wall up to 200 cm mark on the Gehry plan to determine the scale of the drawing. It may not be an architectural scale – you will have to enlarge it to make it 1:50.
• Make the plan of the Barbara Pavilion 1:50 as well.

Now:
Both of these plans are of buildings that could be described as fluid, although they are obviously fluid in different ways. Begin by looking up the definition of fluidity in a good dictionary. Copy these definitions and read them thoroughly. Your task is then divided into two parts, to be done in any order:
• Produce a set of diagrams that describes, explains or demonstrates the idea of fluidity in both of these plans. The diagrams must be A3 size, the same scale as the plans.
• Write a short statement that defines fluidity as a style. This may be based on a comparison of the two buildings, or it may be a statement relating to your own idea of fluidity, or another, in either case you should make references to the diagram.

Due Thursday 19th August.

Yea and Nick, Johnson & Beaumont

PS:7241001
architectural stuff

Fluid Analysis

You are to now redesign the Barbara Pavilion in the style of Frank Gehry. Only draw your response.

You must consider what the style of Frank Gehry is.

You must produce a plan, 2 elevations and 1 section at 1:50. These drawings must explain your intention. Make the representations be about your proposal.

These drawings should be done on Vellum paper also called Crychaline. You can buy this paper at Ecclesley's. Use pencil and pen to construct the required images.

Also produce a diagram that explains, describes the "flow" present in your new design in the way that you did for last exercise.

Due Thursday 26th August.
Orthogonal Analysis.

Now shift your perspective back to the object...

Read Robin Evans' article 'Reasons at the Extremes'. Read it again.
Select a sentence, idea or paragraph from it that you find interesting, provoking or engaging in some way.

Study the image given to you, Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase.
Rearranged image, focus on the details.

Take your selected piece of text and the image whether it is a fragment of it or the image in its entirety and build a completely orthogonal response. Your response is to be made from card. It is to be well made, it is not a building.
There can only be right angles in this model, as any or as little as you please but it must be orthogonal.

Due Monday 9th August

The First retrospective

Summary
Orthogonality
Fluxity
Spatial Form
Movement and the subject
Unspeakability
Architectural language
Abstraction
Representation
Materiality and Mimesis
Structural expression
Truth in architecture
Mimesis/Work
Monody/typography
Drawing

All of these phrases describe issues we have addressed so far in the studio.

You are to select three or more of the above and elaborate on them in relation to the things you have documented in your work and what has been presented by the studio.

Prepare a tight concise verbal presentation in total for 4 minutes only. Consider and engage with all the factors mentioned and described at length regarding verbal presentation. Treat this as a serious formal presentation. We will utilise it as such.

You are to take a position in relation to your selected issues and incorporate that into your presentation.
You must be on time for all the presentations.

Due Monday 9th September
In the group exhibit "Fall and Pavilions" we worked on a kind of symbolic habitat in which found
resources in some form or other, to the basic human needs — a view of the sky, a piece of ground,
privacy. The presence of nature and of animals when we need them — to the basic human urge —
outward and control, to move. The actual form is very simple, a "pavilion," or enclosed space, in
which sits a "pavilion." The pavilion and pavilion are furnished with objects which are symbols for the
things we need, for example, a wheel image for movement and for machines.

A excerpt from Alison and Peter Smithson, Changing the Art of Habitation

Historically the typology of house has a rich importance within the practice of Architecture.
Often architects express their signature, their language, in a house project that provides a focus
and internalization of the architect's ideology and formal preoccupations. While this program is
thus rich with precedent it simultaneously provokes a serious personal contemplation with houses of
habitation and what the essential requirements for living and enclosure might be.

The studio will be offering inhabitants and exhibits the typology of house. We study
move through canonical examples like the John Soane Museum house, Mystery a cryptic
La Carabine's Machine for Living through the canonical modernist houses of Mrs. Eames,
Ravall, Nelson, Jane, Gropius & Biyoko and Libeski (Hill Multips) and end with Smithson's
and their question of habitation.

The first half of the studio will be structured about design exercises that critique the
canonical house project and the elements, parts that assemble to form houses and
habitation. These will include boundary, privacy, view, control, connection, intensity, exposure
and more ephemeral ideas of memory, place, tightness and heaviness. We will look at and engage
with possible formal mechanisms to articulate these desires such as wall, structure, furniture,ing,
section, material, orientation, materiality, image and surface. The process of their
transformations and final realizations in a house project being under intense investigation.

The second half of the studio will be a single house project through which the student will
focus their study and investigations. What will be the requirements for the inhabitant and how
might that fit into a broader contextual question of house, habitation and the future? There will be
the usual demand for excellence in production, execution, evaluation and thinking.

Workhouse
Exercise 2


The development of the house marked an intense and difficult negotiation between client and architect. It is not
sure if a photo responsible for the project or whether it was really a product of a union between client, architect
and architect.

Find a copy of Coelos' film Cenart or by Meiso, Takeo. Taking note of the Casa Milaparita Project. Take note
also of the complex relation. Coelos sets up between Objects, whether for houses, people, statues or even
landscape and the NARRATIVA words presented in the film.

Within the group you may only need to find a copy of a series of the book, copy and read the front, introduction and discussions on pages 736 to 47 and pages 46 to 44. Organize this literary context. There are also cope of the
drawings of the house at the back of the book. You will need these as well.

For tomorrow you do each complete a set of the drawings of this house. These should include elevations, plans, and
sections. You can work from the drawings in the book. Your drawings must be aligned through the x and y drawings.
Mark them to scale. You must work well, well, well, detail, detail, detail and detail in your drawings.

You are also asked to write a short 1 to 2 page paper responding to:
Critique the house interior to its evolution. Is this house more or less a reduction of the client's image of
himself? If so, how? From the floor and what you can see from the reading discuss a possible relationship of concept
and this house.
The Virtual House

The Virtual House is a representation of a house or building that can be viewed and explored in a virtual environment, often through computer software or other digital tools. It allows for the simulation and manipulation of architectural spaces and designs without the need for physical construction.

Conditions for a Virtual House:
- The site for the Virtual House is flat.
- The site of the Virtual House is to be a minimum of 250 square meters.
- The Virtual House should have a heat-shielding, shading, and cooling system.
- The Virtual House may accommodate two to three persons if need be and a domestic animal.
- The Virtual House will be exposed in some way to the accompanying description of a Virtual House for John Hancock.

Read the descriptives, readings, and conditions provided. Look at the way the other architects have responded to this brief. Don’t be afraid of the readings. It is important to be stimulated by them and base them on what you can. If that is very little then so be it. The important thing is to read the articles, look at the three examples provided, and think about the idea of the Virtual, and the idea of a Virtual House. Use this information as usual.

It is important to consider how you are going to present your idea, medium. Your drawings should engage with the idea of virtual potential. Does your project have to be virtual? If it doesn’t, what is important to consider about your project? Why is the language of your drawings and models so important to resonate with your idea? How can you incorporate the visually, potential of your design into your presentation?

Your task is to design a virtual house in response to the conditions listed above. You must present your design in model and drawing format. You now use computers.

Due Wednesday 19th April. As usual submission of this exercise on time is essential.

This project will definitely be one of the projects to be presented at Midsemester.

House: The Situation So Far:
- EX-1: House for Henry. Produce drawings of house for your client.
- EX-2: Casa Malaparte and Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh. Produce a set of drawings of the house and write a short piece discussing the evolution of the house.
- EX-3: Contemp. Student selected sequence from film, or characters, or a fragment of dialogue and built a series of spaces. Exercise presented in visual format.
- EX-4: LE CORBUSIER Villa Savoie. Introduce to Villa Savoie and general reading around it. Exercise to reproduce the series of images from the movie. Consider the question: How do we?
- EX-5: The Livingstone or the Reading Room. Consider what an interior might be. What is a machine? Design a living room set, no more than 3.33m. Five plans, elevations, perspective, sections, axonometric. Consider the interior relationship. Look at Neil Denning and Tom Blau’s work.

Naturally three exercises: were left till mid semester.

- Exercise: Research from the architecture and the buildings we will, do drawings of both works, read articles. Choose one of them and do a project in the style of the other
- Research from drawings by Monday.
- Talk in the style of the article.
- Drawings on Tuesday.
- Talk on Wednesday.

Twain Andes: Virtual House - Draw a section and a plan of the Virtual House. Build a model.

The Smithson: Imagination of the question of...
Workhouse II

This hands-on workshop allows the students to create their own projects. This work is broken down into its components:
1. Site and site analysis.
2. Architecture and design.
3. Conceptual design.

1. SELECTED EXERCISES

You must complete and present at least two of the following exercises:
- Field sketching
- Conceptual drawing
- Site analysis
- Material selection
- Color scheme
- Lighting design

2. HOUSE FOR MARY

We have explored the house as an architectural act in many different ways, and from many different points of view. Each student has been given a house to design for a client. This has been a challenging experience, but it has been rewarding.

In light of all that you have learned, you must now develop a preliminary proposal for your house. You must:
- Choose a house that is suitable for the client.
- Decide on a design concept.
- Create a site plan.

The following criteria will help you select one of the houses you have decided to use:
- Spatial efficiency
- Material selection
- Cost effectiveness

The house you have chosen:
- Vertical
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope
- Slope

3. BRIEF

The brief, also known as the architectural program, is a statement of the purpose of the building. It should be:
- Clearly defined
- Complete
- Detailed

Think of all the different purposes that the building could serve.

4. THE PROPOSAL STATEMENT

Propose a concept for your proposal. You must:
- Define the concept
- Explain the concept
- Justify the concept

The proposal statement should:
- Be clear and concise
- Be well-organized
- Be easy to follow

You must submit a proposal statement outlining your concept in writing to our office.
In addition, and responding to what I had not done in design studios in a detailed way throughout my education, students were asked to extensively draw and diagram the building as well as build large scale models. The result was students understood particular precedents very well and knew the buildings in detail. They then were asked to work in the mode of a particular architecture or bring together and evolve, reworking elements from particular buildings into a new site and programmatic context. Design investigations emerged from applying either process strategies, or design ambitions taken from the work, or the architect and applying them into a particular context and program. Throughout the semester, students made presentations on the architectural language of the precedents and then towards the end of semester, developed clear statements about their own work. How could the building’s or project’s appearance be discussed? How could the process and the relationship to precedent be discussed? Both Marcus and I, very committed to architectural drawings, also required students to thoroughly explore through architectural drawing and representation.

We carried this through into two subsequent studios, House 1 and 2, but this time took the house typology to work through similar issues. In this next iteration, the discussion about architectural language, intent and typological investigation could be usefully focused around this one type and an iterative design process.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

I was very interested in having students openly discuss architectural language, including their own and the work of others. The thinking and research in this period was critical for my later work and research trajectories, as will be demonstrated further. At this time, I was also invited to write and deliver a lecture for a core communications unit Portfolio – a unit that required students to reflect upon the first three years of their work and prepare a ten minute critical discussion of that work, its architectural language, the processes they used, its strengths and weaknesses. They also needed to make reference to precedent, historical or theoretical positions and give an indication of their future direction or design agendas as they saw them. I wrote and developed across many years, a lecture titled ‘Architecture and the Text’ which addressed directly the role of architectural criticism, its relationship to or implication for the architectural canon, and how we came to understand architectural meaning. The lecture also outlines practical ways and methods to speak and write about the student’s own work. I have been giving this lecture every semester since.

In this lecture, I quote Miriam Gusevich in her article The Architecture of Criticism

‘The significance and status of a building as architecture is not dependent on some preestablished set of attributes, on some essential features, but on its status as a cultural object established through critical discourse.’

This process of reflection for the PhD makes clear that my investment in writing and in design – and in the relationship between the two - was indeed begun in the early stages of my practice. The reciprocity that now takes place has been clarified and established through this process of reflection. The generative potential of text, the quality and power of text, is something I invested in seriously at this stage in my teaching practice.

This studio, The Poetics of Translation, run in collaboration with Dr Karen Burns, took the concerns of the previous studio a step further, in addition to drawing on a very different thematic base. Whereas the previous studios looked at what was said and written about the building in relation to the architectural object, this studio looked at the process of translation itself. The focus was on the ideas, intentions and agendas students explored and then how they were translated into architectural form. We used surrealism and the typology of the House Museum as a way to derive formal strategies, ideas and relationships. Looking at Surrealism and Dadaism as two currents of early twentieth-century modernity, the studio introduced students to the major techniques, tenets and artists of surrealism, whilst focusing on the central figure of Andre Breton. Breton, French writer, polemicist, curator and maker of Poem objects, was the ‘client’ for the studio’s major project: a house museum.

Students were introduced to the techniques employed by surrealists and associated artists: including the ready made, the surrealist object, Schwitters’ Merzbau, collage, the exquisite corpse, and the mapping and dreaming of Paris through Breton’s surrealist novel Nadja (1928). We also looked at and had students analyse the Terragni’s Danteum project (1938), Daniel Libeskind’s Extension to the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum (1989-99) and Johns Hedjuk’s drawings to explore how architects have used biographical, historical and narrative material, in translation, to give architectural form to cultural phenomena.

So whilst the commitment remained to having students articulate a response to precedent, to the surrealist material or the site and typology and material, the focus was on developing a method for translation – for setting a process within the studio for translation and for reflecting on that and committing to a particular idea.

Poetics of Translation:

Modern house to Andre Breton.

Kane Tuma & Anna Johnson

WK. one.

Introduction + Surrealism and Data Film.

Viewing of:
- Europe after the War: India and Surrealism, Arts Council of Great Britain, c.1930.

Discussion Topics:
- Key dates, Key figures. Definitions of Surrealism and Dadaism.

Required Reading for Thursday Class:

Exercise 1:

Use a box (any box or your starting point/box) as the starting point for a new object. The object can be anything: a sheet, a coffee cup, a rope, a postcard box, etc. Make a Surrealist Object. Think about its symbolic function, the choice of materials, the collection of objects located in the box, the role of proportion, scale, geometry, and surface.

Is it an object complete in itself, which can be exhibited, or could it be reinterpreted at a larger scale and inhabit a physical space?

You will be expected to explain what you were attempting to do rather than offering a chronological account of your process.

Surrealist Object.

In class viewing & discussion of:


Discussion Topics:
- Marcel Duchamp, Bicycle Wheel, 1913.

Duchamp's work on the nature of objects / Surrealist process. Difference between found objects, ready-made object and surrealist object. Themes of desire, the fetish object.
Pretoria of Translation:
Museum house for Andre Betton
Karen Burns & Anna Johnson

Exercise 2: John Broad, drawings and collage.
Part 1: Complete a set of drawings of the John Broad museum. You are to complete a section and at least two plans of the project. They are to be presented on A3 paper; you should use pen and pencil and a technique that will communicate a sense of the materials, the space of the building. You may want to look at the drawings of Piranesi. The Broad project is rich with detail, ambience and complexity. Capture that in your drawings.

Part 2: Produce an A3 collage. Working in the style of Kurt Schwitters, and using the Heide house, make one collage titled “Museum”; the other titled “House.” Use photographs of the building to help you. Use the collage to portray Heide House as a house, then as a museum. You will have to consider the idea of houses and museum. How are they different?

Engage with the process Schwitters.
Consider the symbolic content of the surfaces, textures, images that you use to make your collage.

Due Thursday August 2nd.

Pretoria of Translation 2:
Museum house for Andre Betton
Karen Burns & Anna Johnson

Exercise 3: Merci Column.
Your client, Andre Betton, has been thinking about the museum to be. He is drawn to the work of Kurt Schwitters and particularly, Schwitters Merci Column idea. Betton thinks that this should be incorporated into the project in some way and wants you to develop a Merci Column or columns. They must be used to define a transition space between a public space and a private space. Not only is this column to be a transitional, expanding element, but also it must lead to us and in the library.

In doing this you must consider whether you are designing a column or a series of columns.
Consider the difference between a series of columns and a wall. Are they the same thing?
Consider the possible symbolism of the column; consider the symbolism of the column in relation to space. Remember the Merci column is a fragment, an assembly and not a complete column. The Merci column also incorporates text and other objects, these function aesthetically and symbolically. You can use these to explore the ideas of column, gender, closure, fragment, and ruin.

Part A: Due Monday 6th August.
The Merci column is a transformation of the Doric order. Your column should be based on, and transform a classical column (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian for example) or a modernist column (a Corbusier column, Miles — been for example. In considering your column type, you must investigate your form’s architectural function and symbolism. You should present an initial drawing of your Merci column and explain your column choice with supporting evidence (images of the column type, text about it if appropriate).

Part B: Due Thursday 9th August.
Build a model of your Merci column in the library. This is to be made at a scale of at least 1:20. You must consider what spaces the column is adjoining. If the column (b) adjoins an exterior space, what is this space and what is its scale and size in relation to the other spaces (the buildings)? Use any materials you see fit.
Poetics of Translation: Museums for André Breton. Karen Burns & Anna Johnson

Exercise 4: Writers Interior.

With the work you have already completed in mind, and your growing knowledge of Mr. Breton, design an interior space. This interior is to be a writing space. It is to be secluded, use one or more of the ideas you have discovered and apply it to this space. Consider the way you assemble and design the architecture and the objects in the space. Consider the surfaces, the furniture and the forms of the interior itself. The interior could be generated by thinking of it as a sunken gala room or labyrinthine space etc. If you do face up one of these ideas you must consider what that space would involve and how it could accommodate a writing space.

You are to present this through drawings. No model is required, yet you must consider what type of drawings you are going to do. What will be your medium? How can you convey your intent through the drawings? Consider detail, surface...

Complete at least plans and sections at 1:20.

Due Monday, August 29th.

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Poetics of Translation: Museums for André Breton. Karen Burns & Anna Johnson

Exercise 5: Wall Project.

Select one wall of your interior and build a 1:20 model of this wall. You are to incorporate glass into the structure and function of this wall. (Some of you already have Breton’s glass in the wall or window...discuss.) Consider the wall space as an objet d’art in itself. Is there an opening for a window, a viewing device, a wall, a screen, a mirror or part of a display case? Consider what you are testing through or perhaps what the glass reveals.

You must decide whether the wall is to be the division between an exterior and an interior space or one interior to the next. You must determine the nature of each surface of the wall. What is the material, function, structure? What is between the wall? Is it just a supporting structure or is it an enclosure of some sort? Is it a bookshelf, cabinet or a habitable space?

Due Thursday, August 29th.

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Poetics of Translation: Museums for André Breton. Karen Burns & Anna Johnson

Mid Semester Submission Requirement.

Your mid-semester work will be due on Monday, September 16th at 5 pm. You should be picked up by 4:45 pm.

You are now working towards your final project: a House-Museum for André Breton. Read the brief carefully.

Site Work:

Complete some photographic overseas of the site. Deposit is through choice as an abandoned site, a site of history for Breton, a site of family for Breton. The site may surprise you. It is a completely different way, use photographs to illustrate your interpretation, your reading of the site. Design the way these photos are presented. Will they be a site map or a catalogue? Or something else?

Due Monday, September 23rd.

The next part is all due for mid-semester, however you are to bring it in the next week for review:

The beginnings of the building:

From the brief, saw the Louisian, Chambre des Fames, (or "My Room"), the Passage des Documents and the Public entrance, you are to think about these spaces and propose a sketch design for them. Although you don’t know what the overall building is going to be, you can start to think about the context in which these spaces will be located. Think about their role, the space’s volume, the external volume, the quality of the volume, the way in which they will be occupied. How will each space relate to each other? How will they relate to the other spaces included in the brief?

How will you deal with the existing building? Will all of your spaces be enclosed by it? or is it a new building project? How will these spaces be reflected in the elevations? Are they deeply cut into the construction of the building or are they pushed out or the street frontage?

You must consider Breton’s ideas, you are to do this study with a lot of his ideas in mind.

For mid-semester you are to pick up the following: a record of at least 150 images through these spaces. This section is to be placed on site. Oh these spaces need to be detailed and drawn with any notes, consider the other spaces and afterwards. The required spaces will be in focus. If you like, the other spaces can remain site unfocused, literally.

Complete interior perspective/ls of your spaces. What works well with each other? How will you treat the internal elevations of these spaces?

Having done the above, complete a final elevation at 1:20 of your proposal. Again, this is a sketch design stage, do all of it will not be realized. However, what you have to consider is how will your spaces appear in elevations, how will they impact on the elevation. Maybe you can’t be too town here.

Further, you are to submit your proposal for the museum of Breton and the proposal of house-museum be reflected in your elevation. This drawing should be done in context, that is, place the elevation on the site. Draw or college the site around your proposal.

Take care with these drawings, use a medium and technique that engages with your ideas.

Visual Presentation:

Plan your visual presentation, be able to discuss the key ideas and points you have explored. Address issues of the program, House Museum, the client André Breton.
The Brief: A House-Museum for Andre Breton

Andrei Breton, the surrealist writer, poet, critic, maker of objects and collector, has commissioned a house. It is located in the Swiss Museum in London, and asks that like Soutine’s house should function as a domestic space and as a testament to his life and work. He also the entire house will become a museum.

It is critical to consider the relationships between these two programs, residential and museum. Will they be entirely separate? This is almost impossible given the brief Breton sets out. You must consider what constitutes public and private space? How will you manage the transition between these areas, areas of space? Like Soutine, Breton will reside in the house while using many of its spaces in traditionally residential ways, as a work space, as a workspace for his archive and as a display space for his collected objects. Breton conducts occasional tours of the house and exhibits Soutine’s famous saddle horse painting tour of 1925.

A site has been chosen in Melbourne, one that will replicate certain Parisian conditions to which Breton is attracted. The site, at 259 Wellington Street, Collingwood is located amongst a semi-residential and light-industrial neighborhood. The block of land is currently vacant and under demolition. Breton of course is attuned to his limitations, the edges of two brick walls and a bible that lines the block. The site is very small. Breton concedes this point and you have the option of demolishing the adjacent building at 259 Wellington Street on the corner of Eddy Street.

Here is the list of spaces the client asks you to provide:

- a Sleeping Area
- a Sitting Area
- an Eating Area that will contain MoMA Oppenheim’s famous fire-covered tea-cup and the photographs taken of this object
- an informal Living Space
- an Outdoor Space: Terrace, platform, courtyard, garden, outdoor observatory for viewing the city. Breton does not mind.
- a Public Work Space to accommodate Breton’s two assistants who help him move his taxidermics and see his archive. At the moment two North American PhD students are serving each day to assist his collections and life. They will need to be accommodated too.
- a Private work space, the Writer’s Interior
- a Library to house Breton’s books and process objects. Breton describes this space to you as his garden of dunes, his “labyrinth of ideas”, his “refuse of tears.”
- the Schweins College Room, a formal living space
- a Chambre des Femmes, or “My Muse Room” says Breton. This space is a testament to Nadja and the women of Breton’s life. It is entirely private, the most private space in the house. It may even be a crypt. “These are the souls of my memories” amongst Breton.
- a Passage des Documents. An entirely private space, this space lies beyond the library and between walls to some Breton’s archived documents. In French passage also means arcade. Paradoxically this secret passage does not go anywhere. It can only be exited by its entrance. Breton is a little anxious about safeguarding his life’s work.
- Room of Surrealist Works, which is purely an exhibition space.
- A Formal Public Entrance and a Private Entrance

I want to live as a flaneur in my own home, declares Breton. I don’t care if the journey is horizontal or vertical, subterranean or heavenly, or easy in its meandering, but it must echo my own wanderings and mappings of the city, the site of my dreams, desires and musings.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This was the first time I actively set up and used narrative for a teaching program. Loaded with multiple narratives, the studio framework gave students several ‘in’s for evolving ideas and exploring them formally. This strategy, which I would come to repeat many times across the next decade of teaching, also allowed me to bring together a particular concept, idea, or reference with a very particular architectural element: the passage, the wall, the bedroom, the study, the column, the façade, etc. This allowed a progressive building up of formal material, content and design strategies for the student. We took fragments of surrealist mythology: the labyrinth, the ruin, the grotto, the secular altar and the garden of desire, and aligned them with particular architectural elements and spaces; a merz column and then asked students to design the particular architectural moments that, once assembled, would comprise their overall architectural response.

The results were very strong. Burns’ ability to animate theory and historical material in a lively and vigorous way was also invaluable for the studio’s success. An agenda I see now in my teaching, was asking students to move beyond the generative sketch, plans and sections and to commit to the 3rd dimension, the view and the view in context, much earlier in the design process. The results of this studio were better than my first two studios. Having the resistance of such strong conceptual material that could animate the architecture and the way in which the site was read - a derelict two-story terrace in Collingwood - fired the students’ responses and energy.

The studio also revealed to me a very alternative understanding of 20th century Europe modernity. In contrast to the dominant account of modernism – functionalism, the international style, and an architecture of discipline - this alternate modernity had a sensuality, a complexity of formal strategies and a rich narrative context. I reflected on the work of Max Ernst and Giorgio De Chirico at this time – figures that, as evidenced in my Seven Lamps project, became a leverage point for me to reread the Abbotsford Convent site and make an alternative narrative and a series of very particular spatial observations.
The next series of studios represented a dramatic shift in direction of my research. This move to consider architecture’s relationship to landscape and site came about for several reasons. The Nolan project opened up a very particular dialogue with landscape, the histories and mythologies that could animate that landscape and then how that could affect a rendition and engagement with that place. Also, and most importantly, the Nolan project cracked open a much bigger and very significant trajectory, as mentioned previously, of what could be inserted into that landscape. However, because of my previous studios’ successes and the fact that RMIT knew I was working on the Nolan project, I was selected to take students along to Bundanon NSW, the last home and studio of artist Arthur Boyd and wife Yvonne Boyd.

The studio involved stay of several days onsite in Glenn Murcutt’s educational short-term facility, with access to Arthur Boyd’s studio and work. This, and the context of the dramatic surrounding landscape, provided an excellent laboratory to test and explore several key ideas with which I had become increasingly concerned. Primarily these were architecture’s possible relationship to and engagement with landscape, and a questioning of what constituted Australian vernacular. It was the first time, as a designer, that I had to really deeply consider the landscape and, in particular, evolve strategies for students to research and design with it. I drew on previous strategies of sequential design explorations. We worked with the contrasting context of Murcutt’s building on site; his polemical approach and questions of vernacular; and Boyd’s more expressionistic and narrative-rich portrayal. I began the studio with exercises simply concerning methods for seeing it, looking at the landscape at a range of scales and viewpoints whilst considering strategic representational techniques.
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN PART RUNDOWN PROGRAM 2022

PHOTO ESSAY

Every great city in the world can be characterized by an iconic image which represents the fundamental physical relationships which distinguish it from another city. This may be in the form of a park, certain buildings and monuments, silhouette, outline or other particular aspects of that city. This image may incorporate cultural images of the city juxtaposed with physical ones.

(Diane Murray)

The purpose of the study is to explore via the medium of photography, the recording of a particular site experience. It involves the selection, documentation and transposing of images.

Taking the studio form as a starting point, you are required to take a series of images on the basis of the general or particular insight they provide into the nature of the site.

The series is to be in two parts (each with an equal number of images), juxtaposed within the series. The parts are to be thematically linked by an idea arising out of the experience.

You are required to use three of the following media, format your study in the method nominated and provide a 100 word explanation of the images selected.

MEDIA:
- Camera: 35mm reflex, colour print photography or colour slides scanned and printed.
- Camera: 35mm disposable camera, 4x5" A3, roll film etc.

(If it is intended to print film and review photography, please add details)

PRESENTATION FORMAT

Title: 95 x 15 ps, max 21 ps
Format: 190 x 150mm
Medium: Black and white laser copy images, or laser prints, mounted on 3mm board
Text: Explanatory or interpretive notes (100 words). 11 pt. Helvetica medium

SUBMISSION

(To be addressed)
Exercise 6.

Material surface studies continued.

Using your photo essays and now your new surface studies make three landscape interventions. These are to be placed around your library, they may be part of the library's function. This involves thinking about your library in a landscape context, it is not a separate study. It may be a sustainable coffee shop you want to design. Your intervention will need to have been designed to have a relationship to the library, perhaps one is another reading area, or functional zone. However, this is up to you, but certainly possible than function, use and placement.

You must present these at a scale of 1: 30 in plan and section. Show where they are located in relation to your library, i.e. show the CONTEXT.

These are to be drafted, accurate drawings, however how you accurately execute them, what texture you add to the drawings, what the weights you use are up to you. I will be looking to see that you have considered the medium and therefore what you have selected to ensure your intervention is designed for your project.

A setting up the ideas and final design drawings AND the project. They are not just a REPRESENTATION of your scheme.

Midterms will be held in week 7, Monday 22nd of April. A handout will be given with the details of the first project and what you are expected to present.

Exercise 7.

Back to the Wall, but in detail.

Select one wall of your library, one that has a relationship, either built or conceived. In your new landscape interventions and build a model of that wall at a scale of 1:120. Your chosen wall must be one that sits between interior and exterior. Some of you have quite open library spaces, so divide what is the interior of your library. Build your wall into the landscape and build the section of the landscape introduction that is relevant or closest to your chosen wall.

For this exercise you will have to consider how the wall transforms your views, interface and materiality, and indeed form, into a built reality. Remember that a wall has depth; its interior surface is often quite different in function and materiality to the exterior surface. What will be the construction system?

You must consider in detail, and build in detail, how your wall meets the ground, and how it meets the landscape. It’s environment.

When you do this reflect on your strategies to date you have engaged to ACT in this landscape.

Due: Monday 10th April.

Have attempted to read the new readings by Thursday so we can discuss them.

Mid semester is now 28th April, the brief will be handed out on Thursday the 15th April.
Bundanon Studio, Anne Johnson

The Brief:
A Russian venue. Mrs. Katerina Konstantinova has come to control new developments at Bundanon. She is concerned about the business of Bundanon, the Multiplex building was very expensive but the building is not making enough money to keep the property functioning. She is lambasted that the abattoir Filling will burn the place into a large scale wine gallery with restaurants, huge parking facilities and commercial like galleries. What are the advantages of the building and how can it be incorporated in new developments? Mrs. Katerina Konstantinova is somewhat disappointed with the efforts of the site. She wants to improve the facility for a hotel, but she also wants artists and creators to get a sense of the place. She plans some art exhibitions that will showcase the landscape, but she is also interested in the history of the place. Mrs. Katerina Konstantinova has a passion for climbing, and wants to see if there can be some way of including a climbing wall. She is thinking that, as part of this recreation program there could be a rock climbing wall.

Katerina was somewhat disappointed with the efforts of the site to date. It doesn’t address the complexity of the site to its full potential. She wants to respond in an understated, minimalist way. She also wants to develop a whole series of themes that has the same sort of character a hotel has a character, there is something with the scale and statement of the Multiplex space that needs to be presented.

This is what she wants new developments to include:

1. A site on the Riverside property for artists to work. This will include a larger workshop, but also some smaller spaces, some of which must be outdoor.

2. A library and an associated reading space. First a host a gallery for Kaffkas and the idea of metaphysics. The library should have a Kaffkasian quality, something that is Kaffkasian is something unchanging.

3. A small gallery that can host exhibitions but could also function as a place where films are shown, theatre or music, presented in performances, readings, or in exhibitions. It is modelled on the idea of the Boyd’s Brown room at Mullum Mullum. And as it will be called the Brown Gallery. Events and gatherings at the Boyd’s were remembered as “invitingly airy, utterly unpretentious, and always infusing in the atmosphere of proceedings that might range from insidiously tiny to thoroughly grand.”

4. A Boyd Gallery, a place for people to sit and meet, to paint. It could also function as an outdoor haven – an amphitheatre. This space will be a place in memory of Boyd’s painting hence the name.

5. A climbing wall, a running/walking track and a small rock wall.


Midsemester details.
For midsemester you are to present an edited collection of the work you have done so far. This means that all the coursework submitted should be present. You will submit the coursework in a single document. Do not ask them to talk about your reading of site and the type of interventions you may make to date.

Give a BRIEF run-down of those exercises, this would include your photo essays and all subsequent projects.

Conclude working on the brief and present your initial thinking strategies for the brief. You don’t have to present complete “planning” of strategies, but you do have to present strategies and some initial ideas for the individual projects. It will probably be more useful for you, if you spend time on all the elements of the brief and come to a conclusion – design understanding and representation of them rather than just focus on one part.

Present your ideas at a range of scales, that is what kind of relationship you are imagining for the 1:1 and 1:50 scale.

You are presenting to landscape architects and architects so ensure that you address your reading of site and how your project is going to engage with the site.

I will not specify what format your presentation should take, use whatever drawings, plans, photomontage, sketches, models, computer or otherwise, you think will best describe your project to date.

I expect that everyone will spend some time planning their presentation on the wall and what they are going to say. Use what you plan to the wall as the basis for that presentation.

You must be pinned up at 10:30 sharp Monday 25th April.

I will be looking for your interpretation of not only site but the brief and how you use initial materials to illustrate, represent that.

Good luck

Anne Johnson.
Again I deployed similar techniques of breaking down what would be a complex brief into components and using the iterative esquisse strategy to build up material and research. The final project was to include a gallery, studios and a library/archive that also had to exhibit site or an aspect of site. They were also required to design a passage through the site that worked between these different elements. Responding to what I perceived as gaps in my own design strategies at that time, I asked students to draw – in several different ways, and using different scales and techniques – quite exacting and long sections across site.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This was the first studio that drew on my book and writing commissions and allowed me to test ideas I was exploring there in the context of design. For this studio, it was particularly the issues of the how one viewed, understood and captured the landscape and then, having taken a position on it, also what to insert into that landscape. This was the first time I took my own interest, as expressed in my design work, in spatial narratives and sequences and expanded that model to robustly take on the landscape. My own stretched out section that worked across threshold and boundaries expanded once again to take in the landscape. This forced a new series of relationships and juxtapositions that immediately altered my own architectural dynamic and dialogue.

Similarly, although at the time, I didn’t see this at all, I strongly invested in the idea of narrative, immediately coopting the narrative elements into the studio, its structure and final requirements. Chapters and episodes became spatial moments and sites for interventions. I asked students to consider transitions between these moments, to consider them theatrically and in terms of their overall sequence. In this case the narrative content was the landscape and site itself with the figures of Boyd and his work as characters, as well as the backdrop of Glen Murcutt.

The studio was exploratory and conceptual in terms of mapping strategies; students were encouraged to explore the possibility of the brief as well, with some students actively taking on the idea of exhibiting site. The idea of a sequenced journey through site was very useful and I would use this for subsequent studios. Critically, I understand that this forced me to consider, in a way I hadn’t previously, that the spaces between buildings, between buildings and landscape, or site were architectural in themselves, and almost as significant as the building itself.

This was the first studio I had run solo and it allowed a rich ground work to set up a series of investigations that would remain relevant throughout the next decade. I was concerned with observations of site qualities, ephemera and histories and how they could register in the representation, the drawings and then in a selective way, in the building. Drawing on Nolan and Corrigan, I explored in this studio the possibility of inserting something abstracted and unfamiliar into the landscape as a way to form a register, a datum against which one could understand site. I developed these ideas later with reference in particular to the work and writings Linda Pollak and Anita Berrizbeitia - ideas that would have significant and longstanding relevance.

At this stage, my academic position at RMIT became permanent, (having had a series of part
time and contract roles thus far). Still involved heavily in the Nolan project and based on the
success of the Bundanon studio, I reworked the studio and ran it at Heide Galleries. Again, the
studio was a success in terms of student outcome, but also the conceptual clarity and shift it
enabled. I would run twice more. With Heide’s collection of buildings, the original Victorian
Weatherboard cottage (Heide I), the McGlashan Heide House gallery (Heide II) completed in
1966, and O’Connor + Houle’s 2005-06 redevelopment and extension of the Heide III building, this
was a fertile and highly productive site. I continued the discussions of the Australian landscape;
architectural engagement with the local identity and possible vernaculars; whilst expanding
the context analysis to address the cultural, political and historical narratives of site.

Students engaged in more thorough way with these references and precedents. Following
discussion and review of the previous studio from Richard Black and Sand Helsel, I tightened the
program considerably, also taking on more precedents and readings, particularly from Linda
Pollak writings and Carol Burn’s and Andrea Kahn’s Site Matters, Design concepts, Histories and
Strategies.53

I devised a stronger series of esquises and conceptual positions from which to run the studio. I
actively took on the idea of architecture exhibiting site, as well as demanding an engagement
with the site’s art history and critical and analytical studies of the McGlashan Building. The Nolan
and Angry Penguins material enabled a debate around what could and couldn’t be placed into
this landscape and setting.

Because of what was revealed by the Nolan material and the previous studios to date, the idea

Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies, Melbourne,
RMIT University Press.
Exercise 1

Trace Concepts: Landing, Grounding, Finding, Founding. ""

1. **Landing.** Landing involves the passage from the unknown to the known, from the vastness of the outside world to the more exact boundaries of a specific project.
   Select a small site quickly. It may be in the city, around RMIT, near your home in the Exhibition gardens, anywhere. But find one quickly. It must have an intersection between "the ground" and a building. The area you are concerned with should be no more than 3m x 3m. It should be a small site. Photograph the entry into your chosen site. It may have one entry, it may have several. However, it should be located at the boundary - which will be determined by you - between your site and the surrounding context.
   Photograph the approach at 1m intervals. These images should reveal the context of your site.

2. **Grounding** is more about reading and understanding a site through repeated visits and studies.
   Having selected your site photograph two surfaces of the site over a period of 6 hours. One surface should be a built thing - a building or structure of some description and the other surface is the ground plane. Photograph the surface from the exact same position and the same angle at half-hour intervals.
   Whilst you are there make All drawings of the site over the same time.
   These drawings should capture the changing quality of the site over the time period, the can be about an observed geometry or physical aspect of the site.

3. **Finding**, may be the result of a fleeting vision or some resonating echo. Finding usually discloses the evidence to support one's initial intuitions about a place.
   Study your drawings and photographs, what is the quality of the boundary between the ground plane and the built object? Make one image, a drawing of that interaction that captures your observations about the site and the boundary condition. This drawing/image must draw on your photographs and drawings. You can use them together, overlap them, fragment them, or use another method that is appropriate.

4. **Founding** is a reaction to something that was already there... founding can be understood as bringing something new to a place. Something that may change and redefine a particular site.
   Design a structure that will be located at that boundary point. It should be a long as your site. It will be a structure that responds to that boundary condition and to the surface qualities of the adjacent surfaces. Its only function is to bring to the fore, make apparent that interaction. It may be a path, a viewing platform, a shelter, a wall, or an abstract folly.
   This is to be presented in section, elevation, and plan in context at a scale of 1:20 you not set whatever medium you choose. But be selective. They are to be drafted drawings - not freehand. They can be done on the computer.
   It is a small design.
   Also pin-up your photographs and drawings.
   This is quick, intensive design exercise intended to get you looking, recording, acting, drawing and thinking quickly. Work fast and make decisions rapidly.

Due: Monday 29th July
The Brief:
For decades quietly unknown to us, Russian woman, Mrs. Katrinia Vasselli has come in control of new developments at Home. This has caused sour end of political control within the Home circle. However, she is a protege of Ilaria Vasselli, one of the artists who set me at a festival and being wealthy and persuasive she is in position to propose alternative planning strategies for future developments at this somber and historically important site.

Katrina is concerned about what needs might become, the proposed developments are very expensive, but currently the property is struggling to maintain the existing facilities. She is leading the proposed developments to turn the site into a large commercial gallery network with emphasis on exhibiting contemporary art. This will be the home of the Home’s Reeds, and their life at Home fostering creativity and supporting artists, these new developments don’t seem to be in keeping with the scale and sociality of what the Friends established. She knows both the Reeds were deeply concerned about the landscape and how the property could be extended. While they certainly wanted people to explore the property, enjoy its beauty and experience the art and the history of the place, they don’t imagine this should be an institution of Home.

With this in mind Katrina wants to investigate alternatives. Katrina is an unusual woman, she has an intense knowledge of the Anjou Penguine project and the site generated from that time. She knows their role well, had a serious investment in the event, expressed enthusiasm, assertion and in developing an Australian modernism that took its direction from Europe but also engaged with Australia’s own cultures, mythologies, histories and narratives.

Katrina is interested in the processes painters like Nolan, Boyd and others from that generation worked; they painted in an exploratory and experimental fashion. They meet experiment, work together and share. She would like to engage with this idea in a similar way. She wants to increase the sociality of the site in a way that integrates art and culture and history of the place. There is something side monumental about the way the building is arranged, the landscape, the way the space between the building and the landscape looks quite unique, and she wonders if the site could be developed further. She wondered if the site could be developed further. The idea of the site is to be a mixed-use site, an intervention that actively engages with the surface and qualities of the landscape.

1. Landscape.
A Nolan Garden tree will be what Sand follows named the articulated biography. It will function as a place for people to sit, eat, rest, and walk through. It might function as an outdoor theatre for events and meetings, and in particular, it will provide a backdrop to the Reeds and particularly Sunday. This place will be a kind of memorial for Nolan and his work.

This place is to be a designed site, an intervention that actively engages with the surface and qualities of the landscape.

A small museum that might exhibit some things quality about Home and its history. However, you may propose that it is just existing site. It may be a temporary museum with changeable exhibition space, and a building that can be adapted, expanded, and its features. All with the museum you have been working on part of it, in fact, will be submerged. To what extent the museum is underground is up to you. You have already begun working on this project and can develop your existing project or change. Ideas of memory and living will be important. You must develop a reading of the program of museum.

The Reeds and Nolin were interested in Kafka and the concept of metamorphosis (you don’t have to become an expert in Kafka) but you might consider what the idea of metamorphosis could be for a museum. The museum should have a Kafkaesque quality, something is Kafkaesque is something uncanny something having a strangely almost surreal quality. The museum would be somewhere quite beautiful, and living with wonder, but it also has a kind of "transcendental logic to it.

A small gallery that can hold exhibits but also function as a place where films are shown, theatre or music played or performed. Readings could take place there. Katrinia wants the building to engage in the tradition of what the literary appeal in Home 1 was for the Reeds and for their visitors, i.e. it was a site of intellectual and artistic engagement and production.

4. Workshop.
A place for artist to work, including a large workshop and some smaller spaces, both indoor and outdoor, for working. Artists have worked here for over one hundred years and the clients have been to maintain this tradition.

5. Path.
A track for walking, running, or just exploring the property. This track should be understood as a way to order your individual pieces and a way that will follow a spatial narrative through the site and through your projects. What will be the starting and exiting points for this pathway? Now you must meet with your projects.

Katrina is willing to consider reconstructions of these programs if the designer is able to articulate them clearly. However, in science you explore architecture and historical styles to provide a backdrop to the transformation. The site of the facility the landscape with curiosity and historical context, but also their role and what should be the narrative that accompanies the story of the site or the history of the site or the history of the place. What will be the narrative you give this landscape?

Stay in the groups you were in for the reading session, but this time you must research the following and do a presentation for next Monday’s class with images of some description.

1. Heide.
   Research the history of this place, this institution. Who are the Heides, what did they do? Have you given a schematic introduction now you look this out. What kind of people were they? What was their relationship to the landscape, their artists, to art and culture? Who were the people that shaped them? What was the Heide artists’ cultural agenda? What is the remit of Heide? Be critical. Think about what you are reading and seeing. What do you think Heide has become? What is its role for Melbourne?

2. The Heidelberg School of Poets + Banks + Nolan
   During the late 1980s a group of artists set up camp around Heidelberg. Who were they? What were they trying to do? What was their vision of the landscape? How did they regard themselves? The next part of this is Nolan and his vision of the landscape. How did Nolan’s work differ from the Heidelberg School? What narratives does he bring to the landscape and why did he do what he did? Why did it work? Give a brief discussion of Nolan’s work up to 1998. Talk about the daily series, what do you think they are about? What might be some of Nolan’s influences? Be critical.

3. The Angry Punks.
   What are they? What did they do? What is the magazine about? What is their cultural agenda? Where does it come from? What is their politics? What is their correlation and relationship to the Heide? What were their influences? Talk about the En Muddy affair and why it may have happened.

4. The architecture and objects at Heide.
   What is the architectural history of Heide? What is Heide 2 about? What is Heide 2’s relationship to landscape, art and living? Describe the architectural landscape of Heide 2. What is the history of Heide 3? What do you think the building? What do you think of its function? What is it used for? What is the history of the objects at Heide? Along with the sculpture? What are the sculptural objects at Heide? What is there about the artists and their period do they belong? What relationship, if any, is there between the architecture and sculpture?

Measured drawings of the boundary condition between landscape and architecture.

Taking the Heide 3 building, as the site for examination, choose three points at the edge of the building and produce three measured sectional drawings at each of these places. Produce three views of each place, and produce three measured sectional drawings at 1.50 but more than the edge of a wall and one of the surface, go through the direction of the building and one of the surface. Make some notes and include these in your drawings.

You should work in pairs for this exercise. Some of the surfaces may not be known exactly how they are so you will have to make an educated guess. What are the boundary conditions?

The exercise is intended for you to engage rigorously and accurately and intimately with the transition from built form to landscape.

You must draw the ground plane accurately as well. This means measuring plants, trees that come in your path. Observe and record the changes in ground level.

These drawings are to be drafted, but you must consider how you will draft present these drawings. Consider line weights, surface treatments, medium, paper. It can be done on computer but you will have to address all of the above.

Freehand sketches of the sculptures. (Individually)

Make a series of freehand drawings of these sculptures. They should explore the relationship of the sculpture to the landscape at different perspectives. The drawings should take into consideration the collapse of perspective on the sculpture, i.e., what is the place of a sculpture in general?

This is about how you are making these drawings. Describe your line work, texture and composition. These drawings are quite small, but the objective is that you try to capture draw your readings/observations through the medium of drawing.

Due: Thursday 9th August.
Inside and outside of architecture. Landscape + Architecture + Mind.

Exercise 4.

Part A.
Take your observations you have made about Heidi 8 and its relationship to the landscape and produce a series of DRAWINGS that explain these observations. Your diagrams can be sketchy, can be drafted or incorporate text but they must be CONSISTENT as a set. You are producing a series of these sketches to portray your observations. They are to operate as a system, an axiomatic set, or drawings that reflect your analysis of Heidi 8 and landscape.

They must be an ‘A’ size and they must be progressive i.e. move through an idea or your observation.

Part B.
Using what you have discovered from your diagrams, design a wall that is to be placed into

The function of this wall is to exist/build / test your thoughts/observations from part A and previous exercises. So the exercise is one of TRANSLATION. The wall has another function you must be able to see through it to one of the sculptures at遗址, that you have previously shown. So, the wall need not have any relationship to the sculpture. It can take on some of the qualities of the sculpture or it can be just about relating that sculpture in a particular way.

There are a few wall to be decide, spaces, meets the ground it defines movement. It has several SHAPES, it has a structure. It can hold things in between these forms, it can have open, it can contain things.

What role or symbolic role might those slots take on? Is there an idea of interior and exterior within? Is it that none exists? How close to the sculpture will you need to place your wall?

You must explain carefully how your wall meets the landscape and what the landscape does around the holes. Does the wall go well below the ground for one? How long is it? Is the wall only vertical? Is it curved? Does it bend? Does it make an enclosure?

You are to make a model of this at a scale of 1: 20, preferably 1:10. You must make the model carefully, show how it meets the ground plane. You should build it into a ground plane to show what the relationship is to landscape.

Due Monday 12th August.

Inside and outside of architecture. Landscape + Architecture + Mind.

Exercise 5.

Eristic operations of Heidi.
I use this term eristic here to refer to a mental operation that may be pleasurable but may equally be arousing, deadly, injurious, or otherwise.

James Conner

Sensate forms, which according to Finis see separate from objects and impel themselves on the way like a sensation or a sign may, the formative, which are vouched forms of those impressions packed up by the imagination in the absence of the objects that originally stimulated them...those appearances which move between sensations and realities.

Part A.
You have discovered several of the “narratives” that make up Heidi. Some of those are historical, contextual, artistic, physical, experimental, architectural. You have also began to explore the site of Heidi and its particular physically.

Select a site at Heidi that crosses over a physical boundary condition. It could move across contours, across and through different landscape conditions, or move from a transition of built forms to unbuilt form. It will be the site for a series of drawings. The site should be no more than 0.5 to 1.5 meters. That dimension can form any site geometry you choose.

Select two of the non-physical narratives that exist at Heidi. You are to produce a map of your chosen site, taking from Conner’s discussion. It must address the actual built qualities of site – contours, planting, landscaping, dimension, quality of light, ground texture. But it must also indicate the non-physical Heidi narratives we have discussed.

Do this in pairs. This drawing should be Ax. It can incorporate diagrams, it can be spatial. Don’t just collapse a picture of angry pumpkins into your map. Think how you can translate those facets through other mediums and visual languages.

Due Monday the 19th

Part B.
Read the article on Museum. Build a collage of your idea what a museum is.

Individually

Also Club Monday 19th
Exercise 6.

Exotic operations & ideas for a small museum at Heide continued...

Some notes on materiality, memory and abstraction:

In 1993 the sculptor Joseph Beuys stood the entire Konrad Fischer gallery - ceiling, floor, and walls - with copper sheeting. He also removed the door of the gallery, which was located on a narrow street in the medieval section of Dusseldorf, thereby permitting anyone to enter. The installation, entitled Lump, opened a breathing space in a tight section of the city. The thought of the lump of copper was a reference to Beuys' mythological repository of maps that enters the body through all its pores. The immediate associations are evident copper is commonly used to carry, store and heat liquids. Copper pipes, rods, and pins come to mind along with their lustrous, smooth and soft surfaces. Beuys created an intermediate space between roof and a part, an interior and an exterior. Here the fluids of the city mingled in the brown acid transforming the copper from dark brown to green.

Why has contemporary architecture forsaken such a rich ground of associations, the details imbricated in the darkness of materiality?

From Beuys' Opera, Work by Frank Gehry, Architecture Studies at the Center for Applied Art

The more abstract the truth the more you have to reduce the senses to it.

Metaphysics, Beyond Good and Evil

A. Material surface studies.

Use your photo essays as a starting point and make 12 possible surfaces to become part of your museum project. These will be presented in the same way as the essay photos.

They will be based around four ideas:

- Lightness
- Mundane/quality
- Transparency
- Opacity

You should match three images for each category. You will have to look closely at the images you have made and manipulate them. You may view into a particular section, overlay parts from another image etc.

These are abstract studies - meaning that of course you will not be able to go out and build them. However, I want you to look at the materiality that you documented and proceed through those exercises make possible surfaces from them. They will inform the walls, and surfaces, both horizontal and vertical of your museum project.

This is a way of capturing a sense of place or a record of place, but through the abstraction and the process of image manipulation you will generate ideas for possible materiality and form for your museum.

You can make these on a photocopier, on the photocopier or by collage or by any other means you see fit.

B. From these studies make 2 walls of your museum and 2 ground planes - one exterior and one interior and collage - draw them into the site you mapped out at Heide.

You must decide how these walls relate to each other and to the city. Where will you place them? How will you place them? How far inside the ground will they go? What happens to the landscape when one of those intersections? Will your walls be turned or orthogonal? How do they transform or purely survive?

Present different views of your walls, and different scales of your walls. Near, middle and far.

The museum is to be small - certainly no bigger than the site you picked out. Some of it will be outdoor - maybe this is an on-site museum gallery. It must have a place where people can sit and read or write. It could be a two-seater, or just a transitional zone from the interior of the building to the exterior.

You may not know what the complete museum is yet, but you have enough material to make these two walls and two surfaces. Again consider the function of the wall, consider what the interior and exterior surface is like. The museum should also come from your experiences, your discoveries, your observations, your researches and your investigations of the site.

Pseudonymically, it will be called the Endless Museum, a term appropriated from Jorge de Borges. What is endless about it is up to you.

One requirement however is that part of the museum must be submerged. To what extent is also up to you.

C. Complete the museum project.

You can present this however you see fit. However, you must include two sections in context - that is, stores the site surrounding it. You will need a plan also in context and some views. Experiment with your representational techniques - attempt to engage this activity by the ideas that drive your exercise.

Due: Part A is due on Thursday the 22nd August and will be presented after Sand gives her presentation.

B is due on Monday 28th August and C is due on Thursday 29th August.
Inside and outside of architecture. 
Landscape + Architecture + Fields. 

Midsemester details. 

For midsemester you are to present an edited selection of the work you have done so far. This means all the exercises submitted should be presented including your photo essays, surface studies etc. Obviously you will not have time to discuss all of them in detail. However, you should use them to talk about your reading of the site and the type of interventions you have made to date.

Give a BRIEF explanation of these exercises.

From the given brief you are to:

1. Select the sites for your projects and the path.
2. Produce esthetic maps of your chosen site. Meaning that you must map, record your chosen sites in the manner that you did for your museum project. You can keep the same site for your museum if you wish and therefore the same mapping information will be provided. Make sure you assemble basic topographical and physical recordings of the site. (You may not get all of the site work done, or be able to make maps of all the sites, but complete as much as is possible)
3. Explain your initial sitting strategy, using diagrams, and your photos and the maps. Discuss why you have chosen your sites. Is the boundary conditions you are interested in, the sites relationship to the other buildings or to the landscape?
4. Begin to explain how you want your interventions to relate to each other and to the site. Again use diagrams or drawings or both to explain this. Try to translate all your ideas into drawings, images and diagrams. Present any initial ideas for individual projects using diagrams or drawings. (You not have many yet... which is ok)

You should begin to outline your initial response to the brief. Don’t just focus on one part; try to think about the entire strategy and all the projects. I am not expecting complete buildings for midsemester but rather sitting strategies and beginnings.

General comment: Plan what you are going to say, what your presentation will be on the wall, and take care with how you make your drawings, maps and diagrams.

Midsemester is on Monday 8th of September. You must be piloted at BV 4pm sharp.
of architectural threshold became important again. At what point could a wall expand and take on the qualities of an enclosure? Could the wall be loaded and operate as threshold, boundary and shelter all at once? Again the idea of sequence and the narrative journey through site was very important. I consolidated the idea of the ‘walk’ from the Bundanon studio, also making reference to and drawing on the work of Land artist Richard Long, but also locally Professor Sand Helsel and her research work. Students engage the site at a range of scales and ways, and make a series of buildings insertions adjacent or proximate to the differing conditions of river, buildings, edge conditions between paddocks, manicured landscapes and the bush. Model making was also brought into the studio in more thorough manner. It was during this stage that I also shifted my then Masters from Pia Ednie-Brown to the UAL Masters stream, led by professor Shane Murray and Nigel Bertram.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

This studio consolidated the previous ones, taking on the poetic, narrative-rich content as I had done in the Poetics of Translation. This suite of studios established a robust armature for the delivery of design teaching. The rhythm of exercises, scale of projects and deliverables were good and clear.

The outcomes were driven by very careful reflections of the relationship between landscape and architecture and also by the way in which architecture could take on these alternative narratives, histories visible and invisible, as useful and provocative design material. The studio and its outcome therefore worked as a critical exploration of these ideas. The resultant architecture was operative and open. The better examples were propositional in the way they addressed these issues and thus served as a spatial solution but also as a critique of this research field. Additionally, I transferred my own interest into my expectations and requirements for final drawings and representation. My own commitment to the drawings, detail and also the qualitative aspects were evident in these studios.

My investment in the idea of sequence and spatial journey throughout site, led me to reconsider the role and idea of the architectural view. The experience of this architecture could not be best accounted for in the traditional ‘hero shot’ perspective, where the object takes up centre stage. Rather it was the peripheral view that was just as important, if not more important. This idea resonated with my cinematic and narrative ideas, leading to a reconsideration of the character and the role of view and representation. Traditional views did not account for the critically important experiences. De Chirico’s views and viewpoint captured architectural experience more accurately. How did one translate or communicate the moment of shift from one condition to the other? And how could one communicate the reciprocity of landscape, context (in its broader sense) and architecture? This demanded the view was critical, (as it had not been in my own work previously) but that it needed rethinking to account for this role. This sequencing of a very particularly viewpoints was established in the first series of landscape studios but would evolve and become central to subsequent studios and also my own work. This would also lead to me working though the view, and with sequential views in the design development stage of the studio. Designing into these views, the peripheral view - where architecture accounted only for a fragment of that scene - was an interesting a new design generator.
The next studio, although a one-off and in some ways out of sequence, came from ongoing discussions with Inger Mewburn. She was interested in running a studio with me that worked across ‘analogue’ drawing skills and the digital. Having just completed some articles on Corrigan’s Niagara Gallery, the Athan House, and my Nolan book, I was increasingly interested in German Expressionism and what I perceived at the time as a trajectory of formal and conceptual interest through local architects, including the Griffins and Corrigan, to current digital interests. This studio also allowed me to reinvest – in perhaps a more speculative way – my cinematic and narrative interests and my early investment in the role of generative drawing and model making.

We choose the Griffins Newman Collage as a site for the studio and a place for a series of digital and analogue explorations. As historian Conrad Haman writes, this building demonstrates these architects’ central themes of ‘crystalline ornament and the expression, or the ordering of movement through line.’ Working with 3D scanners, modelling software and also hand drawing, and my interest in formal and architectural spatial sequences, the studio tested questions of authorship, generative design processes and again questions of translations. The studio provided the context, for me to reinvest, or refresh, relationships of writing and naming and architectural process and drawing. Haman’s writings on the Griffins, including particularly his catalogue essay accompanying the exhibition ‘Walter Burley Griffin, A Re-View’ Monash University Melbourne in 1988, were fertile ground to begin this discussion. I had always been drawn to and found compelling Haman’s rather suggestive, plastic writing and his way of writing about the Griffins resonated strongly with my own architectural interests, as did the way in which the writing became experiential.
Lower Pool Design Studio
Sense and Sense-ability

Tutors: Anna Johnson and Inger Mewburn
Lower pool studio - medium
Course code: Arch 1071
Times: Monday 2.30pm - 5.30pm, Room Number: 8.11.39
Thursday 6.30pm - 9.30pm, Room Number: 8.12.38

"Design is as often unconscious and intuitive as it is conscious and procedural... The key word is alive. The designer must develop an electric sensual perception if he is to create an original design: his eyes, hands, ears, nose and tongue must be alive to the physical world around him. His senses must be free to absorb and sustain such away shapes, textures, smells, sounds and tastes as stimulants for future reference."


New generations of contemporary digital architecture rely on procedures and systems of inquiry that place the qualities of the final creation on the generative operations of computer technologies. The resultant forms are not necessarily 'organic' but have a newfound importance having undergone relief and legitimation through these processes. The forms, often summarized as 'digital' sensuousness and expressiveness, have particular persuasiveness. Yet these forms are not unfamiliar, almost unacknowledged or at least absent from their discussions, is the architectural history of these 'formal' languages or sensibilities. Dialogues can be drawn with the Baroque, the Rococo, and then in the 20th century to the German Expressionists, Russian Constructivists among others. Why is it then that this architecture is for the most part discussed in terms of the process that generated them and not in terms of the actual architectural form?

Architectural process, that is the concepts and procedures architects use to get from idea to the final form, is a phenomenon that has become both fashionable and much discussed in recent history of architectural theory. By comparison the artist is not asked to defend their work in terms of their process whereas the architect or the architectural student endures intensive sessions of criticism and judgment about the genesis of their ideas. However, as Shona Murray has argued in her recently completed PhD there seems to be an increasing gap between architectural theory (and hence I include process) and the resultant forms. The dilemma made for the building and what the building actually does and is can be two distinct
things. As Peggy Deamer writes, the architect seeks to legitimate an aesthetic preference by seeing or doing, a controversial theatrical posture.

In this studio students will be exposed to various 'architectural processes' from past and present. The studio will culminate in the design and presentation of the Griffin's Newman College. We will explore processes or procedures that are inclusive of the hand down, the hand made. What is possible when we work across a range of media and processes and don't rely solely on the generative solutions the computer offers? While we will encourage students to test the limits of each medium and set of issues we will be insistent on students taking accountability and authorship for their work.

We will discuss, critique and explore the very notions of process and particularly contemporary digital processes. In parallel we will look at the trajectory of 'non-standard' architecture. Students will work through a series of structured exercises that will explore a particular translation and use a series of technique that move from hand to computer to casting and back again.

Using the architectures of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin - in particular Newman College - students will then be asked to design a library on the Newman College site. Students will be working with drawings, the computer, 3D scanners and casting techniques. While we will provide some computing tutorials students should have a basic computer skills.

We are interested in your sensibilities! And will encourage you to develop others!

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**Sense and Sensibility**

**Generative Drawing: Fact or Fiction?**

"The architectural drawing is an act of knowing, a rationalization of existence and an intuition of reality to come. Perhaps even more than actually building, the architectural drawing is a record of an architect's intentions at the moment of design." 

Deborah Nevira and Robert Storr: "Introduction" in the Architect's Eye. 11

"The plotter rather than declining an object produces a potentially something happens, passes, wanders around in the space of the representation and remains being 'invaded' in the picture because it creates a denotation or an intimation."


Marks evolve into fields and ultimately into surfaces, and they also gather surfaces into fields and finally into marks, as if visual artifacts are nothing but marks.

James Elkins: Marks, Traces, Texts, Contours, Cell and Splendor: Aesthetic Signs.

"When I draw something, I elaborate it very carefully. I think I know exactly what I want to draw, but somehow the clairvoyance is very unpredictable, and, generally the more unpredictable the clairvoyance, the better I think the drawing is." 


This procedure is therefore more rigorous than writing: first from the start, knowing only how, never what, and then look to see if they signify anything, such a procedure shifts the weight of meaning from behind to in front, from before to after, to the veritable to the unverifiable...

In Front of Lines that Leave Nothing Behind.

Robin Evans.
Part 1a: Research Process work

In pairs select two of the following architects/ideologies:

Deconstruction:
- Peter Eisenman
- Bernard Tschumi
- Coop Himmelb(l)au
- The Chamber Works

Postmodern:
- P. H. Wallis
- Zaha Hadid
- Gehry Associates

Russian Constructivism:
- El Lissitzky - Pravnoei drawings
- Vadim Talal
- Ivan Chermayeff
- Ivan Leonidoff

German Expressionism:
- Egon Schiele
- Hans Richter

Select one pair from each of the two categories you have chosen and investigate the process behind their work. How do they arrive at these drawings or projects?

Investigate the general context your practitioner is working in (i.e., deconstruction, Russian constructivism, etc.) and how they have engaged/contributed to those ideas - ideals.

Study the process in detail - how do they generate form and then how are the projects realized? (i.e. - how are their ideas/drawings translated into architecture? How do they realize their drawings?)

Find and make copies of the drawings. Look, analyze, and understand the drawing, the techniques used, the form, the action of the drawing.

Make diagrams of the language, "modularity" you discover in the drawings or representations of the project.

Due: Monday 26/07

Part 1b: The drawing translated - idea to "abstract machine" (generative sketch)


Select one of the architects you have studied and the brief and generate an abstract drawing that will become an informing agent for your brief project. The drawing does not have to be "architectural" as such. You must consider the weights, tone, style used, to be clear or defined.

Give the drawing a start, middle and end.

Due: Thursday, 19/07

Part 2a: Take your drawing and continue to design the intensive reading room study - decide how you will translate your drawing, what will become skin, structure, solid and void. What is the language of your drawing? Prepare drawings that will then be translated to computer on Monday.

Due: Monday, 16/07

Part 2b: Complete your reading room. Details of presentation requirements to be.
Digital (Re)Configuring

Non-denominational contemplation space for your library.

For there is a community of the arts, a common problem, in art, and in painting as in music. It is not a matter of reproducing or imitating forms, but of capturing forms. For this reason we are to perceive, Paul Ricoeur’s formulas, not to render the visible, but to render resolutely.

Deleuze, “The Logic of Sensibility” Fig 25

Everything is a transcription, everything is a translation, every slogan, every object begins as material form until it makes its way up to representation as material form.

Relatively, “Romantiques Animations”

This is what we can see immediately, this is what we can read, this is what we know. But there is also the reverse of the object, the cost, the residual, the subjection, the neglected, which can give extension to the tangible. Perhaps this is a centre of the virtual, perhaps this is the substance of the unseen, of the undefined signature, of silent voices, or the fixed word. Both the Marx half-inverter and the manege loop define versions of this invisible. The half is the state of a vast anti-inverting knot, twice a precise template along the way, itself perhaps only properly fulfilled by the forming of the occupation. The manege loop is a visible above, a physical approximation of an otherwise invisible thread now continuously changing direction. Howard Ruggieri quoted in Australian Baroque: Geometry and meaning at the National Museum of Australia, John MacArthur

(www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0601/is_14_v4101/ai_214304989)

Space as an abstract concept subject to change and fashion. In the wake of Modernism and the pervasiveness of the open plan, we think of ‘space’ as meaning void. However, other ideas have been different ideas of what constitutes ‘space’. Section drawings of the 19th century sometimes show rendered widths of emblems in an effort to render the space palpably. Gated totem, in the late 20th century, defined space in terms of the walk that defined it. Justin Whiting’s Hill Viettman house with concrete attempting to make visible the inscrutability (of the domestic). The form becomes a cutting. Whiting’s method suggests another way of thinking about space as having the quality of density or fibre, a thickness of space that can be manipulated as if it was tangible.

Part A

The idea of this exercise is to make a non-denominational contemplation space for your library. This space should suit about 25 people either separately or in groups. The contemplation space should be accessed in some way the year passage from the last exercise. The relation of the passage to the pod and the reading room may need to change in order to accommodate this new piece of program.

Begin by making this space ‘in the negative’, as a solid object that defines – or costs – what will eventually be ‘void space’ in your design. You might make your cut from your imagination or from a cut of a real object or objects, refer to the online article about the National Museum by John MacArthur mentioned above. The choice of this starting point, your will be, not completely random. You must be able to give a reason why you have chosen that particular form for investigation. In a way that the ideas that you have been interested in throughout the semester:

The space you are cutting might be the underside of a dome or vault it may constitute the whole of the contemplation space. For now make the surface of the space smooth. It will be father worked on in part B as a computer model to ‘add resolution’ the surface texture/materiality, openings, structure, surfaces and so on.

You will make this cut with a plastic physical modelling medium like white clay, wax, plasteline, playdough or plaster – IF MUST BE WHITE. You can find this sort of material at Enderley’s on Parnell Street or similar art supplies shop. After you modelled it in a study box like a piece of MDF for easy transport. We will scan your models with the hand-held scanner at SIA on Monday 29th of August. The scanner works with a laser that reads the surface of your contract, so very few casting, elaborate folding or other expensive marks will not be translated very well (you might see this as an opportunity however). To get the best quality surfaces your cut must be smooth so you can make it. Although you may initially modelled hand it is best to use a knife or to sand it back (depending on the medium) rather than use your fingers to do the final surface detail.

Your model should occupy a volume no larger than 15cm cubed this does not mean it has to be square. You must attend the scanning session at SIA on 29th of August – 3.30pm on Monday or arrange another time to scan your model by your own plan as there will be no time to repeat this particular step. Part B will be issued on Monday.
Part C: Becoming passage – the space within

Take your wall and design a passage.

For this exercise you should remember our discussions about the processes of recycling, translating and mutating.

You must consider how the Griffis work with passage and you must consider the relationship they explore between wall and passage, between the exterior and the interior of the wall. What is the relationship between wall and void? You must consider what the spatial progression is within the passage. Do you explore ideas of expansion and compression?

Some operations you might consider to begin this exercise are:

- Recalculating: Growth
- Stretching: Narrative development
- Multiplication: Addition/subtraction
- Reflection: Interpenetration - interlaced
- Suppression: Invisibility
- Conversion

Passage Requirements:

- Is it the same wall all the way along?
- Does it have a void within the passage?
- Does it go below the ground, does it bend, curve or stretch?

Due: Thursday, 19th August.

Representations:

- Plan and Section of your passage at 1:20
- All views of the passage. We encourage you to explore the representation – you might use both hand and computer techniques for these drawings – we expect high quality drawings – take your time with them.
- Use both computer and hand to generate and design your work.

NB: Some people have been producing work that is not up to standard. i.e., it lacks merit and is levelled out. Architecture takes time. If you do not know what a good plan and section look like, please go to the library and explore.

Please take time with your design and representing your representations.

Part C: Becoming passage – the space within

Part D: The Wall

The Griffis continued: Origins, Outcomes & Translations.

Some excerpts from Conrad Hammar they are hereby.

Much of the Griffis involvement with the classical tradition was to explore and transform certain vital components in architecture, particularly extroversion, extension, capital and void.

- The Griffis are involved, however, in the tension between the function of columns, wall, arch, tray or frame are always called into question with windows and extraneous offering onto the building surface. so that the buildings become pattern of light and shade.

Several of the new works which dominate the Griffis work in Australia are here in particular:

- Norman's conversion, omitting five, with fragmentary schemes of extraneous, and the work, which are in some degree, towards the drama of movement, this changes in some degree, or, shifts of emphasis from horizontally to vertically.

In Australia, the largest and smallest projects are bought by these: concept; themes, crystallographic, ornament and the expression, or the ordering of movement through five.

Part A: Critical abstraction

Read the Hammar articles again and the above quotes and begin by selecting is field system, for example a grid, a crystalline lattice, a theme or series of themes and then ‘heterogeneous’ it with a crystalline ornament.

You might transform the system using a technique you have observed and diagrammed from the Griffis Neveen College, or from your abstraction project essay.

How will these systems interact? Which will dominate? What will be their mutual relationship?

Part B: The abstraction made real: becoming wall

Read the Hammar articles again and the above quotes and take your transformed lattice system operating on a further to design a wall.

For this exercise you should remember our discussions about the processes of recycling, transforming and mutating.
Some operations you might consider to begin this exercise are:
Revealing
Stretching
Multiplication
Rotation
Reflection
Superposition
Conversion

Wall Requirements:
The wall will not front your intimate reading room (project one) and around - in some way - your immersive pod. The wall will not touch or fall to the immersive pod but will have proximity to it.
The pod will therefore affect the walls live of movement. - Beautifully - physically and conceptually. You might begin by plotting out a line of movement between reading room and around immersive pod as per the Griffiths - along which your wall will follow.
How will the line of movement and your conceptual level intersect? Think about that VERY CAREFULLY - there are lots of opportunities for you here to explore.
The wall is to be at least one window (aperture) and one door.
You must consider the thickness of the wall - that is:
Is the thickness even all the way along?
Does thickness vary?
What is held within the wall - Structure, space or some use and description, cupboards, cabinets?
How deep your wall meet the ground?
Does it go below the ground; does it bend, curve or stretch?

Due: Monday 19th August.
Bring your work in this Thursday for one or one critique.
Use both computer and hand to generate and design your work.

Sense and Sense-ability
Part 1: Iterations and Rescaling: The Immersive Pod
New types of information technology have enabled new ways we can experience information.
Computer technology can now be used to construct responsive information environments that can convey information to all the senses, hearing, vision, touch and sight can now be incorporated into the experience of the information. Further, this incorporation of architecture has some profound implications; information may now become a physical medium to be conveyed through space and effect experiences that are more stimulating, informative and enjoyable to the user.

In this exercise you will continue exploring the computer as a generative medium this time to develop an architectural space. However, this time you are to transform your light fitting design from part 1 of this exercise as the starting point for the design of an 'immersive pod' for your library.
Requirements for the pod:
It must accommodate between 1 to 4 people.
Include a pathway leading into the pod.
Include an aperture - an opening - that allows people some sort of communication between inside and outside.
The specific qualities of these are up to you to interpret.

Procedural losses - the process of transformation. This exercise will require you to do more than simply 'draw up' your light fitting although that may well be your initial move.
Consider the following questions:
• What happens to the 'language' of your light fitting when it undergoes rescaling and transformation?
• How can you transform that language to become architecture? Will you reread, rearrange, edit, subtract, transform, selectively recall, delete? What are the new contexts or settings.
• What qualities - spatial and formal - are I aiming to achieve in the first exercise? Was I successful? Do I need to revisit them?
• How can I extend the idea of those qualities to inform a spatial narrative?
Pragmatic to consider:
- How do I order the pod?
- What sort of experience do I want people to have as they approach it?
- How does it meet the ground?
- If it is supported above the ground how does that structure work?
- How does the aperture work? Do people see out or in or both? What do they see?
- What does the 'skin' of the pod look like? Is it different inside and out? How can the skin be used to communicate with the people inside (lights, sound, movement)?
- What is the relationship of the body to the pod? How do the bodies inside interact with each other if there are more than one?

Plan:
- You will need to generate 3 computer views of your pod – beginning, middle and end.
- In addition you will need to cut at least 2 sections of your computer model.
- Include the views of your light fitting and any supporting material or diagrams that can ‘make sense’ of the process you have engaged in.
- Remember hierarchy of size and position that the images are placed on the wall is important.
- Your drawings and images will need to be able to speak for themselves.

Due: Monday 2nd August.
NB: we will have a site visit as well on this day – meeting at 1.30pm at the entrance to Newman College Melbourne University. We will return to RMIT to edit the pods.
“The Griffin architecture is both massive yet curiously mobile, the functions of columns, wall arch, bay or tower are always called into question with windows and entrances often sunk into the buildings surface, so that the buildings become patterns of light and shadow.”

While Inger conducted exercises on 3D scanners and casting, and the production of digital material, I led the curating and establishment of the overarching studio narrative and manner in which material was structured and delivered. My work with Corrigan during that time, and reflections on studio teaching to date, also made revisit exercises – and my own work of using words and fragments of text as design stimulus and beginning points. We had ‘words of the week’ and aligned them with particular esquisses that drew on my strategy of breaking down an architectural brief into a series of moments and elements: The passage, wall, etc.

Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

The studio was interesting, although the work was not as strong as the other studios’ work. At the time it reinforced that an exploration of the medium itself only (tools) was difficult and needed to be very well supported by a strong narrative content and studio structure to carry it off. However, I see now that it was a period in which I was able to reinvest in ideas of expressionism, generative drawing and writing and its spatial relationship to architecture. Looking at the exercises in the context of this PhD, however, I was recasting architecture, and particularly architectural elements, as being able to hold content and so sequentially forming part of an overall narrative. Some of these moments were almost complete narrative fragments, or pieces in themselves.

I noticed in one exercise to design a passage, which began with a wall that was then expanded, that the student was asked to consider ‘the narrative development’ of the expansion. And in terms of that narrative, how did this wall need to expand? What qualities should be considered and exaggerated? The word I gave them was Passion, which they had to take on, as well as particular elements of the Griffins’ work, and then a series of operations we gave them to begin a transformative process. The transition to passage meant that suddenly an idea of interior had to be considered as separate to the exterior, in role, function and content. Points of transition between interior and exterior become loaded as walls thickened to hold openings, surface and structure, opportunities arose for the narrative of this progression to be expanded. This method facilitated the introduction of key architectural considerations: how the wall meets the ground; transitions and entry points; the character of openings and thresholds; exterior elevations (and ornamentation) and how that might differ from the interior surfaces.

This studio – although not a great success – evolved my understanding of and interest in the Griffins and expressionism. My interest in the theatrical cinematic possibilities of architecture were also consolidated in this period and in an idea-filled architecture. In retrospect, I can now see it was a moment, where the landscape and architecture studios was not quite fulfilling all of my own concerns. There were ideas and content outside landscape and site that had motivated my previous work – particularly the expressionism, cultural and artists’ engagement in allegory that were a little sidelined.
Reciprocity often depends on architecture that is made up of, or broken down into, multiple elements. This combination of fragmentation and multiplicity serves to open the architectural work in such a way as to be able to engage the landscape (the site) not as opposite but as elements of connection and use, similar in kind to elements of architecture.55

Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollak

The final series of design studios that form a major research component of my work and practice as it has been evolving over the last five years. Reciprocity, taught in collaboration with Damien Thackray, returned to site and context investigations begun in Bundanon and Heide, and also took up Thackray’s site for his major project. The studio has had six iterations, and with each new iteration, an evolving and refining of the program, content and studio delivery has taken place. The site is a unique urban system of the Abbotsford Convent complex, a dedicated arts and educational precinct situated within the natural landscape of a Yarra river floodplain. Composed of multiple sites, the precinct is an intriguing, complex and often times awkward hybrid of the built and natural landscape, and the contemporary and the historical patterns of use and occupation. Site and an idea of place making were the focus of the first few iterations of this studio. Sustainability, ecological and social, informed by the principal of causal relationality — the bringing of a multiplicity of systems and things into interconnected and varied relationship (reciprocity) - was central to this concern. The studio will use the Convent precinct as a terrain, in both the physical and ephemeral sense, in which to investigate the notion of an architecture of reciprocity.

55. BERRIZBEITIA, A. & POLLACK, L. op cit, p14
Inside Outside: Between Architecture and Landscape
Anita Berrizbetita and Linda Pollak

Site and the idea of place-making are the focus of this studio. A notion of sustainability encompassing both the ecological and the social and the causal relationships which inform them and the possible margins for architecture to align itself with and enable this process is central to this course.

Our site is the unique urban system of the Abbotsford Convent Precinct and its immediate and adjacent context: the natural landscape of the Yarra River Floodplain with its remnant colonial qualities, the Collingwood Children’s Farm, a working and educational farm, the adjoining and interesting network of pedestrian and cycling paths, and the Collingwood Children’s Farm. In former times the Convent was a place of great expectation, once meant to be a model of Christian community and to educate the young. Today it is in need of re-invention and re-establishment as a space to be used and enjoyed. This site is used and abused by all to satisfy some current need, yet the site has a history, a set of qualities and a condition that deserves to be explored.

The re-opening of the convent, which is the dominant complex of buildings, and the diverse scope of cultural activity that it proposes and provides is one of the most exciting and transforming processes that constitute the precinct. Construction is a deductive remove and recursive site, the projects are an integrating, a complex series of amends and contradiction, interplay of the technical and contemporary, and as such, practical and theoretical engage each other as a site, which is a scattered mesh of possibilities and concepts that interrelate.

Students will undertake an intensive exchange between analysis and making with the intent of developing a site-specific design approach across small to medium scales.

A suite of mapping and design strategies based on the categories of landing, founding, insertion, threshold, passage and materiality will frame a series of differently scaled and programmed insertions that will drive a series of interrelated projects that act as strategic and provocative insertions into the existing fabric of the built and landscape conditions and the systems, people and memories that occupy them. This series of differently scaled and programmed insertions will allow for the exploration of space as a procedural variable across micro and macro sites, the precinct is an intriguing, complex and often-times awkward and contradictory hybrid of the historical and contemporary, and the re-opening of the convent, which is the dominant complex of buildings, and the diverse scope of cultural activity that it proposes and provides is one of the most exciting and transforming processes that constitute the precinct.

The precinct is an active and ongoing condition, in which the exchange between architecture and landscape (site, context) creates something further and unpredictable.

To most cases, the siting of a building disrupts a landscape. This disruption offers the opportunity for architecture to be an agent of the physical and conceptual reconstruction of the environment it has disrupted, and, in doing so, to establish a series of new agency and new space.

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Anna Johnson + Damien Thackray
Site: Abbotsford Convent Precinct
Scale: medium - small

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Anita Berrizbetita and Linda Pollak Inside Outside: Between Architecture and Landscape
For this exercise the building's facade will be the focus of your study. Most important of all select a building that intrigues you and that you would like to work with. Consider the new uses and activities housed within your building, the spatial and architectural qualities, the history of the building and its immediate surrounds including civic space, the points of interest and intrigue. Think carefully about your selection taking into account the new uses and activities housed within your building, the spatial and architectural qualities, the history of the building and its immediate surrounds including civic space, the points of interest and intrigue.

Selection rules:

1. Prepare:
   - 1 x elevation, cross section at 1: 50.
   - 1 x model of the facade at 1: 50. Don't forget about the thickness of the wall.

2. Produce a set of analytical base drawings: plan, section, elevation - and diagrams of the key attributes in the manner you have just produced for your precedent analysis.

   TASK:

child. As we move through the semester you will be required to engage with the convent buildings. The threshold between your building, your insertions and the convent buildings will become very important. The relationship you establish is critical.

In this first exercise we will be studying architectural examples where the architect has worked into or adjacent to an existing building. We will be looking at their strategies – conceptual and formal. This studio will then lead onto your first small design exercise.

**TASK:**

Choose from 1 of the 4 precedents from the following list:

- Wang Shu (Amateur Architecture Studio), Ningbo Historic Museum
- Herzog & de Meuron, Caxixa Forum
- Peter Zumthor, Kolumba Museum
- Carlo Scarpa, Foundation Querini-Stapalija

**Project 03**

**EXISTING BUILDING CASE STUDY - FACADE + THRESHOLD DESIGN INSERTION WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR PRECEDENT STUDY**

We now shift our facade and threshold investigation to site and the case study of an existing building. Following on from your precedent analysis you will select an existing building and do a case study of the most important and/or interesting facade/threshold of the building.

Your case study of the building through careful analysis and documentation of its facade/threshold will involve careful analysis of the specific architectural characteristics of the buildings typology, materiality, construction. As attributes as a threshold and the existing qualities of and relationships between outside and inside, its status and significance within the site including ideas of scale, formal/formal/ informal, front/back, the attributes of its immediate site including civic space, the points of interest and intrigue.

You will prepare a set of base measured drawings – plan, section, elevation – and diagrams of the key attributes in the manner you have just produced for your precedent analysis.

**TASK:**

1. Select an existing building
2. Produce a set of analytical base drawings: plan, section, elevation

These drawings are to be measured and precise. You will need to make your own set of measured drawing observations from which to prepare your base drawings. Measure where and what you can. Make your own set of measured drawing observations from which to prepare your base drawings. Measure where and what you can. Make your own set of measured drawing observations from which to prepare your base drawings. Scale the building, the qualities and points of interest in the adjoining civic space, and the history of the building – what was its original use and story and how does its contemporary re-use reconcile with that history?.

For this exercise the buildings facade will be the focus of your study.

**1. Prepare:**

- 1 x plan of the building in its immediate surrounds: 1: 100
- 1 x elevation at 1: 50

As with your precedent studies this is a drawing which makes a careful and precise study of the architectural character of your facade including rhythm and proportions, ornamental qualities and features, material character and distinctions, relationship of the wall to the roof, scale, and so forth. This drawing needs to show any adjacent buildings so that your building is read and understood appropriately in context.
Project 03
EXISTING BUILDING CASE STUDY: FACÁDE + THRESHOLD
DESIGN EXPLORATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR PRECEDENT STUDY

A building is not an end in itself; it frames, structures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits. Consequently, basic architectural experiences have verbs rather than being nouns.

Liljana Paskalevska

Ininsert initiates a relationship of interdependency between space and its context.

Ininsert initiates cycles of activity and movement across unenclosed or unenclosed space and also across historied intersections in which new architectural and landscape architecture projects are designed to blend seamlessly with their surroundings. Ininsert engages a space with its surroundings, such that it becomes part of an urban continuum, but also that the relationship between space and its context is reconfigured. Ininsert initiates a set of moves across the threshold between inside and outside that explore and propose new ideas of identity and legibility of the various design moves within the immediate context of your building.

Each of the precedents demonstrates a range of design attitudes and operations, which are specifically engaged in terms of reciprocal dialogue with the issues of typological and contextual identity and tradition. Each engages some idea of continuity between the existing and the new – even at those moments of exaggeration or re-configuration, or even seeming rupture when the new architectural language takes over or becomes more pronounced, there is still reciprocity through mimetic materiality and formal strategies, or through amplification of ephemeral phenomena, such as the flooding of the Stampalia interior.

In this design exercise you will take the design operations of your precedent and apply them to your existing case study façade threshold. This esquisse will allow you to explore the process of translating design operations derived from precedent analysis into another existing building with unique typological and contextual characteristics. It will further test and refine your understanding of the values of your precedent as a model on behalf of the studio thematics. And it will allow you to experiment with a range of ways you engage temporal aspects by exposing previous urban layers, in order to reveal continuities and disjunctions between something foreign into a site, or by foregrounding some quality that was already present but not apparent…Insertion can comes into transformative, sometimes uncomfortable, contact with the existing orders. Insertion can operate by importing something foreign into a site, or by foregrounding some quality that was already present but not apparent…insertion can operate by importing something foreign into a site, or by creating a break in that continuum. The interface between the space and its context is not smooth or invisible: insertion initiates a relationship of interdependency between space and its context.

Your case study of your critical façade/ threshold identified and defined the specific architectural characteristics of the building typology (including scale, form, materiality, openings, construction), its attributes as a threshold (between inside and outside, site and context, past and present), its contextual characteristics (including the environment, the social and cultural context of the site).

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TASK:
Working through diagram explore and experiment with a set of reciprocal design moves that have originated in your precedent project, specifically:
- a set of moves across the façade of your case study building – scale, form, materiality, openings, junctions between new and old
- a set of moves across the threshold between inside and outside that explore and propose new ideas of continuity and connection

Method:
President design strategy translation rules:
Step 1: direct literal translation – first, make a series of moves that are faithful to the precedent design operations as identified by your analysis. Translate the precedent moves into the specific site and typological characteristics of your selected façade/ threshold so that the relationship between your precedent and your case study building is clear and legible.

Step 2: context translation – second, translate the precedent design moves into the specific site and typological characteristics of your selected façade/ threshold so that the relationship between your precedent and your case study building is clear and legible.

Anita Berrizbeitia + Linda Pollak

PROJECT 04 DESIGN ESQUISSE 2: ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE THRESHOLD INSERTION

This next design exercise asks you to continue working at the site of your new façade/threshold and to develop your design ideas by loading up the threshold condition through the addition of a program – activity and use and the characteristics and cycles of. The addition of a new program will require you to expand the site specific frames of reference of your façade/ threshold. Moving beyond the immediate façade and its threshold condition your design response will now encompass and addresses itself to the characteristics and opportunities of the adjacent civic space and the interior spaces of this building. This design exploration will further your exploration of strategies for activating and enhancing connectivity across your threshold between the ideas and issues of inside and the outside and past and present that you are interested in working with.

TASK:
Working into your threshold design and continuing ideas your have begun to explore, you are to provide a shelter for an artist-in-residence. This is to be a designated space for one artist to reside and work in the Courtyard grounds for a period of up to a month. It needs to include a place for the artist to sleep, to eat and prepare meals, a toilet and bathing amenity and a place to work indoors and outdoors. This artist will also exhibit work produced there and your design will need to provide an appropriate exhibition space.

Method & Techniques:
- How you work this program into the ideas, qualities, characteristcs and rhythms of your design?
- Natural light exposure for the artist working spaces
- Privacy for sleeping and rest areas
- How connection is made with the existing program
- Issues of public/ private, front/back, inside/ outside, past/ present
- How you might activate the civic area in front of your threshold. Consider exhibition and public gatherings that will take place here – will you make a public entry into exhibition space; open up the threshold to open out interior spaces to the exterior, for ex?

Anita Berrizbeitia + Linda Pollak

LOWER POOL DESIGN STUDIO SEMESTER 2 2012
Project 05: Mapping _ scale: LARGE  _ SITE AS IT BELONGS TO THE BIGGER TERRITORY

This is a three part mapping exercise.

In the first part you will zoom out from the site of your building and consider the larger scale territory of the Convent and River landscape context, and how your site is situated within that.

In the second part you will concentrate upon exploring the river and its influence on your experience and understanding of the site when experienced as the foregrounded site condition.

In the third part, you will explore ideas and issues of connectivity and journey - physical, spatial and historical - between your site and the entry and your site and the river as they exist and are encountered and experienced, and as you are interested in proposing.

You will do this by undertaking a series of actual and imagined walks into, through and across the various terrains, and their boundaries and thresholds, of which the territory of the bigger site is composed.

PART A  _ Walk 1 the line of the perimeter boundary encompassing the river

Walk the line of the perimeter of the site in both directions.

Refer photo for description of the perimeter boundary.

Locate your building within the larger scale territory of the site.

How does it read at this scale? How visible and identifiable is it?

What else do you notice about it from this distance?

What else do you notice about the adjoining context from this distance?

Describe the background, middle ground and foreground that your building is located in.

Describe the location of your building in relationship to the river.

Describe the important boundaries, thresholds and edges of the bigger territory of the site at this scale.

What else do you notice of interest about the character of the bigger territory of the site at this scale?

Make

Make a set of photographs, sketches and diagrams that document your observations from the above list.

1 x 250 site plan diagram locating your building and any features, characteristics and issues you find interesting or important at this scale.

PART A  _ Walk 1 the line of the river along the opposite bank in both directions

Record your observations and experience of moving along and through the terrain of the path on the south side of the river.

What does the terrain of this part of the site feel like compared to the Convent Precinct?

How does experiencing the Convent Precinct from the vantage point of the river change or alter your impressions and ideas of the site?

Locate your building in relation to 3-5 key moments along the trajectory of your walk.

1. Do a detailed study of those moments that take in the intimate, medium and large scales.
2. Draw sectional diagrams of that moment that describe the qualities of the terrain, topography and river edge.

Techniques

Photographs, sketches, diagrams, text

Due for Thursday 15th August

Project 06: Stitching the site back together  _ Design a new Passage

PLACEMAKING – RE-CONNECTING THE SITE THROUGH IMMERSIVE ENCOUNTER ALONG THE TRAJECTORY OF A DESIRE LINE

Anna Johnson + Damien Thackray

1. There is no architecture without action, no architecture without events, no architecture without program.

2. Conflict: sequences of events and spaces occasionally clash and contradict each other. One then observes a strategy of conflict in which each sequence constantly transgresses the others internal logic.

3. Spatial sequence are generally structural; that is, they can be viewed or experienced independently of the meaning they may occasionally evoke

4. Also sequences are cumulative. Their ‘frames’ derive significance from juxtaposition. They establish memory of the preceding frame, of the course of events. To experience and to follow an architectural sequence is to reflect upon events in order to place them in successive wholes.

5. Frames: the moments of a sequence. Examining architecture ‘frame by frame’ as though a film editing machine. Frames are both the framing device – confronting, regular, solid – and the framed material – questioning, distorting, and displacing. Occasionally the framing device can itself become the object of distortions and the framed material conformist and orderly.

Bernard Tschumi – Architecture and Disjunction  _ Chapter: Program

Your site mapping, moment studies and walks have opened up the site up to you and revealed the potentials and disconnections present. You should have identified particular moments that reveal points of interest to you. Through these studies and your work to date, you should now have a more intimate understanding of site. Its characteristics and experiential potentials. You should also have identified where the site is fragmented or disjointed.

In this phase you will explore strategies for stitching together and activating your trajectory so that it creates a new connective passage across the site from entry to your building and from your building to the river. You will occupy key moments along your trajectory and then, in addition, propose strategies for stitching those moments together so that they might be able to be encountered both as independent moments in dialogue with site and too as points that belong to a sequentially choreographed journey into and through the site - its various terrains, characteristics and histories.

TASK:

This next exercise asks you to use your mapped trajectory (your walk) and the moment studies to curate a new journey, a new curated passage across the site. This passage is to move from what you have defined as the entry point to site, through to your artists-in-residence and then out towards the river.
Reciprocity
LOWER POOL DESIGN STUDIO SEMESTER 2 2012
Anna Johnson + Damien Thackray

Project 07 Design: SHORT-TERM-STAY ACCOMMODATION

“the Old German landschaft [precedes] landskip...referring not to scenery but to the environment of a working community, ...In other words, the meaning of landschaft comprises a deep and intimate mode of relationship not only among buildings and fields, but also among patterns of occupation, activity, and space...”

James Corner Recovering Landscape

In the previous exercise you have curated a public passage into and through site that takes into consideration patterns of occupation, activity and space you have identified as being important and that accounts for the site and its multiplicity of layers and experiences. You have been developing a strategy to facilitate immersion and a relationship with place that we believe is critical to a notion of sustainability.

Your design strategy has been designing episodic movements through site which affects a gradual opening up of the whole of the site (in the process reconfiguring some of the established hierarchies and relationships across the site). For the first time the public is brought into substantial contact with the landscape, river and the ecology thereof: the natural system.

In this next exercise you will add an idea of duration to your design investigations that deepens the opportunity for multiple experiences and immersion- that is, an opportunity for dwelling.

Final Program Brief

1. Short-term Stay Accommodation: Continuing with your formal and conceptual ideas to date and working in, partially in, or adjacent to your Artist-in-Residence site (building) you are to design:

   A short-term stay accommodation facility that includes the following:
   - Accommodation for 12 school children + 2 adults - with combined accommodation and amenities. Sleeping rooms should accommodate 2-4 per module/room. You need to provide adequate toilet/showers for this accommodation, storage or clothes belongings in each sleeping unit, a place for students to work (this can be in the rooms themselves or designed as a more semi communal space near the sleeping quarters, a communal kitchen and dining area, and a multipurpose gathering/meeting area.

   You need to consider how this new program stitches into the context, the activities of your chosen site and the workings of the artist-in-residence program as you have designed it. You can disperse this program across and through your chosen site – but you must consider issues of privacy, separation from the artist sleeping and working spaces.

   Representation and work due for Monday 10th September Midsemester crit:

   1. Complete a 1:200 plan of your site:
      Use this as a base to show the existing patterns of use, accommodation, access and connection to the rest of site. Show how light and views work across the site. Where is north for example?

   2. Complete 2 x 1:100 sections through your chosen accommodation site (to include interior of the buildings and any open, civic or public spaces.)
      You may have these already begun from previous exercises. You are to make sure that all the elevational material is in the drawings. Also ensure you understand the basic constructional details of your building - the way the structure works, how thick walls, floors and the roof system is. This drawing should extend to the limits of where your new accommodation design will go.

   3. Complete 1 key elevation at 1:100.
Students undertook an immersive exchange between analyses and making, with an emphasis on the discipline of careful and quality loaded drawing, diagramming, model making and montage. We drew also on the work of landscape architect and theorist, James Corner and his practice Field Consultants. In light of this work, and the Burns and Pollak readings, we asked students to rethink the role and potential of site plans, site analysis and representation, and in essence, the conceptual relationship between architecture and Landscape. In particular we developed a series of analytical and design operations based on the landscape architect and Professor Christophe Girot categories of landing, grounding, finding and founding as described in his “The Four Trace Elements of Landscape Architecture” (1994). As with Bundanon and the Heide studios, a series of site mappings at various scales generated a body of research with the intent of identifying and productively amplifying and intensifying the unique qualities, systems, patterns and hierarchies of occupation across the precinct.

Again, an initial series of weekly themed design follies, documented in a studio journal, enabled students to cumulatively test and develop their attitude to the site and the issues raised by the mapping exercises immediately and precisely in context. A body of cumulative and iterative design research material was generated to form the basis of the final project, which was a multi-purpose residential and cultural facility. In undertaking this studio, students were expected to arrive at a subtle, well considered position on the issues of making a site based architecture of reciprocity - that is, an attitude to the notion of dwelling meaningfully and sustainably that lies at the heart of the studio’s conception of place.

Working extensively with drawings and models, these studios were strong, perhaps stronger than the previous studios. The first few iterations, however, had students working across the whole of site, including the farm and the surrounding landscape and the convent buildings. In several cases this proved too expansive. One of the biggest alterations made at this point was then being much defined with what constituted the site, and where students could work. While we still worked with the landscape, we insisted on an engagement with one or more of the buildings. And importantly for me, on taking a position on this suite of buildings that included a collection of the convent’s original 18th century French Gothic style ecclesiastical buildings (some used, some abandoned), in addition to the adjacent children’s farm and surrounding mix of light industrial warehouses and residential buildings. This move allowed us to discuss questions of contextual and architectural identity. What defined the characteristics and architectural typologies of this precinct? What the student to take a position on this suite of buildings that included a collection of the convent’s original 18th century French Gothic style ecclesiastical buildings (some used, some abandoned), in addition to the adjacent children’s farm and surrounding mix of light industrial warehouses and residential buildings. This move allowed us to discuss questions of contextual and architectural identity. What defined the characteristics and architectural typologies of this precinct? What defined the characteristics and architectural typologies of this precinct? When faced with questions of development, both small and large scale, what are the architectural and local cues from which to evolve an appropriate response? For me, this was particularly important, as it allowed me to draw on my writings of the vernacular, of type and of contextual engagement.

56. The work of James Corner as captured in these two books and his practice work has been critical for the development of my understanding of Landscape Architecture. CORNER, J. (1996) Taking measures across the American Landscape. Yale CORNER, J (1999) Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture. New York;

57. CORNER, J (1999), op cit, P 34
That we had access to these buildings also allowed great studies and drawings to be set, that helped students come to terms with buildings: their sheer scale, mass, materiality and form. This focus brought about a corresponding advancement in the level of architectural resolution and detail that students achieved. Students were asked to intervene either near to, or in, or over these buildings. In doing this and drawing on Richard's Serra's verb list, students were asked to consider a series of operative possibilities for working with their chosen building. Extensive and relevant precedent was shown and exercises set around analysis and model making of those precedents.
Double Reflection: New Knowledge Found, Old Knowledge Rediscovered (Blue Pen)

These studios provided an excellent context to consolidate my ideas concerning site, context and landscape, but also an evolving series of more significant ideas addressing spatial sequences, architectural narrative and ongoing interest in the formal genesis. However, I also understand now, that tightening the area students looked at and forcing a much more considered engagement with the convent proper and its buildings, enabled me to reinvest in my interest in historical and cultural narratives, which would become material to derive design cues.

This studio enabled, and provided the framework for me to evolve, my idea of the progressive journey through site as a way to curate and generate design but also that allows for an episodic architectural development that strategically draws on contextual narratives and other material as a mechanisms to disrupt existing relationships and also provoke new ones. It is from this work that my idea of allegorical placemaking evolved, which finds greater expression and resolution in my final Seven Lamps chapter. This studio forms the research, the background to my final PhD design project, that allows clarification and testing of design principals that have emerged as predominant from the PhD process.
This next teaching laboratory concerns what for RMIT is known as the final year Major Project Thesis. This is the last design project that a student undertakes to complete their Masters degree in Architecture. A semester long subject, structured such that a student, having decided on a brief and project broadly, then selects a tutor (or two) and works under that tutor’s guidance. A particularly intensive process, the tutor should work to direct, prompt, and guide the student appropriately, and help establish the framing research question and the way in which they undertake the research. It is, therefore, a very curatorial role and one that requires the establishment of a strong robust project narrative, with a suitably ambitious research question.

I reference it here because, whilst the student largely directs it, the tutor has a very influential role. In additional, students select tutors based on their research interests. As I coordinate Asian Architecture and Urbanism and have been the International Student Academic Coordinator for several years, I have tended also to attract international students wanting to do their major project on a remote site, often in their hometown. Three of my selected students provide examples of this. These projects become mini design research laboratories as well, and it is consistently very interesting to see how they draw out very particular aspects of my research, or the way I work. See scrolls insert for visual details of these projects.

It is worth pointing out that these students all received honours High Distinction marks – and four of them achieved marks over 90% with, two over those over 96%. Hiep Nguyen and then David Isaacs (co tutored with Michael Spooner) won the Anne Butler Award for the best overall major project in that semester.
Urban Infiltration – Dispersed Culture Museum
CHRIS CHAN

The site is one of the earliest settlements located at Yau Ma Tei, Hong Kong. After 120 years of rapid development, this has become a hyper dense place. The impact of these urban issues and conditions can highlight the coexistence of legal and illegal urban fragments, programme displacement and dual porosity; a pore is always ready for change. The city can be read as dense networks of porosity and the continuum of in-between spaces. These conditions are configuring the urban process with a spirit of indetermination, un-adjustment and confrontation; all of this generated the texture of Hong Kong. My project takes this as an opportunity for infiltration as an experimental design device. Important coexistence, splinter and accretion.

To divide the museum into building fragments based on programmatic relationships maximise the interface of the museum and urban entities. The museum system becomes overlaid with the city thereby allows urban infiltration, which can then open dialogue between the cultural museum and the city.

The project re-utilises dark zones of the city, such as back lanes and building voids. The museum programmes interconnect the dispersed museum and the urban life together as a narrative body in a continuum of the city’s memory. Thus the dispersed culture museum within the urban context take shape. The city is the field and the field is the body of the museum. Infiltration as a strategy is a means to preserve and revitalise the old district – to avoid the damage to urban fabric and the loss of the memory under the heated topic affecting most Asian cites – urban renewal.

Supervisors: Richard Black and Anna Johnson
A Monument: The Holocaust Memorial Library
MELANIE SCHOLL

The Holocaust Memorial Library project is about memory and ritual in architecture. The design of this Holocaust library and research centre questions society's values on the issue of memorialisation, operating as both a monument and a memorial. The physical building is the monument whilst the library as a program is the memorial to the Holocaust.

Rejecting traditional notions regarding memorialisation, the site is located in the busy shopping district of Little Collins Street. The intervention weaves its way above, below and in-between the existing site's well known fashion boutique. The boutique will remain, creating an ironic tension between programs that sparks an everyday awareness of the memorial. In addition to the site's contrasting programs, it has historical significance as it was the site of Melbourne's first mikvah, a Jewish ritual bath used for spiritual purification and rebirth.

In this project, there are two key architectural responses to the question of memorialisation and ritual in architecture. Firstly it is played out through experiencing the building as a journey. This journey parallels at certain moments the ritualistic process of immersion into the mikvah.

The response is also informed by a series of voids that protrude through the space. The void as a symbol of toz and the idea of absences and negative space is critical to works dealing with memorialisation, as a strong absence often creates an even bigger presence. The voids function as a strategy for implementing the narrative and journey into the building. This narrative parallels the narrative of the mikvah in which one attains purity and spiritual cleansing through immersion. As one journeys through the space these intertwining narratives unfold to create increased enlightenment as to the importance of the memorial and remembering the Holocaust.
Culture Factory
SERINE YEE CHENG CHAN

This project is located in a developing industrial city in Beijing. It is a building that accommodates a memorial square, museum, galleries, workshop, library, auditorium and public facilities such as commercial shops, cafes, multipurpose rooms, community centre and artists’ living studios. As such, it exists at the intersection between production and living, commerce and art.

The existing building is one of the old military factories built during the Bauhaus period and it reflects the once strong community living spirit of the Chinese during the 1960s. These large unused factories were once turned into art galleries and artists' living studios in recent years. The key idea of this project is to bring yesterday's community spirit, today's arts and tomorrow's prosperity under one roof.

This proposition integrates new programmes into the existing factory through retaining part of the existing building and adding new spaces to accommodate other functions. The existing building, being a common production place for the workers during the communist period, has important cultural significance. This proposition is about creating new perspectives within the existing factory and encouraging various activities to take place in these spaces.

The 'under one roof' idea is implemented in the outdoor memorial square. The use of circular geometry with square is symbolic of peacefulness and harmony in Chinese culture. The lightness of the roof joins a contrast with the heavy structure of the existing and serves to achieve a definite boundary between the factory and the context.

Supervisor: Anna Johnson
Please note, each student is represented by one sheet in the inserted folded out section. The first three, David Isaacs, Hiep Trong Nguyen, Dominique Hall show a reduced version of the students final major project panels reproduced here with their kind permission. The remaining students Chris Chan, Serene Chan and Mel Scholl are represented by select reproductions of the Major Project Catalogue Para58.

The order of students is as above: David Isaacs, Hiep Trong Nguyen, Dominique Hall, Chris Chan, Serene Chan and Mel Scholl

3.5 Summary of Discoveries and Critique.

In its comprehensive scope and detail, this first iteration of scroll mapping project was invaluable. What was revealed about my interests and working methodologies were particularly valuable for this PhD. However, having laid the material out in its linear and distinct way, the criticism and comment at the PRS was for the next mapping iteration to leave the chronological linearity and map according categories and thematics. The panel wanted to see my hierarchies of interests and investigations and importantly, how a particular article, or written piece then might impact on my teaching or design practice and vice-versa. And so iteration two of the scrolls worked structurally to answer those questions. For reasons of spatial economy, and also repeating material, I have not included that second iteration, instead moving directly to the third and final scroll mapping iterations. The form of the this final iteration altered to become one very large digital map measuring 2523mm by 3567mm. I site seven examples across the scroll and with each, I include an edited reduced version of the map itself. This final iteration also allowed for the beginning of the Seven Lamps design project and to distil my final Writer Architect practice model.
An architectural relationship – parti - that became very evident across the next mapping process was my persistent exploration of an extended sectional arrangement. It is important to note that I am discussing a particular observed relationship across my work, not giving a complete account of the individual projects. This relationship is first evident in a speculative Observatory Project completed in Canberra in 1992, but continues across all subsequent projects. In the first few, Over the Ropes and ACT Bridge Gallery Project, this move is quite intuitive, however by the final State Library project, it is more intentional.

This curating of an architectural sequence can be understood as the first expression of my interest in narrative architecture. That is, this extended section (and the section generally) is used to sequentially curate and structure the relationship of architectural elements, spaces and thresholds. In its entirety, the section addresses a larger scale episodic approach (and desire) to the site and given problem. The intent, and this can also be seen across later studies undertaken with Bertram and Murray, seeks to understand site or context via relationship. Whilst, in the first example the sequence describes a series of independent objects dispersed across a field that register or respond to various natural phenomena (summer and winter solstices orientations, views and the sequence of land to waters edge); the next example, Over the Ropes, applies the same sectional strategy of dispersed architectural elements, except that here they work in a more interconnected way across the site. The ACT Gallery Bridge project, similarly, attempts an engagement with site through a series of variously related objects – albeit naively – recording, engaging and resonating with site. Dream House, by contrast, sets up an internal, indeed interior, dialogue. The extended section remains, but within the interior a series of vertical and orthogonal breaks interrupt the rhythm of the house and internal passages. In The State Library scheme this episodic journey is made via a sequence of thresholds, solid and voids, and works to frame the iconic State Library dome. This ‘charged’ public courtyard also marks the shift of program from archive to the new collection.

Through this mapping process, I observed an interesting shift in this strategy that occurred in my UAL studies at Docklands and St Arnaud. Rather than imposing – or inserting – a series of new objects onto site, the site itself was co-opted into that sequential relationship. An observed sectional relationship across site becomes a point of study in both cases. At the Docklands, this sequence spans between the Telstra Stadium, across the Harbour Esplanade and my design out to the water and ANZ building beyond. Like the Algiers Waterfront. I studied at the time.
In addition to the other major considerations and design intentions, these examples work
to construct a similar spatial rhythm and relationship. This strategy of site exploration, and
of drawing relationship with and into the site and architecture, is translated into a series of
exercises given to students in studios including Bundanon, Heide and most productively, in
Reciprocity. Walks across site become sectional studies and paths for design insertions.
This next trajectory accounts for the use and focus on articulated and content loaded surface – either on in drawing plane or the architecture itself. This is evident across my drawings, design work and also precedents I have studied and written about. Firstly, I observed this quality in my drawings themselves. Akin to or inspired by the earlier drawings of Daniel Libeskind, including his previously mentioned Micromegas and Chamber Works drawings, or the later drawings of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos, as seen in their site drawings of Igualada Cemetery (1985-1994), the drawing captures a kind of abstracted field condition or network and becomes one of the first origins for the design process. As observed by Robin Evans and Lebbeus Woods these drawings can be read as a type of writing. And their generative role in the design process, and for me their relationship to writing, makes them a central reference for my declared relationship between drawings and writing as explored in this PhD.

Looking closely across the drawings reveals a repeated motif or pattern – or more precisely a particular relationship of lines and figures that establishes a formal strategy. A layered and dense network of fine lines becomes the first ordering device. Then into and across that juxtaposed and often curvilinear forms, or fragments are drawn in a more defined manner that comes to hold program or architectural form. More interesting than the description of that phenomenon itself, is that this relationship occurs across a range of scales, surfaces and variously brings together form and site, or ornament and form, and then in the three examples Muse study titled Polyhymnia: The Muse Of Harmony and my abstracted surface study titled Plastic. Forming part of an early Masters study, the Wall and Openings study, I intentionally drew this striated field condition and then used this drawing as a type of template to determine, design a particular wall with openings, thickness and articulated surface qualities.

This finely striated and articulated surface I explore in my writings on WOHA and particularly regarding the Stadium Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Station and the Tan Quee Lan Suites. Because of its resonance with my own work and drawings, I include an extract below from that WOHA publication:

“For the series of projects to be discussed first, the dialogue evident is about a relationship of surface and mass. Surface is detailed to become one textured skin, and whether porous, transparent or a layering of screens, counters large-scale formal gestures. Architecture for the tropics demands a certain degree of porosity and for WOHA these layers and screens are important strategies for handling the climatic particularities.

59. EVANS, R. (May 1984) “In Front of Lines that Leave Nothing Behind” AA Files # 6, Architectural Association, London,

60. WOODS, L at www.lebbeuswoods.wordpress
Almost always those patterns and surfaces are variations of rectilinear and cubic patterns. Whilst the logic behind this is partly an issue of constructional efficiency there is an explicit preference for textured patterns that recall woven textiles or the paintings of Paul Klee. Like Klee there is certain looseness, a certain randomness to their compositional arrangement. The most obvious example of the patterned façade of Moulmein Rise where the northern façade begins with studies of DNA patterns that are rescaled and expanded to accommodate the air-conditioning ledges, screens and monsoon windows. The result is a high-rise building that achieves their desires for expressing of diversity and individuality. Unlike the typical monolithic and repetitive high-rise towers, the resulting elevation appears like giant vertical textile juxtaposed within the surrounding urban context…

This investigation of screen and mass also finds expression at the Tan Quee Lan Suites. This development of 20 apartments, is an adaptation of a heritage shop house strip that almost doubled the original commercial and residential density. The themes of architectural counterpoint and contrast continue but the existing building - heavy with strict proportions - stands in for the usual solid mass. Above this and then at the buildings rear the new addition is finished with a fine perforated steel grey skin. On the front façade this selectively mimics and abstracts the rhythms and harmonies of the restored Shophouse. Whereas the rear elevation that faces a two-way access lane is a bold expression of that screening veil and being operable, allows for select views of the surrounding context. Whilst at the building’s public front, the program and use is more evident, at the rear the sheer scale and abstractness of this elevation is as much a moment of relief in an otherwise random cacophony of external staircases, relics of the modernist and colonial periods and the general ensemble of Singapore’s downtown vernacular.

This idea of monolithic form, abstracted and singular in its expression contrasted with a -delicate surface treatment finds wonderful resolution in the dark brooding Stadium MRT building. With its almost brush stroke simplicity, and geometric elegance, this building is perhaps one of WOHA’s most refined sculptural expressions, certainly one of their most singular gestures that makes impact through its dominant extraordinary sculptural presence. The primary form, a 228m long cubic form that bends on its northern side in response to the adjacent Stadium, begins a dialogue between the curvilinear and orthogonal geometry that continues in section. Here the walls drop over 20 metres flexing in drawing people into the underworld of the station proper. Above, a massive glass skylight held just separate from the supporting walls illuminates the dramatic interior. The primary envelope is clad in aluminium louver system that, from afar, reinforces the monumentality of the object but at close proximity, becomes porous and tactile and works to break down the scale of that primary gesture.”

By contrast, I have looked to and written about the surface treatment in ARM’s work as another expression of this trajectory. As I write in my review (quoted in full in Scroll Iteration 1):

‘This main gallery, along with the other gallery spaces, are wrapped in an animated surface – tattooed with other languages and languages of the other. Fragments of meta-graphics, allusions to a materiality, lumps, bumps and Braille can be seen from within the Garden of Australian Dreams. A constructed decoration? Or a deconstructed pontification? Venturi and Scott Brown declare: ‘The whole building is decoration.’ The architecture is in the surface. Is this NMA surface some kind of Semparian slippage? Or a text laid out for Eternity, woven like a tapestry, only partially decipherable? ‘She’ll be right!’ If you care to translate the meaning it’s there.’

My interest and persistent engagement with the loaded and ornamented surface also has obvious precedent in Baroque architecture. The intentionally fluid relationship found in the Baroque Churches examples, particularly The Church of Saint Charles at the Four Fountains, with its undulating walls, thickening to take in structure, ornamentation and surface and the expression of an overarching narrative thematic is another central influence. Also in this trajectory is the influence of American architect Luis Sullivan and the writings on surface, ornamentation and Godfried Semper.
The beginnings of this category mark one of the major transition points of my design work. The earlier work, as evidenced in scroll iteration 1, was largely defined by architectural explorations that worked through overall formal arrangements and expression and less so particular details of openings, exact quality of thresholds, windows and entries. These earlier explorations had not been taken to that level of resolution. I had, however, become increasingly interested in the points of transition across my design projects and, following the development of my interest in narrative and architecture, these moments took on additional value and potentiality. The first exploration of openings forming punctuations, or a moment within the overall narrative, is seen in the Nine Muses, Melpomene, The Muse Of Tragedy. Here, a key precedent, Michelangelo’s Laurentian Library with its vestibule (1525-71), marks the entry point to my speculative library project. Lush red folds out of the interior and establishes a geometric and conceptual counterpoint. This red material signified desire – for learning, for the interior, and the transition to becoming knowledgeable. The Wall and Openings project is another such early exploration. As discussed in the previous example (2 of 7), this study draws out openings from within a generative drawing.

This trajectory finds expression in several key exercises and esquisses that make up my early teaching programs for design studios. The Poetics of Translation studios used ideas of narrative and architecture with thresholds, moments of transition and openings becoming central components. As has been outlined in previous chapters, content and material was loaded into exercises that required the design of particular moments – the Merz Bau Column, a passage and entry sequence for example. By isolating these moments, students were able to develop a resolved, conceptually focused design. These moments were then expanded and developed for the overall architectural proposition. The focus on elements and conceptual material resulted in very well resolved and thoughtful architectural expression. I took this technique across almost all subsequent studios in various ways. These strategies and exercises worked particularly well in the Reciprocity studios, because of the studio’s site at the Abbotsford Convent, with its ambiguities of front and back and what demarcates entrances and the backs of houses. Openings and windows, and their detailing and articulation, therefore played an important role in signification.

My writing and exposure to precedent has been particularly relevant for the evolution of this thematic interest. I will draw attention to a couple of key examples. Corrigan’s handling of
openings as seen in the Athan House, in the Victorian Play House and Niagara Galleries, are fantastic examples. Corrigan’s interest in theatre, narrative and the care he takes bringing ideas and formal expression together is a central reference. By contrast, architects including local Melbourne architect Kerstin Thompson and her Ivanhoe House. The houses of Michelle Black, John Wardle and then ARM’s Addy House demonstrate more traditional detailing, and this along with these projects’ relationship to contextual material, local vernacular and typologies has been particularly informative for my design and teaching work.

The entrance and window in Kai Chen’s Sommers residence (1986) and Allan Powell’s De Stasio Residence, by contrast, are demonstrative of an entirely different approach that has also been extremely influential for my practice. In these examples, the overall architectural expression is more abstracted than the previously listed projects. Form is robust, sculptural, and openings are carved out rather than being carefully curated and inserted elements. Chen’s cave-like entrance, which then leads up into a light-filled living room, describes a spatial narrative that I have repeatedly revisited. The intensely thick and plastic entrance of Phillip Cox’s brick and timber Church building at Tocal NSW, is another example I have drawn from and shown students.

Finally, Nigel Bertram’s own work including NMBW’s FARM Sommers project, Elwood house (2007) and Fitzroy Apartments (2010), and also the material I studied while I was working within the UAL stream, has had significant and ongoing influence. I have also drawn from Bertram’s careful and ‘precise’ observation of the local, the found and informal detailing as seen in industrial and farm buildings, local houses and even fence boundary conditions. Strategies taken from this period of study find expression across these projects at Docklands and then St Arnaud.
As demonstrated in my early design projects, the first design move often emerged from a generative plan drawing. Often very abstract and detailed, this drawing typically followed the first site investigation and reflections on the project's brief and thematics. Drawing on my interest at the time, in Russian Constructivism and artists, including Claus Sternberg, the Suprematist Kazimir Malevich, the first design expression was a dynamic, intuitive drawing that intentionally loaded up formal possibilities, marks and lines of movement and degrees of density and porosity. Whilst at that time, I did not have a particular ideology or position on the role of architectural drawing or the plan, in retrospect, these drawings were almost a form of writing or at least annotation. They were a mechanism to capture and describe certain intensities and moves I felt resonated or engaged with the requirements of the project. The particular architectural theory I had begun to read at that time is accounted for in iteration one of the scrolls in the drawing section (see above), however, I was aware of and had begun investigating deconstructivism and deconstructivism in architecture.

I went through a very rapid and iterative drawing process and would then test the possibilities of this drawing into section and model. Increasingly, I understood these drawings as being a kind of 'form gesture' that held a certain response and set of qualities I wanted to bring to and then draw out of the project. A process of redrawing, precedent investigation and increasingly using other forms of representational media – like photography and collage -served as an interrogative process and a way to focus, resolve and make clear that gesture. Important to note is that this initial figure did alter, however something of that first gesture almost always found expression in the final outcome.

Of relevance here in the PhD, is the specific and dynamic role those plan drawings played in my design process and their mechanism to initiate an architectural narrative. The plan forms' ongoing significance to my practice is evident across this particular scroll-mapping example. These first abstract plans also became increasingly more precise and detailed across these projects. I note that these drawings were a productive mechanism to initiate a series of relationships, scales of detail, form and site relationships very quickly. Previously in this document, I have outlined my speculations regarding the parallels between these drawings and the diagrams used by digital practitioners, which form the beginning point for the architectural moves.
In addition to the plans of Libeskind, particularly of his Jewish Holocaust Museum, the following plan forms (and the buildings they represent) have ongoing relevance, as do Borromini’s plan of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Alvar Aalto’s plans of the Seinajoki Library, Seinajoki (1963-5), Villa Mairea, (1938-41) residence and particularly the Finish Pavilion Competetion Entry (1939), Hans Scharoun’s Berlin Philharmonic Concert Hall (1956-63), Jose Coderch’s Casa Ugaldge (1949-52), Jorn Utzon Can Lis House (1971-71) and the early expressionist plans of Hermann Finsterlien (1928). Edward Bru’s Cabani House and the plans of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos are relevant international examples. Locally, the plans of Edmond & Corrigan are particularly relevant, as are ARM’s, and the work of Paul Minifie – including his own thesis project Klein Bottle project, is a particularly beautiful plan. The more economical plans of Allan Powell, for example, as seen in his De Stasio Residence and Nick Murcutt’s work, have also been an important reference.

I have placed great emphasis on drawing, and on the plan (and section) and site plan in particular, across all of my design studios. In my more recent design work and also those projects completed within UAL, I have worked more simultaneously through view, section and diagram. However, the plan and its structuring role, its ability to hold and carry narrative, and therefore its role in my practice as a type of writing, remains central.
This third mapping iteration revealed quite distinctively my pursuit of the juxtaposed relationship. Initially, this is expressed simply through my employing of two distinctive geometric expressions for the architectural language; an intentionally orthogonal straight system, broken across with a more dynamic and curvilinear or fragmented language. While reducing these projects to a simple geometric system undervalues their content and the other agendas present in the work, it is via this observed system of particular relationship and adjacencies that certain useful intensities and frictions arise. Certainly, in the earlier projects, this move is quite intuitive, and obviously responds to certain visual desires. The Dream House project, is driven in part by my readings of Deleuze’s The Fold, and a Deleuzian Inflection, where I intentionally employed a system that described or attempted to capture a point of transition between two different states: dream and reality. In that project, a complete rectangle with straight solid masonry walls provides the anchor point for the system of inflections that occur within. The idea was that this relationship of fluidity was only visible in select moments from the exterior, and otherwise it was through that rather binding exterior condition, that the dynamic literally unfolds.

My proposition, and this has carried on to my current work, was that a state of exchange and friction between things (ideas and forms, writing and drawing) brings about an intensified relationship whilst providing for a certain perspective or critical distance on the things being brought into relationship. It is being located outside the singularity of a pure system or response, and alternatively, investing in plurality, that I find most productive and interesting. This idea, I see clearly now, also draws on my very early readings on Derrida and Difference, where meaning can only be understood via relationship, including relationship with what something is not. Whilst the complete relativity and endless deferral of meaning is not what I am seeking, I am interested in a certain critical instability – or reflective position. The very fact of this opening up possibilities of meaning and relationship, is central to my ideas driving an architecture of relationship and juxtaposition, and is something I have pursued consistently across my design work, writing and teaching.

This idea found dynamic expression in the Nine Muses project where each Muse study brings particular tensions, systems and ideas into relationship. These are particularly: desire and knowledge, propriety and the new, books and new knowledge forms, bodies and architecture. These sets of ideas and the possible exchange between them, is what underpins the final State.
Library project. Following that project, the writing commissions that immediately followed, allowed me to deepen these ideas and my architectural response via an investigation of architects who similarly pursued plurality and an architecture of dynamic relationship. As discussed previously, particularly scroll Iteration 1, my review of ARM’s National Museum of Australia, Edmond & Corrigan’s Niagara galleries, Victorian Play House and the Athan House are key examples. Similarly, my work on Sidney Nolan also discussed in Scroll Iteration 1, was critical for reinforcing my own ideas concerning juxtaposed systems, as well as expanding my model to include, incorporate the landscape and contextual histories, narratives and myths. The binary dynamic of ‘architecture / not architecture’, and of landscape / architecture, became a central inquiry across much of my teaching and later design projects undertaken with UAL and then here in this PhD with the Seven lamp Project. The premise of my major design studio teaching research project, Reciprocity, is to orchestrate and design an architecture of relationship and exchange not through imitative strategies, but through relations and productive tensions. The later books, New Directions in the Australian House, Popov and WOHA also allowed another closer study of architects who worked through a strategy of difference from context, with an architectural system of multiple rather than mimetic singularity.
As I note earlier, a critical shift across my work as evidenced by the mapping process, is from a design process dominanted by iterative drawing that works from the abstracted gesture drawings, to a more determined or conscious searching and drawing of site and contextual narratives. The shift to a more deliberate consideration of site, the vernacular and contextual relationships, predominantly resulted from my writing commissions and then subsequent design projects undertaken with Bertram and Murray at UAL.

As I have mapped it, the shift was away from a design practice concerned with theoretical or specifically poststructuralist readings, and increasingly towards questions concerning context and site specific narratives. However, important to note, is that first significant review of ARMs work exposed me to a site position, that was at the time unconventional, and would have lasting influence. ARM pursued a far more cerebral engagement with place and context. At first glance, this building, with its abstracted and coloured forms, appears to have little if any relationship with site and context. However, as I have shown in iteration 1, the project offered a complex reading of site and contextual engagement that drew on political and cultural site histories. In direct opposition with the more seamless engagement with the surrounding site conditions, this project addressed more complex, uncomfortable contextual facts and histories concerning identity, Australia’s relationship to Europe, modernity and then the local. These things then find expression in a dynamic vivid architecture.

Another article, also discussed in Iteration 1, ‘Our Critical Condition’, provided a forum for me to explore issues of architecture’s relationship to landscape and questions of local identity and character. With these ideas in mind and then enrolling into UAL masters study in (2004), I explored what the vernacular might mean in an Australian context beyond cliché. My Nolan work, as outlined in Scroll Iteration 1, was also important for this shift, as were a series of articles and books including the New Directions in the Australian House, The Australian House, the Monograph on Alex Popov and the COX architecture essay. Similarly, my WOHA book, although concerning a Singapore based firm, involved a considered discussion of complex issues of identity, the local and vernaculars.

As previously discussed, the work of NMBW and Bertram’s very particular methodology and attitude to site and the local, has been important in my own site reading. Richard Black’s PhD Site Knowledge in Dynamic Context (2009) and his design studio teachings sited at Castlemaine, of which I have been a regular critic, are also formative. Whereas Bertram looks
closely at local building types, local details and patterns of behaviour and local activity, Black’s Studios and work at Times Two architects with his partner Michelle Black, for example their Ceramics Studio (2008) at Green Gully, explores local vernaculars and site ephemera. They invest and explore both the physicality of site and its archival history. The Blacks’ work and teaching, which also draws on the Landartists, has been a significant precedent and influence for the development of my own studio program and design work.

NMBW and Times Two practice were two firms included in my commission to complete the 14 Case Study Practice Profiles in Momentum: Contemporary Victorian Architecture 2000 to the Present. I include excerpts from both of these here because of these practices’ significance in the direction of my own work. Firstly, from the Times Two piece, I wrote:

*The work of Times Two Architects represents the intersection of well-established architectural skills and interests brought to a rapidly developing regional town of Castlemaine, a place beset by its own particular environmental and heritage issues…*

Both directors share an architectural interest in threshold conditions, the materiality of buildings and the experiential qualities buildings engender. Each has particular skills and research interests that they now bring to the Castlemaine practice. Michelle’s earlier Melbourne houses reveal an architecture of rich spatial narratives – episodic journeys – enveloped by tactile and finely detailed elements. Richard, by contrast, operates more conceptually at a larger scale. His ongoing research into the contextual systems of each site – the history, environment, topography and, importantly water – can now be grounded at Castlemaine. As Richard says: ‘One of the things that came out my PhD is the process of seriously investing time in a place, working out what the very particular issues concerning those towns are before you even make a commitment to do a project. Coming here is allowing us to invest in that process, a process the architect typically wouldn’t be able to do. In a way we’re resisting the whole global approach to architecture. We’re working from the ground up, and out of the community’s issues. At the same time we do have an eye on the world and are aware of what’s going on and our architectural traditions.’

From the NMBW case study:

*The work of NMBW – with its precision of architectonics and intent - is informed by the particular and immediate, by local vernaculars and the everyday specifics of place. Engaging an analytical process of close observation made through photography, drawing and discussion with local community members, these architects learn from context and from existing patterns of occupation…*

*The Pioneer Museum Plaza, Jeparit (2007), is an example of the type of project NMBW*

undertake, and reveals their working methodology and detailed consultative process with community and place. This small public project was the first built outcome of a broader urban design strategy which proposed design solutions to develop a sustainable future for Jeparit, a small wheat belt town in the Wimmera-Mallee region of north-west Victoria. A design studio was developed around the project and students were taken out to Jeparit to begin research…

The intention of this research is to understand the very operations of place: how it works, how it is used and occupied and, ultimately, to reveal the town's idiosyncrasies and the particularity of the built fabric, landscape and people. Typically, this knowledge informs a series of design moves that amplify certain discoveries but also – in this case – provide a catalyst for designing a rich, active public space…

The urban character and the public realm are revealed through this intersection of the physical and social, and somehow the town was encapsulated in that one moment. ‘We look at things like that, looking for combinations of the physical, cultural and social that are little sets – little ecosystems – that inform our design response.’ At Jeparit such observations informed the design of a series of new, simple public elements integrated into a strategically chosen site at the existing Pioneer Museum. The outcome was a new public entrance and forecourt to the museum, while the existing building became an active gatehouse to the town and museum.

This working method is evident in all NMBW projects, including the Somers house (2003), the Elwood house (2007), and an installation project done with RMIT students. In all cases the intention was to understand place and the way people live: ‘We think of every project as a little essay…an opportunity to reveal or to show something or even clarify something that might already half exist.’ Rather than approach a project with a predetermined kit of parts, NMBW make very specific studies of each situation and by doing so feel confident about their design decisions and about what the clients are really seeking and how they might live and work.

The architectural language and aesthetic resolution of the project are also strongly informed by place. Decisions concerning materials, detailing and even the overall form are drawn from careful observations of place, building typologies and the local vernacular. For example, at Elwood, the dominant elevation of the residence, facing a canal and bike path, is a playful riff on the very Australian standard paling fence, extended to become the cladding of the garden shed. At Somers, the loose arrangement of the new building against the existing and the new building’s form and materials recall both the language and casual ensemble of farm buildings.63

This work carried through into my UAL research at St Arnaud as outlined in Iteration 1, and also the close exploration of the vernacular and site then took place through my design teaching beginning with Bundanon, Heide 1 & 2, then the 6 iterations of Reciprocity studios.

The PhD process and this final mapping iteration has brought to the fore my interest and investment across all modes of my practice in narrative. In the following Seven lamp Chapters, I declare more comprehensively this trajectory, however in this section I will briefly track the evolution of this theme. Firstly, and I expand on this in the next chapter, the term ‘narrative’ is broad, and specifically I refer to it in terms of a structuring device; literally a narrative that implies a sequence of things working towards a particular resolution to build or curate content.

In discussing the work of Michel Butor’s Mobile, Barthes writes ‘Michel Butor has conceived his novels as single structural investigations whose principals might be this; it is by tying fragments of events together that meaning is generated, its is by tirelessly transforming these events into functions that the structure is erected: the writer (poet, novelist, chronicler,[architect]) sees the meaning of inert units in front of him only be relating them.’ It is this idea of a series of units – elements, moments, buildings, fragments of site, text that becomes reworked, coopted into a larger sequence of relationship that generates meaning.

For my work, the intent has been to curate architectural form and site in such a way that it can be understood as a narrative. This has also been taken into my teaching. Important to note, is that I have also studied, written about architecture and material (my Nolan book) that literally engages various narratives and attempts to make that visible, legible across and within the work.

The first series of design projects - Over The Ropes, The ACT Bridge project and Dream House - explore, as outlined in Iteration 1, a spatial narrative. The architecture, expressed across an extended form, literally involves a staged spatial sequence, a series of thresholds and particular views out and across the architecture itself and site. Particularly in the Dream House and my final State Library Project, this spatial narrative is driven by specific conceptual ideas that sit outside the architecture itself. In the Dream House, a proposed journey from dream to awakening is explored via ideas informed by Deleuze’s in The Fold and Leibniz’s inflections, folds and monads. In the Library Project, I proposed an idea of learning and the transition (desire) to becoming knowledgeable. This was played off against the physical transition from an archive and traditional library to a digital collection. In my Nine Muses project, the set of nine muses could be read as one narrative, but each individual piece could also be understood as a mini narrative about, for example, desire, knowledge, symmetry, writing and ornamentation etc.

Example 7 of 7: Scroll Iteration 3
An investment in Narrative and Architecture:
Allogory: an alternative architectural medium.

As discussed previously, my first writing commissions concerned projects with a strong narrative content and spatial sequence. The work of ARM and Corrigan is central to my narrative investigation along with the international precedents including CJ Lim, Nigel Coates, Tscharni and Italian architect Giuseppe Terragni. These ideas have then translated into and across all of my teaching in various ways. In Poetics of Translations, and the early house studios, narrative form became a structuring device – an armature about which to explore particular architectural moments and the studio’s thematic concerns. Narrative and a spatial sequence are also central to the organisation and content of the Reciprocity studios. For example, a particular exercise follows a walk across and through site establishing a spatial sequence and strategic moments for design intervention. These walks then became a way to curate site, reorientate journeys through site, and in doing so, and establish points of entry, departure and moments of rest and activity along the way.

This narrative trajectory has obvious resonances with the very fact of me being a writer. My interest in narrative overlaps – and is yet to be explored – in terms of my interest in the digital. How does cinematic narrative and filmic design intersect with the potential of digital architectural and architectural representation? My interest here, to be pursued at a later date, is in the formative role architectural representation has with its outcome and therefore, the ability for the digital realm to hold a stronger spatial sequencing which by turn, places greater demands on the order and content of those views and sequences.

As I have stated earlier, this exploration in narrative in this PhD has given rise to an idea of allegorical place making in my work. And I situate this allegorical interest within the narrative trajectory. Jennifer Bloomer’s Architecture and the Text: the (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi, has been an important reference point for my early projects, however, its significance in terms of opening up to me the possibility of an allegorical architecture is more recent. Walter Benjamin’s 1928 treatise on allegory, Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (the Origins of German Tragic Drama) is a central reference point for Bloomer’s work. From Benjamin, she proposes allegory as a ‘transformative’ working between the verbal and the visual, the viewer must engage in the space between the linguistic (reference) and the graphic. The ‘suppressing’ - I would say bringing into – of the image and text.

In my penultimate PRS presentation, I cited a detail from Sandro Botticelli’s painting La Primavera, as a way to introduce several key ideas for this presentation and my work. I recount that here to demonstrate the way in which I might engage allegory to structure my work and interest.
At the time I said, ‘A trio of figures emerges from the woods moving towards Venus. Zephyrus, the wind of March, reaches out to the veiled nymph Chloris and ‘ravishes’ her. As he does this, flowers sprout from her mouth and she becomes - there in the picture frame - the third figure- Flora, Goddess of Spring.

This is an alive moment caught in representation that depicts duality of time and of becoming within the one expression. It is also a finished piece (or form) that captures a narrative whilst simultaneously depicting the process of genesis. Within this, what I am calling a threshold moment on the edge of a forest, themes of emergence, desire, reciprocity and juxtaposition are played off against one another and in the context of a wider narrative.

These Botticelli figures are used in my Seven lamp project - intentionally displaced in the Abbotsford Convent to introduce that key idea of a kind of allegorical place making. This describes my consistent endeavour to explore an idea or see via a kind of allegorical structure or armature. That consistent desire to make a narrative, through the arrangement and placement of character, form, gesture, site and spatial sequence, carries across all three of my practice modes.

I am very interested in narrative, in both writing and architectural design, and indeed in problem solving and its primary responses and relationship to a tradition of story telling and of structuring thought, ideas and, I would argue, space.

3.7 The Scrolls: Iteration Three: Reflection.

This final iteration of the scrolls has reinforced the interchangeability of my practice modes, and the dynamic and continual exchange that occurs across and between the drawing, writing and teaching. Of note, my working method that involves thinking - conceptualising – equally through writing and drawing, finds translation into design outcome and also architectural critique is distinctive. The writing and design process involved in studio teaching – writing up and refining the outlines, exercises, delivering material and also student feedback - are in effect an active design exploration – they are design laborities. With the assessment processes becoming a form of reflection and mode to refine and evolve the model.
Chapter 4: The Seven lamps: Design Principals and Declarations.

Overview

This project, as has been mentioned earlier, was a testing mechanism for certain emerging ideas from the scroll mapping process, that began two thirds of the way through the PhD. As the mapping process revealed, my practice had been dominated by writing and teaching over the last few years, and this project was also a way to reengage my role as ‘architect’ designer. Importantly the lamps were a way to give hierarchy to the diversity of content and research undertaken across the previous 12 years. Each lamp, then, becomes both a declaration of a field of interest and an expression through a design move. They are therefore a catalogue of design declarations and design strategies that can now be applied and tested across future projects.
Lamp 1. Plan Form, the Emergent and the Generative: A Stitch across the Narrative Arc:

‘If anything is described by an architectural plan, it is the nature of human relationships, since the elements whose trace it records – walls, doors, windows and stairs – are employed first to divide and then selectively to re-unite inhabited space.” Robin Evans

This lamp addresses my investment in plan form and generative plan forms as useful devices to establish site narrative and architectural gesture. Important to note is that this not a plan form in the traditional sense with a very codified and prescriptive system of marks, enclosing lines, but rather refers to a drawing: a system that is more open and abstract. This drawing in my work has allowed for me to draw in site particularities, but also for other references, both architectural and non-architectural, to be brought into the narrative. Here in my practice, the plan is to be understood as a mobile surface, a Semperian texture into which the first site response, forces and influences are stitched. The drawing’s primary role is beginning the narrative, which is then tested and pursued through relevant representational modes.

More broadly, this lamp introduces the importance of generative modes of designing that take place through drawing and writing and that mark the beginning of the formation of the project’s narrative. It is through these drawings and marks that architectural language often begins, and through which the author declares their qualitative preferences. Again, Evans’ work is critical here, where he outlines the ‘enormous generative part played by architectural drawings’ He argues that whilst, ‘on the one hand the drawing might be vastly overvalued, on the other the properties of drawing – its peculiar powers in relation to its putative subject, the building – are hardly recognised at all.”

Here at the convent, the narrative concerns the site’s history and the existing built context of the 18th century French Gothic style ecclesiastical buildings, the adjacent children’s farm and the surrounding mix of industrial warehouses and residential buildings. My plan serves to work a new spatial journey and sequence through site that strengthens the relationship of the site to the river, and to its past histories; whilst celebrating the peculiarities and particularities of the existing built fabric. Additionally, this narrative engages the site’s history from the early 20th century as being a place to house ‘outcast, wayward’ women - almost imprisoned - making lacework and doing laundry work. Into this system, intentionally looking outwards to other histories, remnants of Alvar Alto’s Seinajoki Library, Seinajoki (1963-5) and Finlanda Hall and Congress Centre, Helsinki (1962-75), plan slices of Borromini’s The Church of Saint Charles at the Four Fountains are woven into the text(ure) of the plan form.


66. ibid P 156.

67. ibid P 154
Lamp 2: Sequence and Entry: Spatial Narratives.

The next lamp addresses conditions of entry, of openings and architectural apertures. In particular here at the convent, it is the point of entry and its signifying role of marking the beginning of the narrative. The symbolic value of entry, what it does and doesn’t demarcate and my interest in an architecture of thresholds – points of transition from one place and one condition to the next – makes this place critical. Within my teaching, students are also asked to consider the role of entry and its relationship the context and site. What can an entry be? What can it signify and how might it engage the contextual conditions? And what of the architectural moves to come – the architectural language - should be revealed at this first point?

Looking across my earlier projects and the buildings I reviewed, entry has been a key focus. The Laurentian Library, with its much-revered vestibule and staircase, has been a central reference. The tension between the reading room, its ordered and rhythmic stillness, and the much more fluid, explosive vestibule is an ongoing inspiration and the focus of that particular Nine Muse study as previously discussed. Kai Chen’s Sommers House raises another key question I have consistently reflected upon: At this first point of contact with architecture, what is to be signified about program and place? And how much of that should be made legible, and how?

So, at the Abbotsford Convent, with its porous relationship to surrounding site and access points, what is the potential of entry and where should it be located? I proposed an entry that resonates with the mixed typology of site buildings, the odd fragments and collisions of place, and references to past history and events. This moment draws on my observations of site – where what appears as the back is often the front, where walls are, by turn, denuded and then ornamented, and propriety thus inverted.

And so: the roughly made existing red brick wall is kept, but made a little bigger, with scoops taken out and arabesques carved in. Fragments of the French Gothic architecture and of the lace work laboured over by the convent inmates, are rescaled and rendered a little more brutal. Then recalling that ecclesiastical language of spires, towers and finials, two dark Calderesque forms reach out framing the entry proper. Cast in black steel, their meaning is twofold: nearby industrial buildings, adjacent industrial remnants also make their presence felt. Soft and hard combined, this is another of my inflected forms made tough. Celebratory and defensive, I have proposed a layered threshold, from which both interior and exterior is framed.
Lamp 3: Views and Allegory, Place, Potentiality and Design

This next lamp, following CJ Lim and Ed Liu as they explore in their *Short Stories: London in Two-and-a Half Dimensions* 68, pursues more directly my positing of architecture as a narrative form. This concerns the lyrical and spatial sequencing of ideas and structure that carries the viewer, or reader, into another realm such that meaning – content - is revealed via the experience of the architecture. In writing (they, we) might call it ‘showing not telling’. This lamp, therefore, involves the critique of conventional orthographic modes of representation, particularly plan, section and elevation, that are limited in what they communicate about the real visceral and qualitative aspects of architecture. Architecture is also experienced sequentially. And so, for this lamp I declare the value of the view - the peripheral view, the sequential view and the allegorical view - as a key design strategy. What is the narrative potential of that view? What has just happened there? What is it about that space, building, or site that suggests a particular occupation or invites a particular response? And how can that response be then designed and sequenced across a site?

As part of this lamp, I propose an idea of Allegorical place making where things are brought into the narrative and into relationship with site such that certain aspects, histories and invisible narratives, and qualities of site, are brought to the fore. The device of allegory is also particularly relevant for my practice because of its operative function as working between word and image. This thematic is one that has evolved and found clearer expression through this PhD process.

Several important origins for this particular lamp have been my ongoing interest in the baroque and architecture or form that embodies narrative and allegory. This, combined with my desire for architecture to engage site (and sites inherent, sometimes unseen, narratives), led me to observe that I draw on things outside architecture to register that content experientially. These ideas have beginning points in my Sidney Nolan book particularly, including Nolan’s interest in the 20th century European modernism, mythology, Pieter Bruegel and then Sunday Reed’s challenge for Nolan to depict the Australian landscape through the lens of 20th century modernity. Nolan revealed site and engaged site history via the placement of his abstracted and mythologised Ned Kelly into a roughly painted landscape scene: the modernist black square brought into Australian Landscape.

And so here - De Chirico haunts the convent: empty spaces, sunlit facades and deep shadows frame a loaded scene. A girl passes through, two men talk…this is a place where something of significance has happened or is about to happen. There is an empty strange formality about the place – a comment about Australia? Stage-like, uncomfortably pregnant with past inhabitation and overlaid with the new. A certain irreconcilability feeds this narrative but also generates a positive emergent tension.

Lamp 4: Form Gesture, the searching for a Vivid Architecture.

‘The inflection is the pure Event of the line of the point, the virtual, Ideality par excellence.’

Gilles Deleuze

This lamp follows on from my muse study I titled Terpsichore – the muse of dancing and dramatic chorus. At the time of writing it, I assigned this Muse to the idea of inflection, Deleuze writers, ‘in fact, the inflection – the fantastic forms, or the arabesque, in its sinuous and woven movement, keeps together as possibility…the object of fantasy or the knowledge of the imagination’

The lamp addresses the question of form and its origin - my critique of process and the formation of specific architectural qualities or character. It continues one of my most dominant architectural trajectories and is an investigation that carries through from my very early design work, particularly that which was interested in the potential Gesture of Architecture in a Brechtian sense. Gesture for Brecht involves a physical attitude, the ‘gist’ as demonstrated via the actor’s physicality and then also through the relationships – e.g. words, actions, qualities with others, and context. Architecturally, I have taken this to refer to the inherent intentional qualities invested in form by the maker. What can an architectural gesture hold and convey? (And what is legible in that form? Where does it come from?) This is a trajectory that I draw through the Baroque, expressionism, Hermann Finsterlin and more contemporary examples including Corrigan, ARM among others; but also Nolan, Allan Powell with their more ‘crude’ or raw insertions into landscape.

Can we position the architectural object, gesture, as being more autonomous? As being a thing independent of process alone and understood and critiqued alternatively in terms of specific qualities? What are the relationships that form can curate? What are its resonances? What can it refer to, respond to, frame and reveal? In short, can the critique be forward looking?

Here, in this design proposal, that is a searching for certain vividness - a kind of unexpected slightly unfamiliar thing but one that that resonates with place and site. Here this is a striated and layered form, where into the folds of surface, cuts and openings are found, and a series of thresholds initiated. Past and present resonate together and a new celebratory civic space is opened up, where previously a building prevented access to a hidden courtyard behind.


Lamp 5: Desire and Juxtaposition: A Place where things come close to Touching, Architecture activated by Proximities

This lamp concerns my investment in thresholds - a place activated by difference and proximity and therefore desire. And ‘Thresholds’, Pollak tells us ‘are where transformations begin, where exchanges between unlikely things occur, and where identities are declared… threshold as an operation involves the preservation of differences, as well as the creation of something new…’

Here this is between one building and the next, one wall and the next, or conversely between text and image, word and vision, all twins bound by proximity and circumstance. This is a place where things come close to touching, and therefore where space and context is understood or revealed via relationship and adjacency. This lamp foregrounds a relationship of multiple entities, an observation that things are not in isolation, and therefore meaning and experience is formed via relationship. Architecture occurs between conditions: between the generative and the realised, and between text and building.

Between building and ground is a multitude of thresholds and edges, born from that relationship. Robin Dripps in her essay Groundwork, writes of the edge, that it mediates relationships with the ground, ‘Whether made by adjacency, juxtaposition, overlap, or by things brought together by seam, the edge registers and responds to similarly and difference.’

This lamp study follows on from the previous lamp, and also takes from and revisits the Muse project, in particular the Muse of Erato, (which I renamed the Muse of Desire). At that time, I drew on the work of Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze and Phillip Goodchild’s An Introduction to the Politics of Desire. These ideas have ongoing relevance for this work. Goodchild writes, ‘Foucault and Derrida allocate desire a similar function in dissolving systems of classification. Desire actively resists classification and in doing so challenges the very systems brought into play…desire in its darkness ends up illuminating meaning…’ Whilst, Deleuze writes, ‘desire…is a spontaneous emergence that generates relationship through a synthesis of multiplicity’s.’

It is these ideas of the multiple being brought into relationship that I am particularly interested in here. That my architecture engages with context and existing site, but in a way that is not a seamless synthesis of contextual differences and formal and historical anomalies - rather that these differences provoke an emergent, vital dialogue.

The threshold condition is the test of this architecture and forms the key moment in the narrative arc. And this convent site is about relationship and tensions between built typologies: between native vegetation and spatial conditions, courtyards and passages, corridors, arcades, porticos, and then the wall itself - an expanded threshold of moulded reliefs, of openings and varying thicknesses. This lamp finds multiple examples across the map – the relationship between moments of the building – between one skin and the next; building and context; specific choreographed relations exist across all the work and are readily identifiable.

71. BERRIZBEITIA, A. & POLLACK, L. Op cit, p23
This lamp proposes an architecture that works through reciprocal relationship with the surrounding site conditions, with all their anomalies and idiosyncrasies and stories unseen. Here at the convent, it involves the reworking of a previously enclosed courtyard space that was the only free outdoor space available for use for the particular community of girls who lived and worked on site. This lamp addresses an intention that architecture curates a newfound journey through site and context, and that in doing so, site narratives (some old, some forgotten), are drawn out, brought forward and refigured. The application of the extended section, the type of surgical slice through site is an important tool here for exploration and continues, as I have expanded on in the previous chapter, the ongoing role of section here too. And in these studies, as is seen here, the gaps and voids, the spaces between buildings revealed, are just as important as the buildings themselves. I note in this process that many of my projects have intentionally worked with sites containing remnant or historical buildings: the State Library, the Melbourne Exhibition Building and now the Convent.

This lamp also addresses my close observation, as expressed in my writings and teaching exercises, of architectural openings, windows, doors and surface qualities. Now, in this Convent project, these observations include the thresholds, built idiosyncrasies and unusual adjacencies and rhythms of buildings and remnant voids. These are then are brought together along with the history of this courtyard space. And more in keeping with Hejduk, CJ Lim and their explorations of architectural narrative’s investment in writing, making textural spatial narratives becomes a catalyst for design. A series of ‘What if…?’ questions is posed. What if this convent courtyard, previously enclosed, inwardly focused, was cracked opened? What if the girls’ lacework transformed into a veil, a skin-like lace tempering the severity and austerity of the courtyard buildings? What if a hole is punched through the end wall, opening up to the huge oak tree behind? A new spatial narrative is woven through the Convent buildings, redolent with the Convent’s peculiar rhythm of spatial tensions and adjacencies, compressive rhythms and the strange coexisting fragments of Gothic architecture and industrial typologies.
Lamp 7: Context and Site: Resonances and Riffs.

This lamp declares my relationship with site, where more so than before, gesture and drawing, design and architecture engage tangibly and provocatively with site context. This lamp addresses a contextual response that explores the consequence of inserting a new, foreign relationship into site, as a way to refigure and reveal contextual relationship. ‘Insertion,’ as Linda Pollak writes, ‘initiates a relationship of interdependency between space and its context, and initiates cycles of activity and reactivity between an existing context and a new, inserted, space. Insertion can also engage temporal aspects by exposing previous urban layers, in order to reveal continuities and disjunctures between past and present.’

This lamp draws on my writings concerning architectural relationship to site in the Australian context. What is placed into a landscape with its relatively brief Western or white history? And so back to the convent - what if, where once a massive wall and room divided courtyard from the tree, river and landscape beyond, a door expands and pushes through opening up a passage way? This lamp establishes a connection that curates relationship to the separation tree for the girls and a release to the landscape and river beyond. This opening is thick, dense and carries traces of pre-existing architecture and also something new. Vital, vivid qualities, a gateway, a doorway to another place and time, like the Laurentian Library vestibule, this is an opening that almost oozes out of the wall, an openness that connects and invites. A threshold extended, a transition stretched, and so a point of flexion from one to the next.

75. BERRIZBEITIA, A. & POLLACK, L. op cit,
INFLECTION: An exchange between writer and architecture
The practice model.

Overview

This essay is intended to provide an explanation of the model of practice I have established as a result of this PhD. The relationship I have demonstrated between my writing and drawing across this dissertation and as evidenced in the Seven Lamp project, the discussions across the Scroll Iteration chapters, makes contribution to the fields of architectural criticism and to the design process.

Fundamental for architectural criticism is the distance established between the subject and object and the way in which the critic brings the ‘reader’ into relationship with the object. What type of relationship is established? Typically once removed, the critic places the reader in a kind of formal, analytical position, and from there demonstrates or ‘plays out’ the critique. Central to this dissertation is the concept that that space between architecture and representation (words and drawing) in critique as well as in architectural process, is generative and able to produce new architectural content. I propose in the case of architectural critique, and dependent on the mode of writing or drawing, that buildings can be strategically revealed to the reader (viewer) in differing ways with differing effects. One way this can occur is via narrative form, where a more immersive engagement made through writing brings the reader into a first person experiential relationship with architecture. This is doubly important for my practice because words are also used in the architectural process in a generative way. As demonstrated in the Seven Lamps project, with its allegorical insertions and writing that in part adopts narrative form, the potential is the reader (or maker) is brought into close proximity with the ideas and references that are the genesis of the architecture. This dissertation posits that architectural meaning is created both in the process preceding the architectural object and then again, after the building in the processes of observation, review and critique.

By way of example and discussion, this essay also gives background detail and musings to my reflections on some relationships between writing and architecture that I see as important.

Text and Architecture: a Relationship of Reciprocities and Riffs: An alternative proposition for a model of architectural practice.

In 1928, Walter Benjamin completed his treatise on allegory, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (The Origins of German Tragic Drama)*. And in 1993, Jenner Bloomer, author of *Architecture and the Text: the (S)cripts of Joyce and Piranesi*, described this work – a key text for her own book – as ‘Klein worm-like’

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'A three-dimensional map of “systems” of ideas, documents, and configuring diagrams represented as black marks upon a page. It is not exactly writing as “writing” is conventionally constituted, nor is it exactly a “drawing” as such. It oscillates between writing and drawing, operating in the spaces between. The conventional allegorical painting, which requires the reading and viewing operator-cum-interpreter to engage the space between the linguistic and the graphic, is a simple model of this: that “space between” must be explored, or built within, in order to construe the relationship between the two.”

It is this sense of a thing with multiple points and ‘moley routes’, an object that twists and turns and works interchangeably, backwards and forwards between writing and architecture, that captures the model of practice I propose. Bloomer then follows her account of Benjamin’s Treatise with a description of her own book which, she writes, is, “…not a treatise that proposes a theory of architecture and text, but a para-theoretical construction of architecture and text. It relies on transformative operations.” This essay, and indeed my practice, also do not offer a theory of architecture and text, but alternatively describe a practice which does however, rely on transformative operations between word and drawing - here intertwined in a sometimes uncomfortable, but very productive, intimacy.

Whilst I might love architecture and the process of architectural drawing - in a way that I cannot quite love writing - the reality of my practice is that it has constantly evolved an interchangeable and dynamic relationship between the two. What begins as a piece of writing has resulted in a set of drawings, and perhaps consequently, what was begun as a desire to draw, and to make (architecture) has resulted in a practice that for the last ten years, has been dominated by writing about architecture, for architects, for students of architecture, and for myself.

This PhD process has given clarity to this working relationship, allowing the operative modes of exchange to be defined more precisely. In essence, this PhD has established the framework for the future model of my practice: that of a Writer Architect – who makes texts and architecture, words and image – but importantly, one who uses the structures and potentials of each to facilitate the production of the other. Each has a generative role enabling the other’s genesis and production. I have found, through this PhD process, that my role as writer, a commentator and critic, has direct consequences for my design work (and teaching). Similarly, drawings and collages may form the first expression of an idea that then precipitates an iterative process of writing and further drawings.

The word text derives form the Latin word Texere, to weave. It has come to mean the act of weaving an idea; stitching a narrative together. But what is woven is visual, stitches coming together forming a scene or an image. It is this potential transformative exchange between word and image that underpins my practice. Architecture and writing have a longstanding


poetic, even allegorical relationship and, whilst I will not give a detailed account of that history here, these two apparently independent structures have a well-known union. German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s much-quoted line from his letter on Humanism, (1947), is one such poignant example of their metaphorical interchangeability. ‘Language is the house of being. In its home man dwells.’

Architectural practitioners, commonly, do not like writing. ‘It’s like pulling teeth.’ said Richard Black to me recently, ‘It’s agonizingly slow!’ But Black can diagram so well, draw so well that perhaps he doesn’t need to write. Nevertheless, these two skills or ‘structures’ are not always coexistent and yet there are definite resonances and riffs to be found. Indeed Catherine Ingraham, in her Lines and Linearity essay, writes: ‘The structure of architecture and writing do not tolerate each other, yet that intolerance only conceals the disturbing implications of the two linear structures that house each other.’ Disturbing. The relationship of words and architecture can also have a disturbing or threatening possibility. Will words somehow diminish or reduce the building, the experience of the architecture? Disturbing, perhaps because the architect, or the student, in defending their work, will be misinterpreted, or at the very least will be misunderstood. This avoidance of these potential rupturings is certainly what the 17th century French author Freart de Chambray pursued, in his Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern declaring emphatically, ‘The art of architecture does not consist in words.’

This is the position that Adrian Forty begins with in his ‘Words and Buildings, A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture’, a book that explores the relationship between architecture and words through a detailed study of 18 select terms that frequent 20th century architectural language. Forty cites John Evelyn’s critique of de Chambray, and Evelyn’s assertion that words are indeed part of the architecture profession. Evelyn argues that architecture requires the engagement of four different types of architect people. Firstly the ‘architects ingenio’ – the ‘man of ideas, familiar with the history of architecture, skilled in geometry and drawing techniques…’, then the patron ‘architectus umptuarius - with a full and overflowing purse.’ Thirdly ‘architectus manuarius - the artisans and workmen’ and then fourthly, the ‘architectus verborum – the architect of words, skilled in the craft of language, and whose task it was to talk about the work and interpret it to others.’

Forty is interested in Evelyn’s proposition that architecture consists equally of these four aspects, or parts of architects. And by extension, that words are therefore equal to the drawings, the work of the craftsman, or the funds of the patron. My own practice and work supports Evelyn’s proposition: architecture is more than just buildings. My colleague and fellow writer, architect and architectural advocate Stuart Harrison also concurs with this. His own architectural
publications and the establishment of the RRR Radio Show The Architects and architectural practice, HAW Harrison & White Sustainable Urban Design and Architecture, both demonstrate these ideas. In Harrison’s case, his intention is also to ‘rescue the profession from itself, which is faced with the challenge of making excellent design projects and also communicating to the public why the profession is useful and needed.’ The issue for Forty is: how is that relationship manifest? Is the architect of words to remain separate to architecture proper, or can we understand ‘language as lying within’ architecture?’ For this practice, words and language, drawings and buildings are spliced equally - not always neatly – but certainly together.

In making a case for what defines architecture and indeed separates it from simply building, Miriam Gusevich proposes that without language, and in particular architectural criticism, there would be no ‘architectural canon and it is the canon, which institutionalises the difference between architecture and building.’ Thus, in effect words give us architecture.

As has been demonstrated across this PhD, writing and words, text and its texture, have been central to my practice. I propose that writing’s relationship to architecture is more intimate again than proposed by Forty or Gusevich. With those twins again bound by proximity, another threshold is formed. Words stack up. Lines collide. Drawings with phrases, words with buildings. Both generative and spatial, writing sits equal to, rather than separate from, the drawing. For this practice, writing and drawing equate in their propositional and qualitative ability and agility. The model of working described here is one that relies upon the generative interrelationship and application of word and drawing. And in their co dependence, has shaped and defined my architectural intentions and outcome.

As architectural drawing has varied modes across this practice – the analytical diagram, the generative sketch, the final drawing to name a few - my writing similarly has different modes, voices and roles, as I have suggested in my scroll iteration chapters. These are the architectural commentator, the critic and then my own exploratory design writing. Releasing the traditional oppositional relationship between writing and drawing has opened up alternative possibilities – alternative narratives - for how architecture can be conceived and produced. For this practice it is the working between writing and image (drawing) where architecture and architectural ideas are tested and produced. An idea finds expression in both words and drawings and works reciprocally between both modes before finding final expression and resolution. Sometimes this is a written exploration of a reading that then becomes figurative and visual. This occurs in the first three projects I include in the Scroll Iteration drawing section, including Over The Ropes, The Canberra Bridge Gallery and the Dream House, where design ideas and drawings emerged from my response to particular theoretical readings. In the next series of projects, particularly Nine Muses, the exploration

83. HARRISON, S., Interview via SMS, 12 February 2014.


explicitly involved the simultaneous production of both text and image, which was then presented adjacent and equally as an architectural proposition.

Following a period of rapid and intense writing that occurred after those first design projects, I worked more with writing rather than drawing and another type of architectural spatiality emerged. In the space between the actual building and then my review, architectural ‘content’ was formed. As I have mentioned previously, this became a discussion point with Paul Minifie. In the same PRS session, Martyn Hook asked: was I simply a conduit for the architect’s intentions and ideas, or, was I also producing architectural content? I proposed the latter, and that another architectural space unfolded between the building and my reviews of them; and also, that this space was in fact essential for the discipline of architecture. For one reason, because my consistent observation is that what architects say about their buildings and design processes are frequently in disagreement with the reality of the architecture. But this slippage, or lag, between what is created and how it is discussed is not only common, but also not a threatening reality. For these things - origins, intent and meaning - emerge predominantly and most potently, between all parties involved in that building becoming architecture. Perhaps this processes mirrors the ‘four participants’ in the architectural profession that John Evelyn describes.

These discrepancies between what architects say about their work and the work itself are well known. Before discussing his Duck and the Decorated Shed ideas, architect, educator and architectural theoretician, Robert Venturi, writes;

To make the case for a new but old direction in architecture, we shall use some perhaps indiscreet comparisons to show what we are for and what we are against and ultimately to justify our own architecture. When architects talk or write, they philosophize almost solely to justify their own work, and this apologia will be no different.86

Conversely however, architecture is given another life through the work of critics and commentators. This discussion between building, critic and architect, often becomes a generative source for me, and as other critics have observed, for the architectural profession. Architectural criticism is a productive action – a necessary activity. The regenerative and operative function of criticism is essential for the profession. Citing Gusevich again: ‘criticism is not parasitical; it is a productive activity – constructing its object, creating the canon, and implicitly and explicitly defining the criteria for judgement…criticism can retrieve, reopen, reformulate, and resituate even the most canonical object.’87 Whilst her position is representative of a period during the mid 1990s in which architectural theory – and by extension architectural criticism – was in flavour, the basic generative role she assigns to the critical activity I follow and still see as necessary.


Buildings are representative of a particular time and place, and so can be understood as being a text, a document that captures a certain historical and contextual slice. Bloomer posits that the building is not only a ‘document of something that has happened’, it is also an ‘event itself’. I follow Bloomer here in proposing that the existence of the building is textural, as she writes: ‘that is, architecture contains the instrument for radical critical operations upon itself within itself.’ For this model of practice, the act of observation – of reading, in all senses of the word – is therefore not passive but generative. An example of this for Bloomer, is given in her account of the reader of James Joyce’s Finnegan’s Wake, who cannot be an inert passive reader but rather an active reader – this ‘reader-writer is a producer, appropriator, a maker, an assembler.’

My supervisor Leon van Schaik, also made a comment to me during a crit session regarding the act of looking. Of reading a building, he said: ‘For every act of observation, there are one 100 design ideas possibilities.’ My practice is located between the surfaces of architecture and text, between the drawing and the word. And these surfaces form a kind of vessel, where ‘meaning’ or architectural ideas are formed and transformed. Following Bloomer, I propose the surfaces of writing and architecture can be constructed as she writes, ‘as a constellation of points of exchange, a kind of switching mechanism of potential transformations.’ And for my practice, this space becomes doubly loaded. In the act of observing buildings – architecture - and in the process of writing about them, another space opens up for the genesis of architectural ideas and therefore feeds into and begins my own architectural design process.

I also strongly regard and am influenced by the critical thinking and work of architect and theoretician Robin Evans. His depth and generosity of insight I find unusually optimistic as well as stimulating. By contrast with the above-mentioned writers, I am also drawn to the language and character of his writing: expressive, not laboured nor obviously theoretical; and his obvious investment in buildings themselves and in architectural drawing (which he also sees as generative). I cite Evan’s here because his critical writing, the language of his reviews, suggests operations to further explore architecture. For me his work immediately gives rise to the desire to act, draw or write. In a seminal review of Daniel Libeskind’s Chamber Works, twenty-eight drawings exhibited at the Architectural Association, London 1983, Evans made this wonderful insight about the role of the architectural critic. He writes that it is his/her role to:

‘Delve into, uncover, disclose, reveal, divulge, discover, unfold and show to the reader what lies hidden or unseen, to get to the bottom of things, to plump the depths beneath the surface beneath the curtain… the critic in search of origins, essences, intentions, motives, and causes, for these are the things that lie behind appearances. They look to find some animating or authenticating agency that will account for whatever they confront. The critic’s task is always to

88. Bloomer, J. (1993), op cit, P 22
confront…. it is the critic’s duty not to take things at face value.”

Drawing on the work of other writers and thinkers (and material) outside architecture is an important part of my practice. Of note, in this chapter it is not so much the people and work I have drawn on, but more the process of drawing inspiration and ideas from outside of the architecture discipline. And this I also see as generative rather than as instructive. Earlier in this PhD, I have outlined my critique of theories standing in for and ‘legitimising’ certain aesthetic preferences; and, like writers including Bloomer, I see the process as much more transformative and generative. She writes: ‘In the interior of writing and architecture – which is where theory and philosophy negotiate their terms – what begins as a material, spatial experience becomes figurative or metaphoric.’ Bloomer articulates a shift from space to idea. My process also involves a similar exchange between image, idea, text and space. Each mode, or reading, or representational form, provides a different lens through which to view the idea, the building or drawing.

More broadly, too, each discipline can also be affected by looking at and reflecting upon other disciplines in much the same way. Alternative methods and strategies for working with and seeing the objects of that discipline are exposed by this interdisciplinarity. Eisenman, for example, looks to other fields. In discussing his design process and his use of philosophy, he writes:

‘Studying Derrida and studying Palladio are clearly not the same thing. Studying Derrida helps you to look at Palladio in a different way. Studying Palladio also helps you to look at Derrida in a different way. I am interested in the possibility that [philosophers] provide for looking at [architects] in a different way… I use models from other disciplines because we do not have models in architecture which are today adequate to describe the complexities of the world.’

In the same way, Daniel Libeskind, in an interview by Karen Burns Architecture Australia (2001), discussed the absence of architectural references in his work and why he drew predominantly on literary figures for inspiration:

‘Writers have more to contribute to a discussion of the city and its future. In its analysis of the modernization of urban space, its response and in its sense of spiritual longings of huge populations, literary culture was in advance of the architectural avant garde… I am not only interested in writing but in what is experienced in the text. The discourse of architecture has been limited to a few very reduced notions of reference. Expanding that field to musical, literary, poetic, artistic and cultural fields, locates architecture within the humanistic framework from which it originally arose.’

Architecture is inherently and necessarily tied to other disciplines, to culture, art and politics. It is this connection that makes theorising the origins of architectural form and meaning
richly complex. Bloomer posits that architecture is located in this gap, in the place between boundaries, writing ‘...this architecture is not disciplinary, but interdisciplinary. It seeps out of its capsule and bleeds into the interstices, the intervals among the dissolving walls of other capsules: philosophy, science, and literature. Architecture is not in a capsule but in a soup.

For my practice, it is also the character, the quality of the writing itself, both in reading and in writing that has a generative role. Bloomer refers to a 'knotty textuality' of writing, and I have referred to the influence of Roland Barthes, including particularly his books The Death of the Author, Pleasure of the Text and Camera Lucida. As well as his ideas, I am drawn to the physicality that he assigns to writing and words themselves. For my practice, where writing becomes physical, and therefore spatial, words are qualitative and therefore generative. The expression and the meaning are held as much in the texture of the words as the content.

Regarding this textural physicality – the 'aesthetic of textural pleasure' - Barthes writes that expression:

‘...is carried by the grain of the voice, which is an erotic mixture of timbre and language, ...its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theatre of emotions, what it searches for are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of the consonants, the voluptuousness of the vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue... it granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes: that is bliss.’

For me, these intertextuality and resonances within text, are also present in a similar way in drawings and images. Within the process of drawing, ideas are formed and transformed; but also once the drawing is finished, another set of possibilities opens up. Labyrinthine in process, almost self-generating, drawings and images (text and writing) produce infinite possibilities.

The work of Italian writer Italo Calvino and his own exploration of writing, narrative modes and particularly the process of idea formation is an also an important influence. Calvino also works generatively between image and word for the construction of his stories and imagined places – his architecture. The rapid-fire interchangeability he describes, between image and word, and the process of moving from an image (or word for me) and then towards a greater resolution or expression of that through writing (or drawing) is a very familiar.

In devising a story, therefore, the first thing that comes to my mind is an image that for some reason strikes me as charged with meaning, even if I cannot formulate this meaning in discursive or conceptual terms. As soon as the image has become sufficiently clear in my mind, I set about developing it into a story; or better yet, it is the images themselves that develop their own implicit potentialities, the story they carry within them. Around each image others come into being, forming a field of analogies, symmetries, confrontations into the organisation

of this material, which is no longer purely visual but also conceptual, there now enters my
deliberate intent to give order and sense to the development of the story; or rather, what I do
is try to establish which meanings might be compatible with the overall design I wish to give
the story and which meanings are not compatible, always leaving a certain margin of possible
alternatives… I would say from the moment of putting black on white, what really matters
is the written word, first as a search for an equivalent of the visual image, then as a coherent
development… Finally, the written word little by little comes to dominate the field.”

Through this PhD, I have reflected upon architectural drawing as being a type of notation, a
form of writing. Certainly, my own process of drawing and redrawing is a way of seeing and
knowing, of reading and observing. And as an extension of this, architecture then becomes a
form of spatial editing. This observation returns to my investment in the generative and spatial
qualities of writing and drawing, which, as I have explored in this chapter, are interchangeable.
The process of looking at and analysing buildings, for me has also always involved a process
of diagramming. Diagramming in order to understand, and to communicate, is not a new
concept. And locally for me, there are many rich examples to be found; Leon van Schaik’s
own ideograms, and then his observations and diagrams about the Sir John Soane Museum
project are an excellent and poetic example of this. “Similarly, Richard Black’s extraordinary
architectural diagramming and drawing ability can be seen as a form of notation and analysis
and has informed my own work. Black’s ability to draw out, with a one line economy, the precise
architectural idea - ‘parti’ - in a three dimensional diagrammatic notation has greatly influenced
my own drawing approach.

For this thesis, it is particularly relevant to note that for these practitioners, and for me, words
and drawing sometimes collapse together, at times becoming a single entity. On this topic and
for a useful example, I return to Inger Mewburn and her PhD Constructing Bodies: Gesture,
Speech and Representation at Work in Architectural Design Studios. (2009) Her PhD was a study
of architectural education and the process of the ‘fabrication of architectural meaning’ in the
design studio context that is also produced in the exchange that occurs through and between
‘material things’ (models and drawings), and ‘bodies’ – (the teachers and the students). In
particular, she explores the role of ‘gesture’ in design studio knowledge practices. Although my
teaching practice formed part of her research (I was one of several case studies), I only came to
read carefully her study towards the end of my own PhD process. What Mewburn draws out, not
only about the ways in which I gesture and use gesture during teaching, is the interchangeable
and fluid working methods using both words and drawings. This study is very interesting for
this culminating chapter and I will sample key parts to illustrate my points.”

Much of Mewburn’s material was derived from close observation and study of architectural


room, an analysis of the architecture of Sir John
Soane, in Mary Wall (ed.) AA Files # 9, Architec-

100. MEWBURN, I. (2009) Pg’s159-162.
design teaching, in situ in the classroom setting. Inger was particularly interested in my propensity to sketch a lot - as she says ‘continuously’ - in the crit sessions. (I always like to hold a pen while teaching!) She carefully noted the way in which drawings, speech and my own hand gestures together formed my mode of teaching. This is perhaps not so remarkable in itself, but what is interesting is the way in which she has captured my very fluid use of sketches and words, and the ways that one can become a substitute for the other.

As Mewburn writes: ‘Anna would often actively sketch while talking to her students…the drawings produced by Anna could be thought of as a trace or ‘inscribed recording’ of the mediating gestures produced during talk that were translated through the pen.’ Mewburn points out that I often worked over my own drawings to give particular emphasis. ‘During Anna’s acts of sketching, the pen could be thought of as a kind of “mediating tool” activated by her gestures and through which the gestures are able to be channeled. The paper acts as a repository for her gestures so that previous gestures can be called up and reworded into later speech.’ In another example where drawing and words are used in an reciprocal way, Mewburn says: ‘Anna’s gesture/drawing performance is designed to answer a question in words and in images.’

I have included a sample from Mewburn’s PhD, showing her diagramming of this process and my own loose sketches generated during this crit session. This thesis makes a very useful contribution to the practice of design teaching and processes for making architectural meanings and intent. For me, it is also a very useful study demonstrating my process of working between drawing and speaking. While I know my process of teaching and my own methods, Mewburn’s exacting and insightful study is particularly useful in its close observation of my use of words and drawings, and the way she notes that these are sometimes simultaneous. ‘In frame 13 the word “between” is elongated in order to time it with the strokes of her pen. In the second frame she completes her sentence with “and your architecture”, but the diagram of the two architectural components remains unfinished as a partial rectangle. Significantly she completes the final two sides of the rectangle (“your architecture”) while remaining silent, allowing the pen to ‘speak’ its strokes can be clearly heard as she completes the drawing. (Frame 15)’

101. MEBURN, I. (2009) op cit, P157...
102. ibid P157.
103. ibid P157.
104. ibid P158.
This kind of pointing was taken to its logical conclusion in drawing where the difference between gesture and actually making marks was seen as an essentially blurred. One of the teachers, Anna, would often actually sketch while talking to her students. This kind of sketching was a common feature of design classroom interaction (first described in detail in Schön’s famous example of Peter and Jan). However, she used her drawing not as a means to develop his theory of `reflection with the situation`.

The drawings produced by Anna could be thought of as a trace or `inscribed recording` of the mediating gestures produced during talk that were `transcribed` through the pen. Anna would also pay attention to her drawing as she drew it, sometimes tracing over the top of existing line with her pen while not actually touching the paper. Looking closely at the drawings that involved the record of the mediating gestures, which appeared as a series of dots and over-tracings, as can be seen in the image below:

Figure Twenty-one: One of Anna's sketches made while talking to a student. A close examination of the drawing reveals the marks made by her pen.

In the following example, Anna’s gesture-drawing performance is designed to answer a question in words and in images. The timing of the drawing, speech and gesture helps to fuse the two modes together. In frame 13 Anna is shown drawing a long thin rectangle to represent an existing wall at the top of the wall. As the rectangle is drawn, Anna asks: “But how does making the building bigger and that space smaller, make it more valuable?”

In frame 14 Anna adds another section outside the rectangle and asks: “What’s the difference between this one and this one?” The student is left to interpret the question.

In frame 15 Anna stops and says: “You see what I’m saying?” In frame 13, the drawing represents the existing wall in plan, while in frame 15, Anna states: “I’m saying you are designing the space. Because you’re creating a tension between one wall and the other.”

You can see the words `between` and `one wall and the other` in the next frame.

In frame 13 the word `between` is elongated in order to time it with the strokes of her pen. In the second frame she completes her sentence with `you and your architecture`, but the diagram of the two architectural components remains unfilled by a partial rectangle. Significantly she completes the final two sides of the rectangle (`you and architecture`) while remaining silent, allowing the pen to `speak` (its strokes can be clearly heard as she completes the drawing in frame 15). The pen serves to amplify and mark off her speech. The student does not ask his next question until the drawing is complete, although he is clearly unsatisfied by her answer. We could speculate that this is because

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he does not exactly understand her use of the word "tension", but does not say so. He seeks further clarification with "But why do it? Why make the..." in Frame 16. Anna speaks over his incomplete question, overlapping the end of his utterance with "because at the moment...", while lifting her pen up and pointing it at the student's torso (out of frame):

![Frame 16](https://example.com/frame16)
![Frame 17](https://example.com/frame17)
![Frame 18](https://example.com/frame18)

She moves her pen back down towards the paper. As she utters "for whole" (frame 17) she makes a rapid circular motion with the pen tip at right angles to the paper and in the general direction of the drawings the student has pinned up on the wall. This is an example of the drawing being used as an expressive gesture. She then returns to drawing to complete her explanation. Diagrams of the progression of drawings are shown with the accompanying speech transcription, but without images, starting with a repeat of the speech from frame 16, "the whole suitable space is between". During this utterance she is drawing another rectangle to mark out the "between space" in her drawing (shown as a green line). She then says, "It actually goes into your building..." in frame 18 while tracing over this "between" rectangle with her pen to give it more emphasis (the move is shown in red in frame 19):

![Frame 19](https://example.com/frame19)
![Frame 20](https://example.com/frame20)
![Frame 21](https://example.com/frame21)

In frame 21, she completes this drawing gesture "phrase" by drawing a line with an arrow at each end while saying "and here...". This final drawing gesture act could be seen as the equivalent of an iconic or gestural drawing, a double headed arrow is recognizable architectural "code". Throughout this masterful drawing performance Anna may not have convinced the student of the value of the suggestion to make the space narrower, but she is able to convey it with precision and emphasis using a minimum of words.
Conclusion.

This PhD has distilled a set of concerns and interests, but importantly allowed for a deep reflection of my practice that actively works with, between and across drawing, teaching and writing – in all its various forms. Examining my work, produced across the past 12 years, has enabled the establishment of a model of practice that more knowingly and strategically engages all three modes of my practice to date. The work produced, as architectural writer, educator and designer, has been extensively and iteratively mapped throughout this PhD. This, along with a key design two thirds of the way through – the Seven Lamp Design project – has provided material for the discovery and identification of particular working methodologies that characterise each mode of my work.

What has emerged, in particular, is the reciprocity and generative exchange between my writing and drawing. It’s clear that one has not been produced without the other, but that both reciprocally inform each other and a certain crucial interdependency exists between them. One is not possible without the other, as Evans concludes in his Translations from Drawing to Building. ‘…having recognised that words affect vision, we are under no moral obligation to expel them from it, even if the expulsion could be achieved.’

Where previously, a certain irresolution existed between these seemingly opposed forms of architectural expression – words and architecture – this PhD has revealed a far more sympathetic and synergetic relationship. This catalogue captures my reflections across my work, as well as providing for the refinement of a practice model that actively engages these differing modes of architectural exploration and production. Architecture, in its greater social and cultural role, and in this time, is a discipline that requires an expanded mode of practice beyond the traditional architect designer. Architecture is also the art of problem solving, of applying and working with spatial intelligence, and thus requires an ability and certain desire for continual adaptation and change. The practice I have refined is one that has multiple expressions and working methodologies, and, critically, it is one where methods for reflection and critique are inherently folded into its very structure.
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