

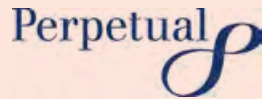
# Pocket Possibilities: 'Freespace' in Community

A tool for applying principles of  
'Freespace 2018' to designing with  
Australian minority communities.  
Anna Ewald-Rice

Byera Hadley  
Travelling Scholarships  
Journal Series  
2020

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Anna Ewald-Rice was awarded the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship in 2018  
**Cover image:** A flooded St Mark's Square overlaid on a massive dried desert ant hill form the two environmental extremes between which this project sits.  
Photos by Anna Ewald-Rice

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‘Freespace’  
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principles of ‘Freespace  
2018’ to designing with  
Australian minority  
communities.

A shifting journey  
towards unforeseen  
outcomes.

<b>1. Intro</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5. Findings Seen And Unforeseen</b>	<b>55</b>
Aims And Outcomes	2	How The Pocketguide Shaped Up	56
Stories	4	Project Findings	58
<b>2. A Pocketguide Takes Shape</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6. New Outcomes New Settings</b>	<b>63</b>
Significance Of The Venice Biennale	10	USYD - Design Studio	65
Venice Experiences	11	Stanford Conference	66
Global Framework Of Projects	11	AMAGA Conference	67
Applying Freespace	13	PNYX article	68
Emerging Ethical Questions	15	In The Workplace	68
Legislation, History And Practice	17	Reconciliation action Plan	69
<b>3. An Emerging Pocketguide</b>	<b>19</b>	AASA Indigenous Resource Portfolio	69
The Brief For The Pocketguide	20	Conclusion	70
The Pocketguide In Pictures	21	<b>7. Appendix</b>	<b>73</b>
Project Synergies	23	1. 'Burri Gummin: One Fire'	74
<b>4. In Community</b>	<b>25</b>	2. 'Narrative, Self and Engagement'	90
Each Place Is Different	26	3/4. 'Beyond The Functional'	100
Tennant Creek	28	5/6. 'How To' and 'Pocketguide'	104
Yuendumu	36	<b>8. Acknowledgments</b>	<b>126</b>
Balgo	42	<b>9. About the Author</b>	<b>126</b>
Warmun	48	<b>10. References</b>	<b>127</b>

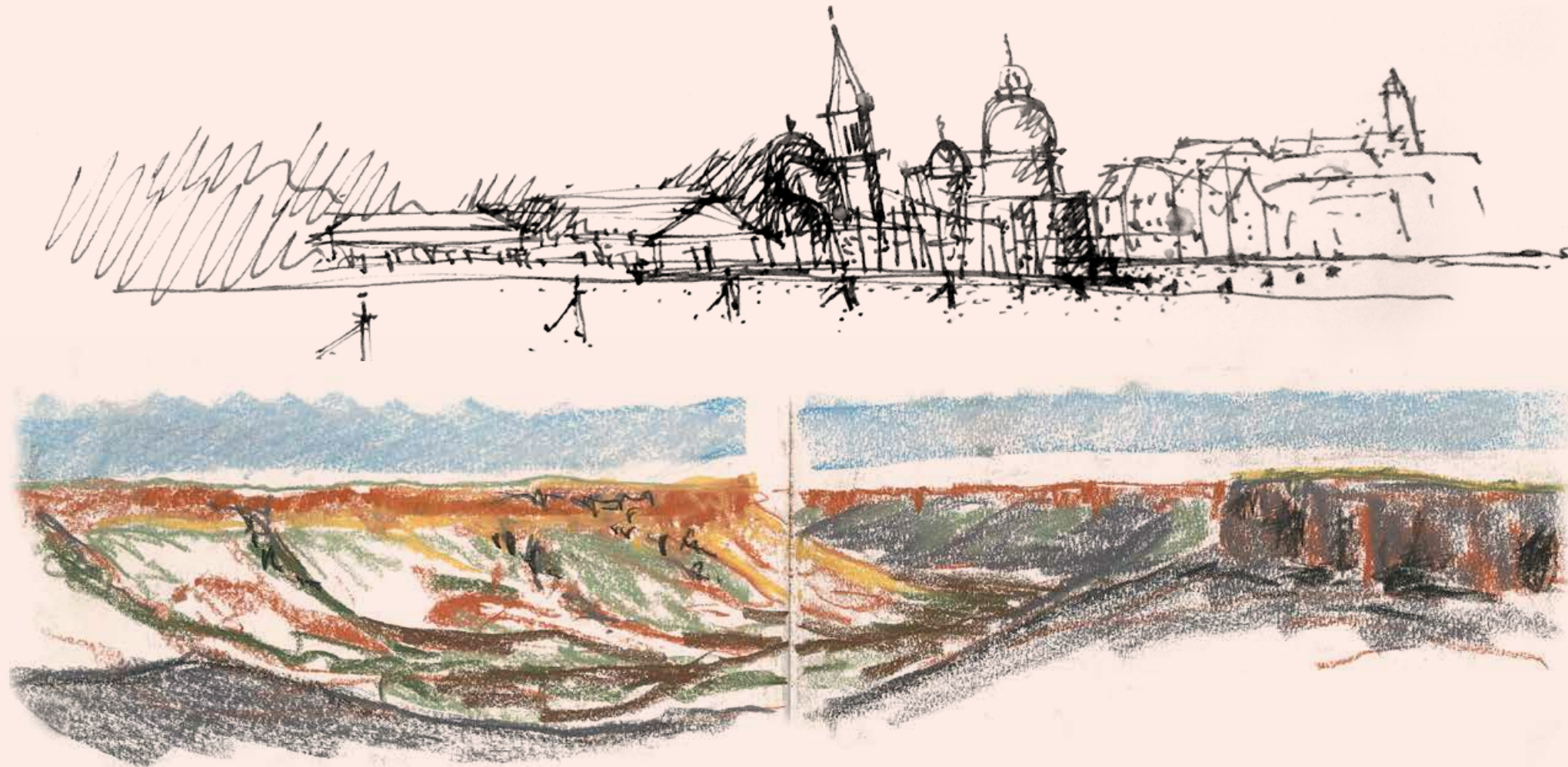


With deepest respect  
I acknowledge the first nations  
of this Country, the original  
custodians of this land  
who's sovereignty  
has never been ceded:  
elders past, present and future  
with embedded knowledge  
and lived experience  
in their ways of knowing.  
I write with gratitude for what is shared  
and in respectful humility  
listen, learn and strive for  
sustainable existence.  
I do not claim to be an expert.  
I understand the ethics  
of writing on indigeneity,  
that my position is one  
of an Anglo-Australian  
that is a part of a system  
still centered in colonial practices.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and  
encouragement of my family in particular Sue Rice, who  
has led me to see the joy of learning through new and by  
no means straightforward projects.

# 1 ..... INTRODUCTION





“In Australia, we see designs considered socially and culturally responsive being knocked back and a lot of developer driven giants that contribute nothing to the personality or community of their context. There is little transparency to this decision making process. Perhaps what we need is a system that equally value the qualitative and quantitative merits of a project in a long term and meaningful way.”

- Sarah Lynn Rees<sup>1</sup>

**Top:** The edge of the flooding grand canal, Venice, Italy.  
**Bottom:** The edge of the balgo pound formed by ancient oceans, Western Australia.

## METHODOLOGY OF DESERT & WATER

This project began with an intent to develop a practical pocketguide for use by architects and consultants when designing with marginalised First Nations communities. Foregrounding principles drawn from 'Freespace 2018' Venice Biennale centred around an 'architecture of possibility', the pocketguide was to be a tool to aid inclusive culturally sensitive designing and to foster cultural exchange.

Throughout this project I have developed an understanding that reconciliation needs to be more than a symbolic gesture. It needs to be done in both practice and theory by developing projects which support the day to day realities of communities, conducting meaningful engagement that is founded on respect and listening and allowing a shared and open dialogue of ideas to flourish.

The Biennale acted as a catalyst to these ideas, bringing a range of conflicting notions and global cultures of difference together making each more apparent in the process as they were brought into negotiation and dialogue around the centre stage of Venice.

This method of understanding difference through narrative, storytelling to investigate the self, and exploring interstitial spaces between self and the other, has formed the basis of my research methodology.

As my journey unfolded, the tension and overlaps of both desert and Biennale experiences necessitated constant reworking of my aims and revisiting outcomes. The opportunities afforded by the Byera Hadley Scholarship has enabled me to realise a research paper, an article published by the Architecture Association in London, an

interstate conference workshop, a conference presentation at Stanford University in California, and co-writing and teaching design studios all of which share a focus on the multiplicity of issues and concerns associated with effectively and meaningfully engaging with First Nations communities.

This report is written to reflect the personal journey of the project whilst also recording key findings and outcomes. By downplaying scholarly conventions of research, the reports personal language seeks to genuinely engage with diverse audiences maximising accessibility, digestibility and general usefulness. It serves as a way into understanding the many twists and turns which have given rise to the multiple outcomes of this Byera Project.

The outcomes include:

- A Pocketguide
  - » A2 printed poster, an 'in the field' conversation framework for initiating, discussing and recording information.
  - » A 'how to' use the pocketguide, ie a support for facilitators, which expands some of the themes in the poster and encourages the exploration of allied concepts and ideas.
- University Of Sydney Burri Gumminn: One Fire Housing Studio Unit Outline
- Association Of Collegiate Schools Of Architecture (ACSA) Less Talk | More Action: Conscious Shifts In Architectural Education Conference Paper.
- Beyond The Functional: Culturally Responsive Design In Practice And Theory, Article Published In Pnyx, June 21, 2019, Issue 68
- Australian Museums And Galleries Association, National Conference: At The Centre, Our Peoples, Our Places, Our Practices. Conference Workshop.

<sup>1</sup> in Van Mannen, L., Ware, J., 'A Conversation with three young Practitioners, in 'Repair', Australian Pavillion, Biennale Architettura 2018





**This page (left):** Driving the path of the Seven Sisters Songline from Kalgoorlie east to Warburton, 2017

**This page (right):** Developing the design for the Warburton Arts Centre during the SLIC program, 2017

**Opposite:** Driving out on country, Warburton 2017

4

## STORIES

### My Story

I grew up on the back of North Head at the northern end of Sydney Harbour which is the land of the Cammeraygal people. In a family of architects we spent much of our time on the water sailing, fishing and drawing and have consequently developed a strong respect for wind and tide as well as a reverence for the nuanced patterns of sandstone landscape and place. As a young person I have had the privilege and honour of travelling through Indigenous lands and being involved with communities in both Australia and the Pacific . In 2017 I visited the remote Western Australian Indigenous community of Warburton through USYD's Services Learning in Indigenous Communities program, After this visit I was approached by Warburton's youth arts organisation Wilurarra Creative to help design a new youth arts centre. This request grew into an ongoing Warburton Youth Artspace Project and formed the basis of my Masters graduation design project. As the design process continues I am weaving client visits, community feedback and walking country together with an unfolding theoretical underpinning based on a line of inquiry raised by Kevin O'Brien which

explores the relationship between Indigeneity and Architecture. He challenges architects to develop

*"Fundamental projects that sponsor, support and affect the day-to-day events of the Aboriginal community at large and ultimately present a stage for a constantly changing cultural experience."*

(Kevin O'Brien, Aboriginality and Architecture, University of Queensland, 2005)

The Warburton Youth Artspace Project showed me that it was relatively straightforward to develop a programmatic brief, ie. a list of spaces, their sizes and usage through a series of community meetings and workshops. Wider, less tangible issues associated with designing for possibilities, designing to engender creativity and finding ways local youth might engage with their Artspace were far harder me, my clients and prospective users to speak of. This suggested a need for a guide, a working prompt which identifies and provides ways to discuss and explore qualitative and intangible issues. Ideally this prompt would be visually based and promote 'exchange through doing'



5

providing ways to circumvent the difficulties of multiple languages and diverse learning systems. As an active tool for promoting conversations between architects and Indigenous community members this pocket guide might aid the designing of buildings that are informed by inclusive exchange and thus contribute to a meaningful and genuine expression of Indigeneity in our built environment.

### Sharing Stories

As a young practitioner I am beginning to understand the conflicts between cultural, professional and academic obligations when attempting to engage with aboriginal contexts in Australia.

I believe that it is through the telling and sharing of stories that we can begin an authentic process of reconciliation. This project is about creating multiple platforms for discussion around the relationship between Architecture and Indigeneity, acknowledging its long and fraught history and moving beyond in a soft manner through subtle reminders of ethics, transparency, equality and cultural specificity in a process

that aligns with notions of reconciliation rather than decolonization. It is based around the idea that in order to develop culturally responsive design, designers must first try and understand through conversation, listening, by acknowledging differences and shared experience just what flows in the gap between themselves and their client, the layers of history, significance and values that are both specific to each and every one as well as generic aspects of humanity. Everyone has the right to good design. We just seem to forget that sometimes. When working in this context:

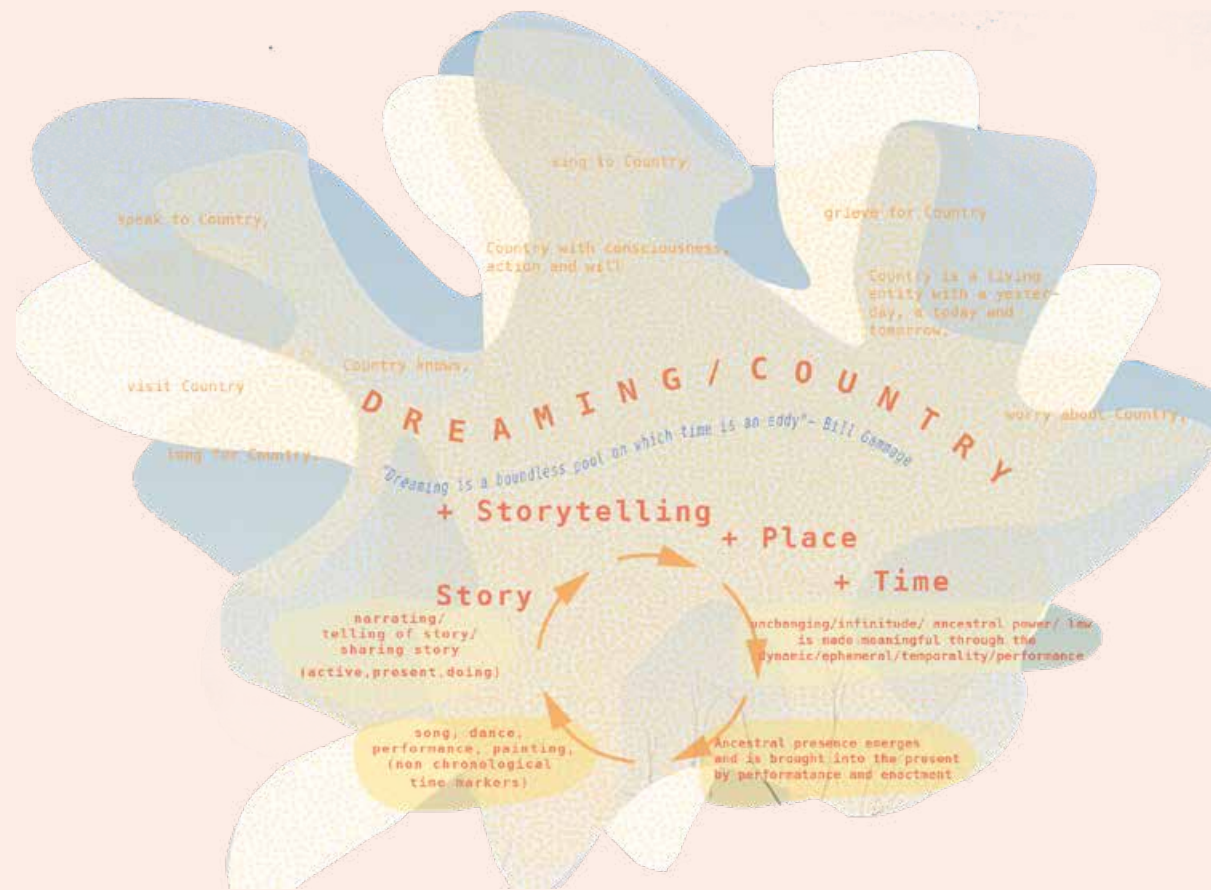
*"Storytelling must begin with the teller positioning themselves. Before re-telling narratives, we must start with our own."*

-Samia Mehrez, The bonds of race, (1991)

*"...Storytelling must begin with the teller positioning him or herself in relation to clan and place..."*

Stephen Muecke, Textual spaces: Aboriginality and cultural studies, 2005





By acknowledging your own story, and bringing that knowledge to the fore it enables you to engage with and explore other people's stories, the commonalities and the differences.

A key contributor to Indigenous Australian scholarship is academic Martin Nakata who advances a notion he calls the cultural interface<sup>1</sup>.

*“Spaces constituted by points of intersecting trajectories, dynamic relations, where intersections of time, place, distance, knowledge traditions and politics are composed of different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas, aspirations and responses.”*

Homi Bhabha calls this third space<sup>2</sup>, a liminal space where meaning is produced as a result of interaction. Your being and ways of knowing is the outcome of disruptions, to you, your ancestors, your neighbors. We are in constant flux, in movement through space

and time, always discovering something about and reflecting on our own identities.

*“Just as the discovery of culture is a journey, not a destination, Aboriginal architecture should be a ‘process’ and not just a ‘product’.”*

Mills, D. and Brown, P. Art and Wellbeing, Australia Council for The Arts, 2004, 99

I am coming to understand that storytelling is one way in which Indigenous culture remains fluid, existing in multiple temporalities simultaneously. Everyone is responsible for conducting story maintenance on country and on a regular basis to ensure the land remains healthy and the culture strong. Contemporary storytelling is an important process of finding new expressions and evolving new stories that assemble community and pass on both new and old traditions.<sup>3</sup>

*“Neither stories nor land are generalisable, and there are strict rules around their transfer to others: to whom, and through what mode of practice. The tradition*

<sup>1</sup> Nakata, M. N. (2007). Disciplining the savages, savaging the disciplines. Aboriginal Studies Press. 323

<sup>2</sup> Bhabha, H. K. (2012). The Location of Culture. Routledge. 312

<sup>3</sup> Professor Macia Langton, chair of Indigenous studies, Melbourne University, talking about Wilurra Creative, Wilurra Strategic Plan 2015



This page (left): diagram clarifying my own interpretation of country and the role that stories and narrative play in conducting story maintenance. **Opposite:** Balgo men's story, first painted on banners for the church in the 80s to positively link Christianity with Indigenous beliefs. Now they decorate the art centre as a giant mural

*reveals an epistemology – system of knowledge – in which land is central and law, ethics, land rights and original histories are communicated through lore that is place and person specific.”*

Memmott, P. and Long, S. 2002, 'Place Theory And Place Maintenance In Indigenous Australia', Urban Policy and Research, vol. 20

As architects, there is a need for us to respectfully engage in mutual two way learning. This can be hard to practice as we take control of technical information and language. By offering and sharing our story we demonstrate our understanding of how this influences our values and positions us amongst others, It makes us human and others can feel safe and comfortable with us.

This Byera is positioned in a time when government policy is changing to include Indigenous acknowledgment and consultation but the fundamentally colonial industries around the built environment have yet to work out how to do it. Many want to try but few know how. Stepping up to the responsibility handed to us whilst taking the lead from Indigenous architects we might ask the question: how does this project benefit

aboriginal communities? How might we move away from symbolic gestures developed by white people and begin to de-construct 'aboriginal architecture' and its associated connotations? To quote Indigenous designer Linda Kennedy, “black design is a white thing”.

*“Moving towards reconciliation is not a symbolic gesture. It needs to be done by developing projects which support the day to day realities of indigenous communities, conducting meaningful engagement that is founded on respect and listening and allowing a shared and open dialogue of ideas to flourish. We need to build relationships and take the time to get to know each other and learn how to communicate.”*

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-support-grows-but-more-needs-to-be-done-latest-australian-reconciliation-barometer/>

Through colonisation, land has been spatially and politically redefined as a commodity in cadastrally described ownership. Building becomes a political act of claiming back, re-territorialising through doing, place making through action.



## 2

### A POCKETGUIDE TAKES SHAPE







“Free space is a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for use not yet conceived. There is exchange between people and buildings that happens even if not intended, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene.”

2018 Venice Biennale curatorial statement,  
Grafton Architects

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VENICE BIENNALE

The key curatorial statement for the 2018 Venice Biennale explores the fundamental humanitarian role of Architecture<sup>1</sup>. This Pocketguide, informed by principles drawn from the Biennale aims to embed its global values within an Australian context in an attempt to facilitate discussions around potentially difficult topics that are too readily blindsided by the general Australian population.<sup>2</sup> This is not a unique situation as many countries are dealing with similar issues, breaking open colonial histories and finding strength in softly spoken knowledge.

The intention here is not to compare the architectural projects of the Venice Biennale with those in remote Australian communities. The purpose of drawing upon the Biennale as a generator of ideas is to broaden the conversation around designing for remote communities to include the global concerns of architecture. Instead of starting with the limitations of community infrastructure and the rabbit warren of bureaucratic procurement systems, let's start with the ocean of possibilities revealed by the Biennale in its role as the global thought leadership platform of the architectural profession.

<sup>1</sup> Attiwill, S., La Biennale. Freespace: The 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, Artichoke, No. 65, Dec 2018

<sup>2</sup> Latimore, J., Indigenous People Are Being Displaced Again – By Gentrification, The Guardian, 9 April 2018



**This page:**  
Controversial venetian graffiti questioning Freespace as the 'Street Pavilion'.  
**Opposite:**  
Flooded St Mark's Square.  
**Previous:** detail of 'Becoming', an installation in the Spanish Pavilion.

## VENICE EXPERIENCE

My time in Venice was not what I expected. It became a battle of man versus nature, stone vs water and technology vs time. The experience was a testament to the changing nature of human relationships to place and the need to scrutinize Architecture's role as a mechanism for change at a global scale. How can it remain resilient in the face of ecological, economic, cultural, and socially unsustainable trajectories?

Frozen in time both the islands of Venice and the Biennale pavilions were visibly crumbling under the torrential flood waters and rivers of plastic booted visitors on boardwalks. I came away from two weeks of wading through the worst high water aqua-alta since 1960 truly believing that Venice will be gone within the decade. The cutting-edge architectural technologies being exhibited and the static overtly stylised pavilions which stand as a reminder of last century's global powers will sometime soon be gone, submerged, lost.

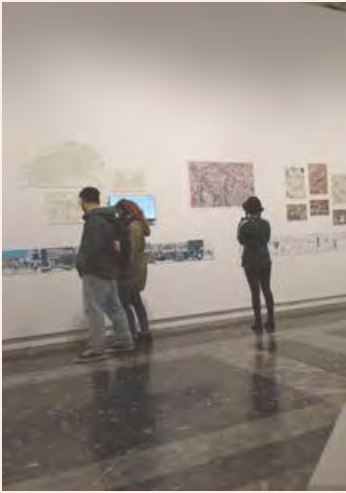
## GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF PROJECTS

The Venice Biennale brought to the fore aspects of architecture that are or should be evident in all buildings, yet often seem to go overlooked or undervalued. Foregrounding the quality of space as distinct from form, the theme of 'Freespace' focused on the qualitative aspects of the civic spaces that buildings create around them such as such as generosity, freedom, and dignity. It also acted as a deliberate provocation to incite debate regarding colonialism, Brexit, and climate change, questioning whether space can ever be truly neutral and free.

The projects on display were united by a commonality of going beyond the brief, by a questioning of the role of the architect and by generously offering comfort, quality, and opportunity to the people who interact with them.

The Thai Pavilion used the medium of film to explore the life of spaces after designers have handed over authorship to users. This comment on the dynamics of time in the production of place and context was similarly examined in the French Pavilion titled 'Infinite Places: Building or Making Places?'. Displaying ten neglected places that had





This page (clockwise): French, Japanese, Spanish and Thai Pavilions  
Opposite: Clustering ideas and key terms from the exhibits.

been transformed through experimentation and emerged out of specific encounters, where the architect went beyond their calling to create not only buildings, but places, possibilities and futures. ‘Becoming’, the title of the exhibit inside the Spanish Pavilion, presented the country’s Architecture following a common thread of learning and opportunity to confront established concepts and ideas and emphasise the architect’s new multidisciplinary profile. It used 52 adjectives that qualify Architecture to create a dialogue with the visitor. This was inspirational in the way it used a graphic mode of investigation to open the discipline of Architecture, used a new language of interactions, effect and continually changing systems, to allow people to become active participants in a collective construction of place.

The fundamental nature of the ‘Freespace’ theme and the wide breadth of the projects that aligned to it at times almost dissolved the theme’s message. The concept of

‘generosity’ could be interpretable as a universal aspect of design and it could be argued that the very act of building is a generous civic contribution. The Biennale’s attempt at distilling broad ideas into neat hierarchical bundles in order to be digested by the general public perhaps also limited its relevance to the audience. How do you distill overarching ideas around subjective and qualitative experiences? Is generosity related to wellbeing or safety? Does that differ between people according to identity and context? Does identity come before respect or does one translate to the other? Can a building feel generous? How does a building feel anything at all?

Pocket Possibilities : ‘Freespace’ in Community		
SPANISH PAVILION	becoming,’ the title of the exhibition inside the Spanish pavilion at the 2018 Venice biennale, presents the country’s architecture as seen from the perspective of different learning environments. ‘becoming’ is seen as an opportunity to confront established concepts and ideas.	CARER, EVERYDAY LIFE, PARTICIPATORY, PERIFERIC, INCLUSIVE, Social SYNCRONISED, HUMAN, PLAYFUL NARRATIVE, INDEPENDENT COLLABORATIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, EMERGENT, Unfinished, Temporary AFFIRMATIVE, CRITICAL, COSMO-POLITICAL, STRATEGIC, PERFORMATIVE, ATMOSPHERICAL, REACTIVE, TRANSFORMABLE, EXPERIMENTAL THERMODYNAMIC
SCANDI PAVILION	A generosity not just between humans, but between humans and nature	GENEROSITY, CO-EXISTENCE
DANISH PAVILION	Demonstrate architectures ability to bring forward real solutions to our common challenges. Focus of the pavilion is the potential inherent in architecture to use collaborative innovations to help society respond to the emergency of unsustainable practices” “What architecture brings to collaborations is a freespace of the imagination, giving form to that which is not yet there.”	FRUITFUL,INSPIRING AND BENEFICIAL MEETINGS BETWEEN PEOPLE, PROMOTE DIALOGUE RATHER THAN POLISHED ARCHITECTURE, ENGAGEMENT AS KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.
AUSTRALIAN PAVILION	Aims to expand the point of view from the object of architecture to how it operates in its context.	REPAIR, GENEROSITY, THOUGHTFULNESS, DESIRE TO ENGAGE
FRENCH PAVILION	Places that emerge out of specific encounters, spatial and temporal combination. “The architect does not stay within the bounds of building construction but seeks to make places just as well/ An infinitude of possibilities, both here and now”	TRANSFORMATION, ASPIRATION DETERMINATION, EXPERIMENT, ENGAGED, TAKE RISKS, ENERGY, THIRD SPACE, INTEGRATE NON-PROGRAMMED SPACES, SPACES FOR APPROPRIATION
GREEK PAVILION	Learning takes place in the space between. Plato founded his academy in an olive grove.	COMMONS, UN-PROGRAMMED DEMOCRATIC
PHILIPPINE PAVILION	Built environment as an expression of self-determination. Architecture and urbanism’s ability to empower and transform lives.	COLONIALISM, NEO-LIBERALISM, HOPE
THAI PAVILION	Talks about the life of spaces after designers have handed over authorship to users. This change occurs through people having synergy with the built environment.	SYNERGY
BELGIUM PAVILION	Find the need, research a way of achieving it which involves participation, encourage people to feel empowered by planning, imagining something new and making ti real.	ACTION BASED RESEARCH

## APPLYING FREESPACE

The Biennale acted as a melting pot of global ideas, it was a melee of themes, principles and manifestos pushing my understanding of ‘Freespace’ to its limits. Each exhibit was based on a project or series of projects that cemented the concept in its context. In order to use this intellectual soup to inform my Pocketguide, I used a methodology based on observation and recurrence (see above).

By quantitatively assessing the recurrence of words and ideas I attempted to condense the information to single words or phrases removed from their contextual and project trappings. In this way these words recurred across languages and projects, bridging cultural divides and intentions.

The dense Biennale lexicon that emerged focused on concepts and terms borrowed from fields that specialise in describing and interacting with continually changing complex systems, for example terms like ‘peripheric’, ‘synchronised’, ‘affirmative’ and

‘permeable’. Perhaps architecture could be framed in these terms as something changing with culture, time and human interaction as opposed to memorialising a static system. Hmong-American refugee scholar Mai Moua in ‘Leading with Cultural Intelligence’ argues that this fluidity and dynamism of culture and the variety of means through which it is expressed plays out in every human interaction and conversation through words and tone.<sup>3</sup>

The above table, acts as a way of clarifying and systematising my experiences as well as outlining the origins of this new lexicon from specific Biennale exhibits. Although an informative representation of this new lexicon, the emerging terms needed to be represented in the manner in which they operate as a tangle of threads forming a complex non-hierarchical woven experience.

3 Moua, M. (2012). Leading with Cultural Intelligence.





## EMERGING ETHICAL QUESTIONS

The Australian architectural wave of ‘ethics over aesthetics’<sup>1</sup>, is being fueled by a newly emerging field of writing led predominantly by Indigenous architectural practitioners such as ‘Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture’, ‘The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture’ and blogs such as Future Black Design. Like the Biennale, they question the siloed nature of architecture in particular the separate categorisation of ‘aboriginal architecture’, in which the normal requirements of good architectural design are often overlooked or don’t apply. Why do universal design ideas of generosity, comfort and aesthetics so often go out the window? Why is the work of Indigenous practitioners judged differently<sup>2</sup>, when it demonstrates an equally if not stronger and more sophisticated design response as those of an old white male acronym firm?

These questions are intrinsically tied to the history of our Australian nation, today's politics and the reason for this research projects existence. Throughout the experience of working on this project I have become increasingly aware of how little, patchy or non existent knowledge of this history is in the design industry. The recent changes in legislation and their implications on projects will require a careful process of unpacking and explaining to all practitioners.

1 Woodward, M., Exploring The Emerging Wave Of Socially Conscious Architects, Architecture and design, 15.10.2019 <https://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/>

2 K. O'Brien, Chapter 2: Architecture and Consent, Our Voices: Indigeneity And Architecture, 2018

## 14 RELATIONAL POSITIONING: WEAVING WORDS

This web of words (above) is one of the most useful things I have assembled throughout this project. It has come in handy time and time again from working with students, facilitating workshops and writing articles. The Biennale was such an overwhelming amount of project based experiences and themes that I had to develop a way of summarising without simplifying, translating so many divergent global experiences into one homogeneous pool of ideas that could be put on the table all at once and talked about as a whole. Once the words are set free from their projects and pavilions they can be applied in a wide range of contexts, allowing me to find relevance and reference to the Australian Central Desert.

This use of isolated single words to aid the definition of an idea draws on a concept of Professor Michael Tawa's, one of using words not to specify a meaning but to weave a story around an idea.

*"You can draw a constellation of themes that can be researched, grouped into multiple collectives and opened up to potential tectonic investigation through architectural design..."*

-Tawa, M. (2011). *Theorising The Project: A Thematic Approach To Architectural Design*. Cambridge Scholars Pub..

Words become tools, tools of weaving (making, interlacing, bringing together, netting), collecting (gathering, collecting, catching) and sustaining (supporting, providing, continuing, nourishing). This practical literary contraption implies soft edges and fluidity around meanings, acknowledging overlaps, interpretation and translation. As a single word it can be looked up, have its synonym googled, translated via robot and all of this morphing adds to its meaning and becomes a part of the process of weaving.

This wording and speaking around ideas rather than occupying a central defining position could be understood as aligning with Indigenous notions of relational positioning. Positioning people, places, and objects as defined by the things around them. For example the dark emu that stretches across our night sky is defined not by the stars, but by the dark spaces between. Principle Architect for the Government Architects Dillon Kombumeri gives an example of this relational positioning through the Indigenous

protocols of naming.<sup>4</sup> Our recent renaming of the last piece of undeveloped foreshore 'Barangaroo' in honour of Bennelong's wife is naming it in the western tradition after status and seniority, for example Lord Sydney, Lord Hobart, Lord Melbourne and Lord Brisbane. Alternatively Canberra, derived from 'Ngangerra', is named after the valley between a woman's breasts referring to the two mountains that frame the city.<sup>5</sup>

The relational understanding became apparent in the desert as “Where you from?, Who’s your mob?, What’s your name?” was repeatedly one of the first questions I was asked. ‘Who I was’ became of minor significance compared to ‘where I had come from’, as it was acknowledged that we are all part of one system within a much larger system of interconnected ideas that make up country. This was my introduction to ‘country’.

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4 Talk by Dillon Kombumeri, USYD lecture Dec 2018

5 Talk by Dillon Kombumeri, USYD lecture Dec 2018





## POLITICS, OWNERSHIP AND COUNTRY

Following the landing of Cook in 1770 the first fleet arrived in Sydney in 1788 and the early colonial architecture of Sydney was born. Quite literally the shells from sacred middens were ground to make the mortar of the earliest sandstone buildings and many that still stand today. From then until present day Australia has been divided into cadastrally defined patterns of ownership. Building became a political act of claiming. It formed a key part of Cook's definition of Terra Nulius as "(the Aborigines)...did not cultivate the land or erect permanent habitations upon it".<sup>3</sup> Today, even more so building is a political act.<sup>4</sup> Maybe there is an opportunity

for Indigenous peoples to lead the process of claiming back and for architecture to be a tool for handing over autonomy to First nations communities. Kevin O'Brien argues that architecture is a potential mechanism to allow Indigenous people to find Country, and non indigenous to learn about Country. He believes that projects have the opportunity to bridge the layers of Australian history and address them all equally.

This addressing of Indigenous cultures is something that is just becoming more apparent at universities, but right across the industry. Architects are not alone in struggling with to grapple with these concepts in their own projects.

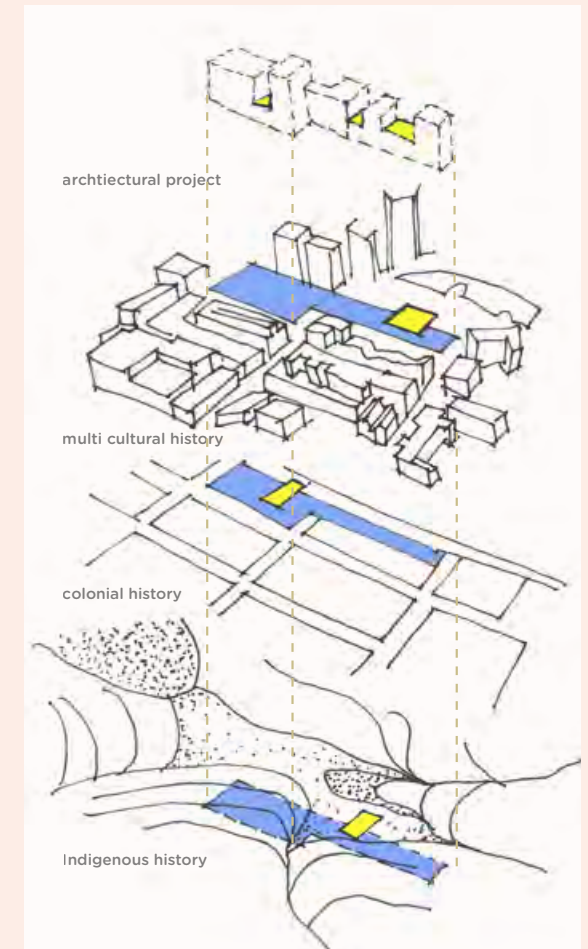
<sup>3</sup> Journal of Captain James Cook, (Day 26, 1770) in Wessell, A., "We Will Show the Country": Bringing History to Life, 2017

<sup>4</sup> K. O'Brien, Chapter 2: Architecture and Consent, Our Voices: Indigeneity And Architecture, 2018

**This page (left):** Ground shell midden mortar at the Sydney Observatory.

**This page (right):** Diagram outlining the ability of architecture projects to penetrate layers of history and bring together the multi-cultural, colonial and Indigenous histories of Australia. (Kevin O'Brien, USYD).

**Opposite:** 'Reconciliation Conversations', a day of provocations, policy and project conversations, AIA NSW Chapter, 2019.



These changes are being spurred on by a number of policy changes in the building industry. On the 20th July 2019, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt gave his national address during a NAIDOC week event 'Walking In Partnership To Effect Change'<sup>5</sup> in which he outlined his intention to hold a referendum to give Indigenous people constitutional recognition. At a state level Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms are coming.<sup>6</sup> In NSW currently Indigenous heritage regulation comes under the Flora and Fauna act, defining a living culture only through archaeological sites and objects. The Environmental Planning and Assessment

<sup>5</sup> Wyatt, K., National Press Club Address - 'Walking in Partnership to Effect Change', 20th July 2019

<sup>6</sup> Reconciliation Conversations, Australian Institute of architects, 28th May 2019

Act 1979 has also been updated as the culmination of the biggest overhaul of the Act since the legislation's inception almost 40 years ago. It applies to all NSW Planning permissions and outlines the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage, including Aboriginal Cultural heritage. This reform places acknowledgment of Indigenous cultural heritage centrally within the design approvals process, a requirement previously missing from both a planning and design context.

How can we, as the design community, respond to this - responsibly, appropriately and respectfully?



# 3

## AN EMERGING POCKETGUIDE



### INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES

#### INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES

Contemporary Indigenous architecture is an embodiment of these timeless principles:

Every step must follow a spiritual path guided by the Elders in the community.

One must conduct oneself in a good way.

One must train oneself to be always in the service of others.

One must respect people's own traditional decision-making processes.

Architectural form is inspired by the spirit of nature.

When one plans for the future, one must plan for all life-givers for seven generations.

#### PRINCIPES DE L'ARCHITECTURE AUTOCHTONE

L'architecture autochtone contemporaine incarne les principes intemporels suivants :

Chaque étape doit suivre un cheminement spirituel guidé par les aînés de la collectivité.

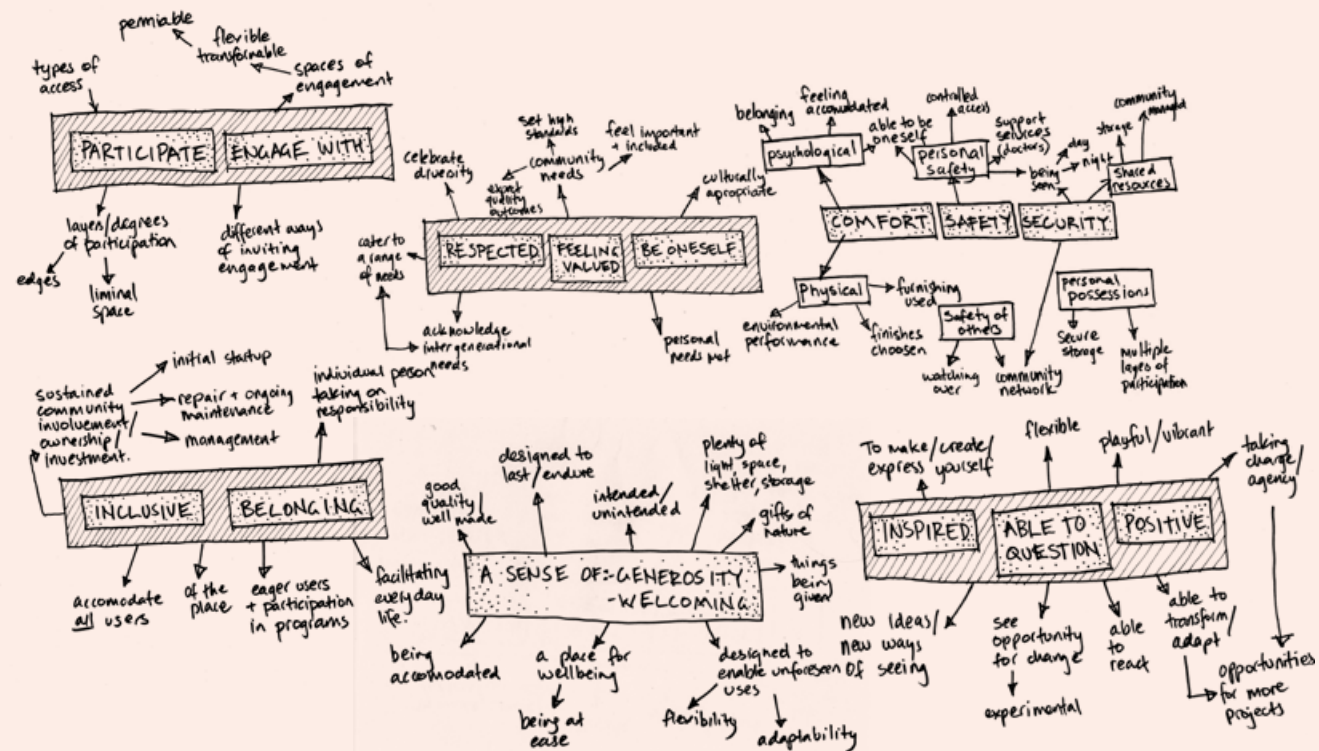
Il faut bien se conduire.

Il faut s'exercer à toujours être au service des autres.

Il faut respecter les processus décisionnels traditionnels des gens.

La forme architecturale est inspirée par l'esprit de la nature. Lorsqu'il s'agit de planifier pour l'avenir, il faut le faire pour tous les donneurs de vie sur sept générations.





20

## THE BRIEF FOR THE POCKETGUIDE

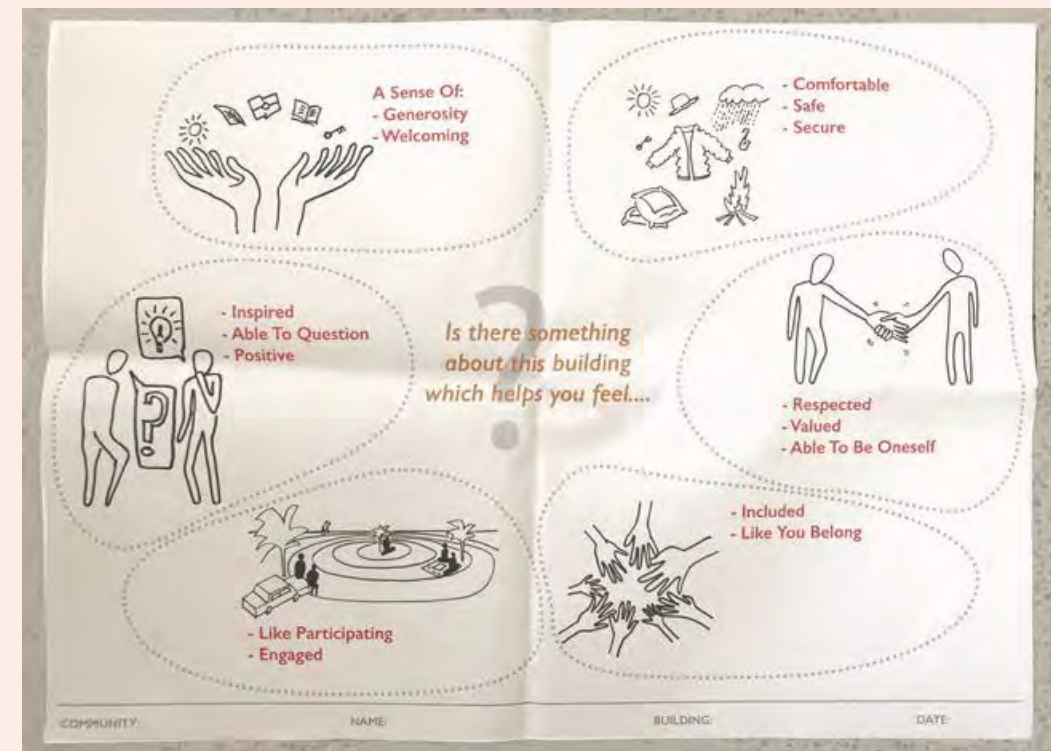
The pocketguide developed as a tool for generating a transparency between the data collector and the person giving the data. It had to facilitate a process of communication with potentially limited dialogue and maximum meaning. It also had to set a certain tone, one of respect and free of assumptions so that larger ideas and less tangible concepts could be openly discussed. It needed to facilitate drawing and writing, freedom to diverge from topics and ability to draw across ideas. It was very important that both the facilitator and participant had access to a range of mediums to record on the pocketguide pens, charcoal, fat crayons. The pocketguide had to be a framework that promoted looseness, interpretation and sharing, rather like the biennale. It is designed to encourage you to go deeper, to listen deeply. As a prompt for conversation the pocketguide itself was developed through extended process's of exchange and debate around the semantics of each word as each was unpacked and stripped back to its essence. This process refined the lexicon down to six key clusters of terms that would be accessible and enable participation by all.

Research shows that access and design participation is intrinsically tied to capability

and capacity building within communities.<sup>1</sup> For Indigenous projects to be socially sustainable they need to be driven by Indigenous peoples, combining traditional knowledge with sector specific knowledge.<sup>2</sup> This integrated approach with input from a range of users facilitates the development of strategies and opportunities for two-way learning and information exchange.

Merrima Design Unit, founded by Indigenous architects in 1995, aimed to create architecture which responded to Indigenous needs, revolving around consultation and the inclusion of Aboriginal people in decision making regarding their environment. They believe that only then can architecture respect cultural practice, respond to meanings of country and place and make culturally responsive spaces.<sup>3</sup> From extensive conversations with Michael Mossman, a key member of the now closed design unit, He believes that consultation and inclusive practice need to be widely taken up by the profession.

- 1 Designing with Indigenous communities, Jacqueline Gothe, social design sydney talks, UTS, 24.04.18
- 2 Designing with Indigenous communities, Angie Abdilla, social design sydney talks, UTS, 24.04.18
- 3 Meriima Design Unit website, <http://www.spatialagency.net/database>



21



**This page (top):** The A2 Pocketguide poster.  
**This page (bottom):** First run of 'how to'; booklets to accompany the Pocketguide.  
**Opposite:** Linking ideas through conversation outlined in the 'How To' booklet.  
**Previous:** Design principles in the Canadian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2018.

## THE POCKETGUIDE IN PICTURES

What developed was a 2 part guide. An A2 printed poster outlines a conversation framework for discussing and recording information on as it is brought up. It is large enough for the participants to see and contribute too and be drawn on by many people and record comments, observations and concerns.

To accompany this poster is a small pocket sized 'how to guide' booklet which expands some of the themes in the poster and encourages the facilitator to explore allied concepts and ideas. This should be read by the facilitator before beginning the session. It can also be used to record relevant architectural examples that might be referenced throughout the conversation.



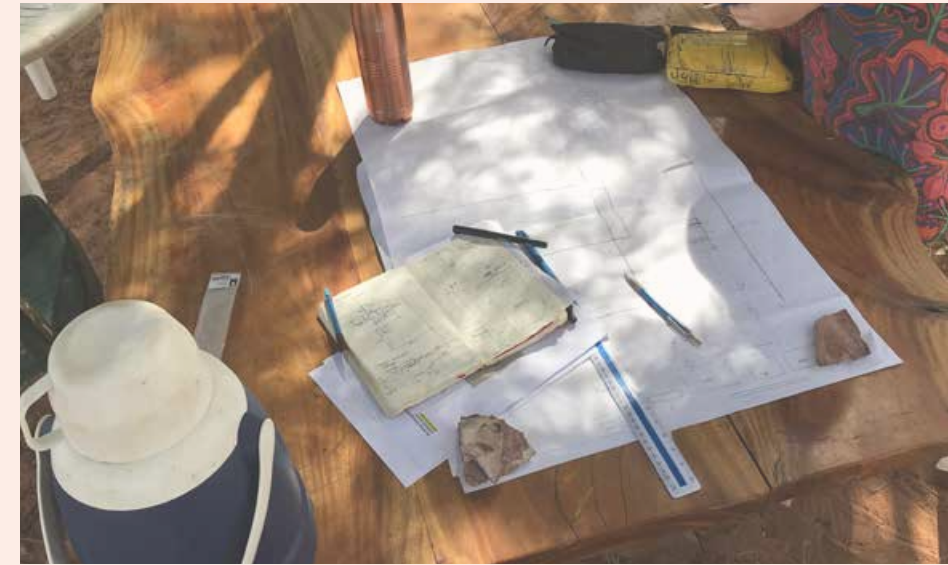
*The role of this project is to develop a tool which encourages qualitative notions of generosity and thoughtfulness to be embedded in the architectural design brief from early stages so as to stand the best possible chance of being present in the building.*

### THINK ABOUT:

- The consultation is about talking with not talking at, allowing space for answers. Think about attitude of working with, drawing with, talking with, walking with.
- How you are going to meet people?
- How you are going to have these conversations and where?
  - Can people focus?
  - Is it shaded?
  - Is it quiet?
- Consider using the poster to draw peoples responses on. Write down peoples comments using their own words so that they can see.
- Explain to people what you are going to do with this material and when they will hear back to follow up.
- Try and remember peoples names (stickers)
- Bring something to the consultation to share: lamingtons, tea, biscuits are all great for sharing.
- Provide textas and markers for people to draw themselves and plenty of paper.

### WHEN SHORT ON TIME:

- If consultation time is pressing, the following two questions could loosely touch on much of the content in this guide:
- What are some things that make this building good for you? Why?
  - Can you tell me if there some things that you think could be better? Why?
- Asking 'why' reveals the intention behind the statement. Allow for it to be hard to answer as it requires un-packing. You may need to go over it a number of times.



**This page:** A typical setup when using the poster, in the shade and offering refreshment.  
**Opposite:** Extracts from the 'How To' guide. Designed as a print at home resource to be filled out when in community.

## PROJECT SYNERGIES

Key factors in developing the 'Pocketguide' were to consider who exactly will use it and how might it be used when engaging with Indigenous communities? It is the 'who' and the 'how' which I expected to find out more about through community trials.

It became apparent certain Biennale ideas could equally be used as a framework for talking about initiating the design of a building or as a toll of post occupancy evaluation assessing existing community buildings. Working with existing buildings had certain advantages. It could allow ideas to be demonstrated through tangible examples, to see the extent of how these principles are evident in real buildings, and enable seeing to what effect community engages with the principles present in the building. It is my understanding that when working in communities it is important for designers to acknowledge current use patterns of existing buildings, as well as any particularities around what resonates and doesn't work for the specific community in which they are working.

My initial intention was to trial the Pocketguide with the assistance of the Warburton community due to our working

relationship established throughout my university graduation project. However through discussions with another 2019 Byera recipient, Doug Hammersly<sup>1</sup>, the possibility of overlapping his project and mine became apparent, there were obvious synergies. With Doug's focus on post occupancy evaluation of significant contemporary Indigenous projects and Arts Centres on the one hand and with my focus on ways of facilitating community inclusion in the initial stages of designing, our projects had the potential to both support and complement each other.

On the ground this meant I joined Doug for a short period of 2 weeks in shared remote area travelling, where we served as research companions which was so helpful when visiting remote communities for the first time. This decision to travel together also allowed the Pocketguide to be trialled in a number of communities where differences in outlook, country, situation and experience could prove to be a useful tool for re-informing the guide. As designing with Indigenous communities necessitates working closely with multiple client groups, the more groups I could speak with the better!

<sup>1</sup> Doug Hammersly, Architecture in Remote Australia: Community and Art, 2018 Byera Hadley recipient.

- COMFORTABLE
- SAFE
- SECURE



### KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does this building help you feel comfortable? Why?
- Does this building help you feel safe and secure? Why?

### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

- Value
- Belonging
- Caring
- Everyday
- Wellbeing
- Human

### ALSO CONSIDER:



### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:





# 4

## IN COMMUNITY







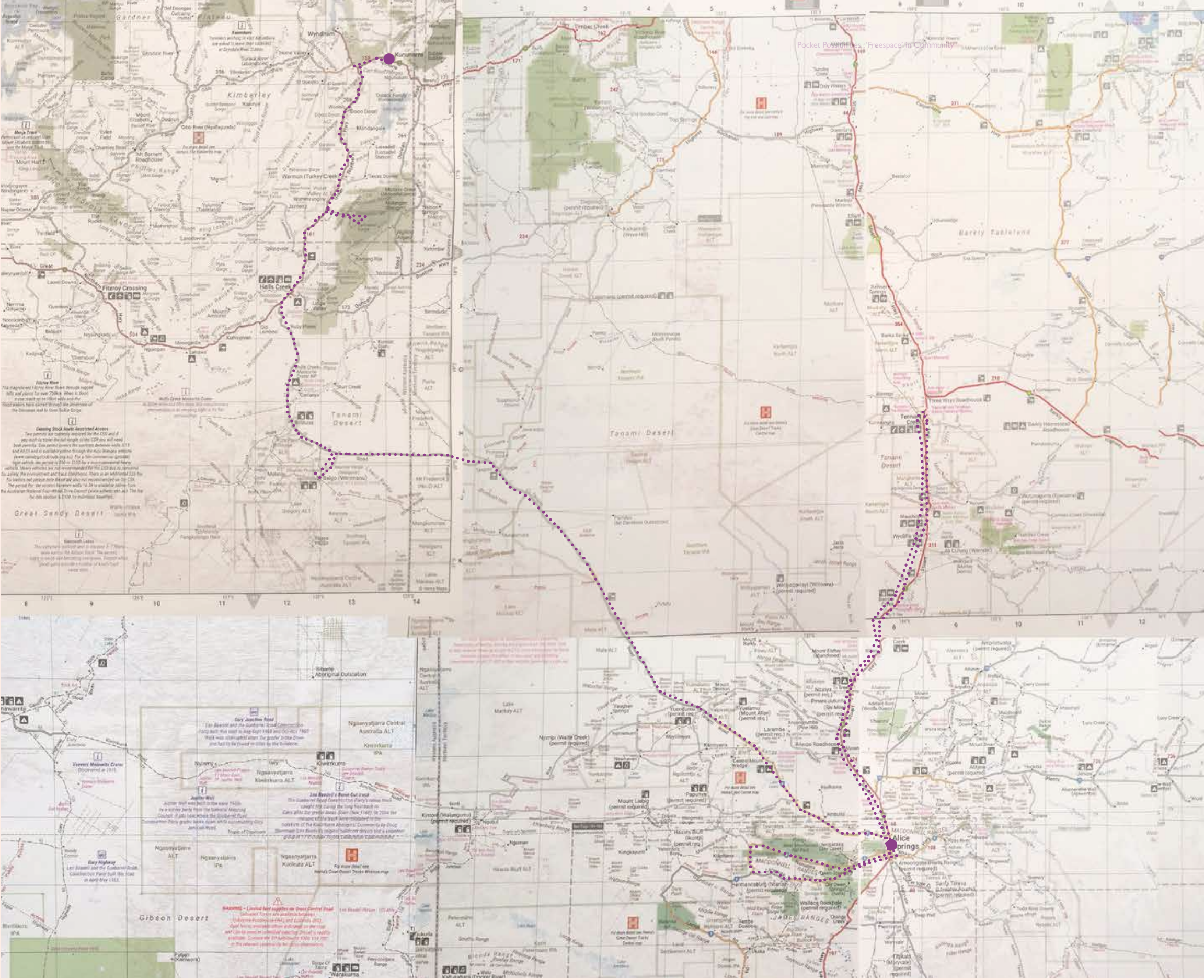
# EACH PLACE IS DIFFERENT

Over the course of two and half weeks Doug and I visited the communities of Tennant Creek, Yuendumu, Balgo and Warmun spending a few days in each getting to know people, the managers and their (sometimes multiple) Art Centres. Doug typically steered conversations towards building particulars, whilst I sought out the users and spoke with them about the more qualitative aspects of their experiences using the Centres as set out in the Pocketguide.

Before arriving we made contact with each of the managers, juggling weekends, days off and sorry business to find a time to visit that worked for everyone involved. All were generous with their time and understood the value of what we were doing. Some offered accommodation and organised meetings with elders and artists and all extended an offer to return and spend more time. We also passed through the communities of Ali Kurung, Hermannsberg, (between Balgo and Halls Creek), Halls Creek and Kununurra but stayed only long enough for a cup of tea and a yarn. These unofficial visits came through word of mouth connections or guided by new friends from larger communities nearby.

In the nature of fully testing the Pocketguide, my intention was to use it in a slightly different way in each community exploring its potential as a record during conversation, a prompt, a partner for drawing, as a follow up or as a record after conversation.

Visiting and being so welcomed by these communities was a truly life changing experience and as such the following recounts are written to reflect that personal journey.



**This page (left):** The trusty Landcruiser rig.  
**This page (right):** Our journey from Alice Springs up the Stuart Highway and then the Tanami Track.







## 28 TENNANT CREEK *JURNKKURAKURR*

### Pocketguide As Record

In April 2019, we headed to Tennant Creek to follow up our first lead. The Tennant Creek & Barkly Region Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre had been closed for 12 years, reportedly run into the ground through poor management. In classic outback style we had been asked to ‘give someone a lift’ so we were driving up the Stuart Highway with Anna an experienced Arts Centre manager who had been working across the country for twenty years. We were all volunteering to help re-open the Centre. This turned out to be four fantastic 18hr days of both back and front end work, from sifting through piles of architectural drawings dating from 25 years ago, filing manila folders of interviews with artist and local stories, to painting the front door with local resin, baking damper for the opening night and creating a database for all the paintings in the collection. The new manager, Erica Izett was an experienced woman whose greatest skill was her ability to make people feel valued, involved and needed. She had the town solicitor framing up paintings after work hours, the prison inmates cleaning up the yard and the young CDEP (work for the dole) fellas out collecting mulga to make

spears and ‘number 7’ clubs for the gift shop. The whole process had an amazing energy and intensity to it, culminating in an opening ceremony involving an address by architect, anthropologist and personal mentor Paul Memmott. Following his address a smoking ceremony was held throughout the building as well as the smoking of newborn babies, a women’s dance and a men’s dance. Most importantly beef stew, roo tails, damper and endless sweet tea was served to all 300 people who came.

Designed by Sue Dugdale, the Cultural Centre building or “Nyinkka” as it was affectionately known fell into the architectural category of a foreign object, a UFO.

*“That Nyinkka, d’ya know she is shaped like a lizard from above. The old people wanted it that way. Its important to us Waramungu. Nyinkka is of this place”*

- Jerry Warumungu-Kelly

**This page (left):** Block work made from local sand and spinifex

**This page (right):** Jerry drawing his favorite parts of the arts centre in the sand.



In 1995 the Warumungu elders of Tennant Creek initiated the development of the Centre, which opened in 2003 after several years of consultation. Of the two gallery spaces, one consisted of curved glass walls and 6-metre ceilings and the other a winding windowless space of permanent and touring displays. Behind these front of house spaces, services and support rooms continued the curving form, resulting in small oddly shaped rooms, inappropriate orientation and multiple entry points. Over the years offices had become storage, shop became gallery, and workshops were stripped and locked. Despite the present inadequacies of the building it was indisputably architectural, standing out as a cultural icon and symbol in a tired town of dusty concrete block and temporary dongas.

Pocket Possibilities : ‘Freespace’ in Community



Sitting down with traditional owner, Waramungu elder and mentor Jerry, we spoke around some of the questions in the pocketguide in relation to the Art Centre’s beginnings. It became apparent the consultation process for developing the Centre was extensive. As the traditional owners, the Waramungu elders had been resolute on creating a place to celebrate their stories. Talking and jotting notes on the pocketguide, we walked around the site with Jerry pointing out details of planting irrigation systems, discussing the use of medicinal plants in the grounds and the way the bricks were made onsite from local earth and spinifex. Here was someone who was a proud owner keen to show off their iconic building.

Here I encountered my first conundrum.





**This page (top):** Gathering for the opening ceremony.  
**This page (bottom):** Preparing the fire for cooking and the roo tails to be baked in the coals.  
**Opposite:** A lesson making damper in Jerry's screened porch. kitchen.



*‘Jerry why doesn’t anyone from the town seem to come here?’  
 (considering it was located right next to the towns central shops)*

*He explained: ‘They don’t come here. This isn’t their place.’*

## Pocketguide As Prompt

It was only by heading out to the Barkley Arts Centre located in a dingy old school on the opposite edge of town did I start to understand what Jerry meant. All the tables in an old classroom had been pushed together into the centre as one big table and around it a few women were painting. I got chatting with a senior woman named Mary Jane whilst she waited for more paints to be mixed for her. After explaining where we were from, what we were doing and why, I pulled out the pocketguide and together we spent a few minutes carefully looking over all the drawings before Mary Jane pointed to the image of many hands symbolising inclusivity.

She said:

*‘We don’t go to Nyinkka, that’s a Warumungu place. I am Walpuri. Been in Tennant Creek for 20 years but I cant go there’*

*“Would you ever feel like you could sit and paint there? Maybe if they changed the building?”*

*‘No never. Thats a Warumungu site.’*

I was learning that in these communities which have a long complex and often violent history, this nuanced relationship between traditional owners and people who have drifted, been moved off their land and settled in town is the source of much conflict. Community and cultural centres designed in consultation with traditional owners that directly reflect totems and symbols from those Traditional Owners stories become exclusive spaces for that often small section of the community.







**A Sense Of:**  
- Generosity  
- Welcoming

- Barely like a meeting place.  
no conflict.

→ come from different groups.

- Spiritual bonding is accepted.

- Njinka is a new territory.



- Comfortable  
- Safe  
- Secure

- in this space everyone is equal.

- safe  
- cultural obligation  
- 12 tribal groups  
- Waramunga people to.

- "a child at bush is everyone's child."



- Belonging to other tribal groups.

- Inspired  
- Able To Question  
- Positive

← job opportunities.  
- Waramunga people were welcoming. Not so now.

- feel like home wherever you go.

**Is there something about this building which helps you feel...**



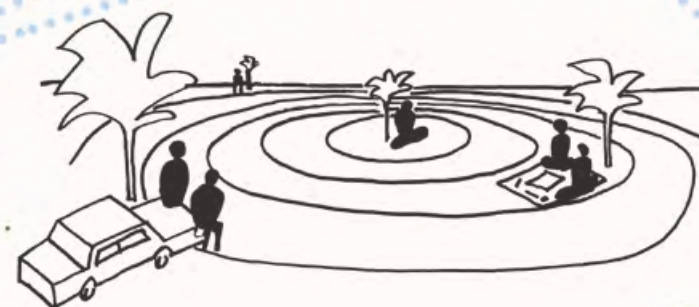
- cultural obligations  
- when in a different people feel like outsider.

- Respected  
- Valued  
- Able To Be Oneself

- earn respect.  
- respect traditional ones.  
- Sharing

- ceremony is important.

- go through the to.



- Like Participating  
- Engaged

- Australia is a spiritual place it brings you.



- Included part of it.  
- Like You Belong

- One family - belong with land.  
- Identity with culture.  
- Belonging all across the to p end.  
- take part in ceremonies as one.

COMMUNITY:

NAME: Mary Jane (Mrs) - Heather (Gloria's sister)  
Walpuri woman (Tanami desert).  
- Gloria (senior artist)

BUILDING: general art centres.

DATE: 23.04.19





On the evening of the Nyinka opening ceremony these tensions could be read in plan around the dancing ground, where the soft sand had been collected from a nearby sacred Warumangu river site. The Traditional Owner elders sat in the front row with their families behind in the seated section. The majority of the crowd stood 30 meters further back, leaning on walls and sitting on edges.

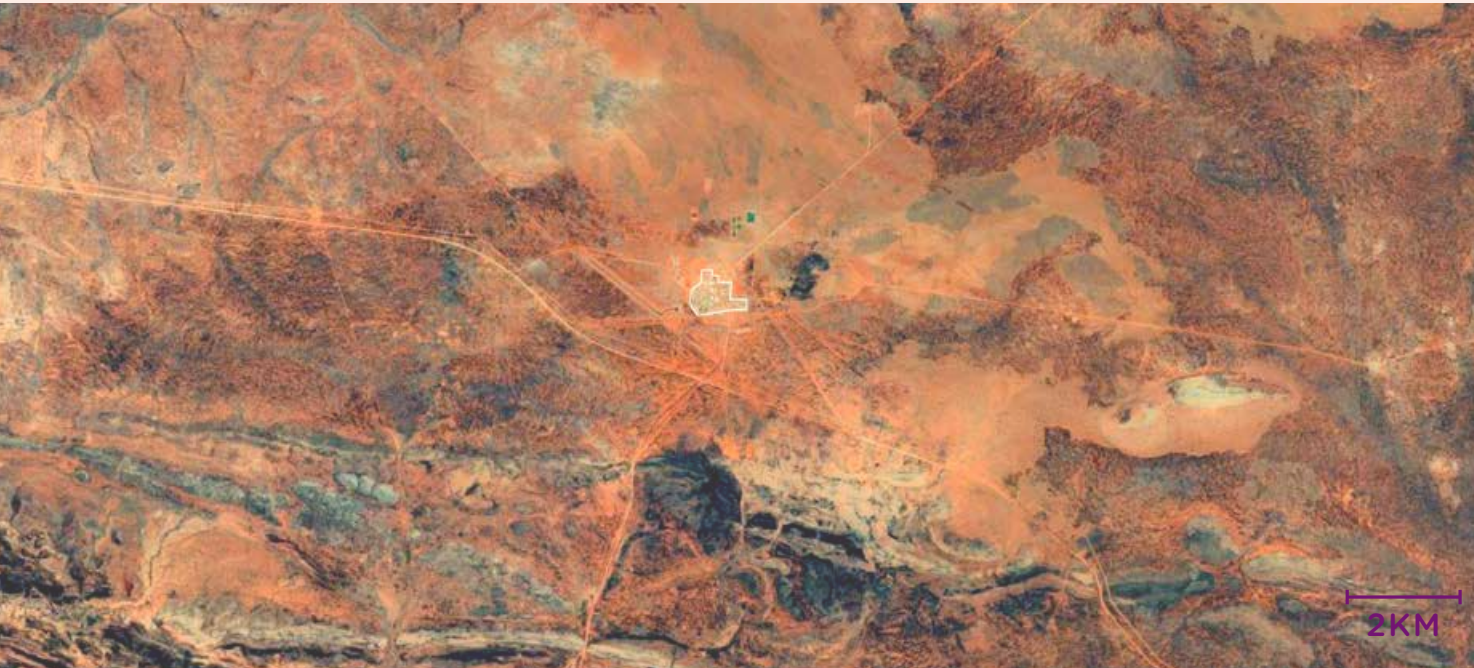
I can only wonder if these tensions were so visible when the building was going through

the consultation process or is this something that is the product of exploring the art/cultural centre typology in the area? Maybe these questions of use and wider ownership were never raised?

**This page (top):** Social layers around the ceremony space.  
**Opposite:** Preparing the herbs and spinifex resin for the smoking ceremony.  
**Previous:** Pocketguide filled out whilst talking with Mary Jane at Barkley Arts Centre.







36

## YUENDUMU

### Pocketguide Accompanying Drawing

We had heard mixed reviews of the Warlukurlangu art centre at Yuendumu. Run by two Chilean women for over 15 years it is one of the largest licensee's of indigenous art 'products' in Australia. Tea towels, bowls, spoons, dog collars, pencil cases all bear the trademark of Warlukurlangu. This was an arts centre that was a booming industry and substantial income for the community. From what we could understand the centre ran on a rather ethically dubious payment arrangement, with artists being paid a wholesale price based on size for the works upon completion regardless of time spent or subject matter painted. 'Money story', the colloquial term for the time when finished paintings we brought in, cataloged, archived and the artists were paid, was held every afternoon at 3pm sharp. We learned later that in most other communities money story was a weekly if not fortnightly affair. The human capacity of the centre peaked just before 3 and then turned to a ghost town at 5 minutes past. This booming economy had a dramatic effect upon the atmosphere of the centre. Over the morning there were artists propped up everywhere painting on pre- stretched, primed and base coated boards. Out the back an army of 10-15 'arts workers' were making, stretching, priming and base coating canvas's of all sizes.

These volunteers consisted of some young community members but mostly art school students from major cities looking for the 'Indigenous experience'.

The building floor plan stretched out in all directions with the permanently staffed cash register positioned at the centre. Developed over a period of 20 years the building was made up of extensions upon extensions, with the 2 Chileans driving a practical solutions based approach to their building, if somewhat idiosyncratic. What was immediately apparent about the building is the myriad of nooks and crannies where people could sit. There were low curved walls, a big screened in shaded area with a cool concrete slab, places to sit under the trees and light a little fire, a seat leaning against the water tanks offering some radiant cooling.

With everyone being very used to young city buyers and curators bustling around the centre, upon arrival we were immediately ignored by the artists. Sitting down at one of the big painting tables I started to sketch the space, waving away the 15 dogs which had sniffed me out. Since Tennant Creek I had been musing on how to announce my presence and intent in a soft an



approachable manner. Perhaps the common language of drawing would help? When I pulled out a charcoal stick and started sketching the arts centre space a senior man in a white cowboy hat came and sat down opposite and we started chatting. Otto Jungarrayi Sims was an active board member of the Warlukurlangu centre and very proud of what it represented to the community. On learning that I was an architecture student, he asked my opinion on his new business plan to develop painted toilet seats as products, designed by him and manufactured in china.

*"Hey anything that makes you feel good is good no?"*

- Otto Jungarrayi Sims

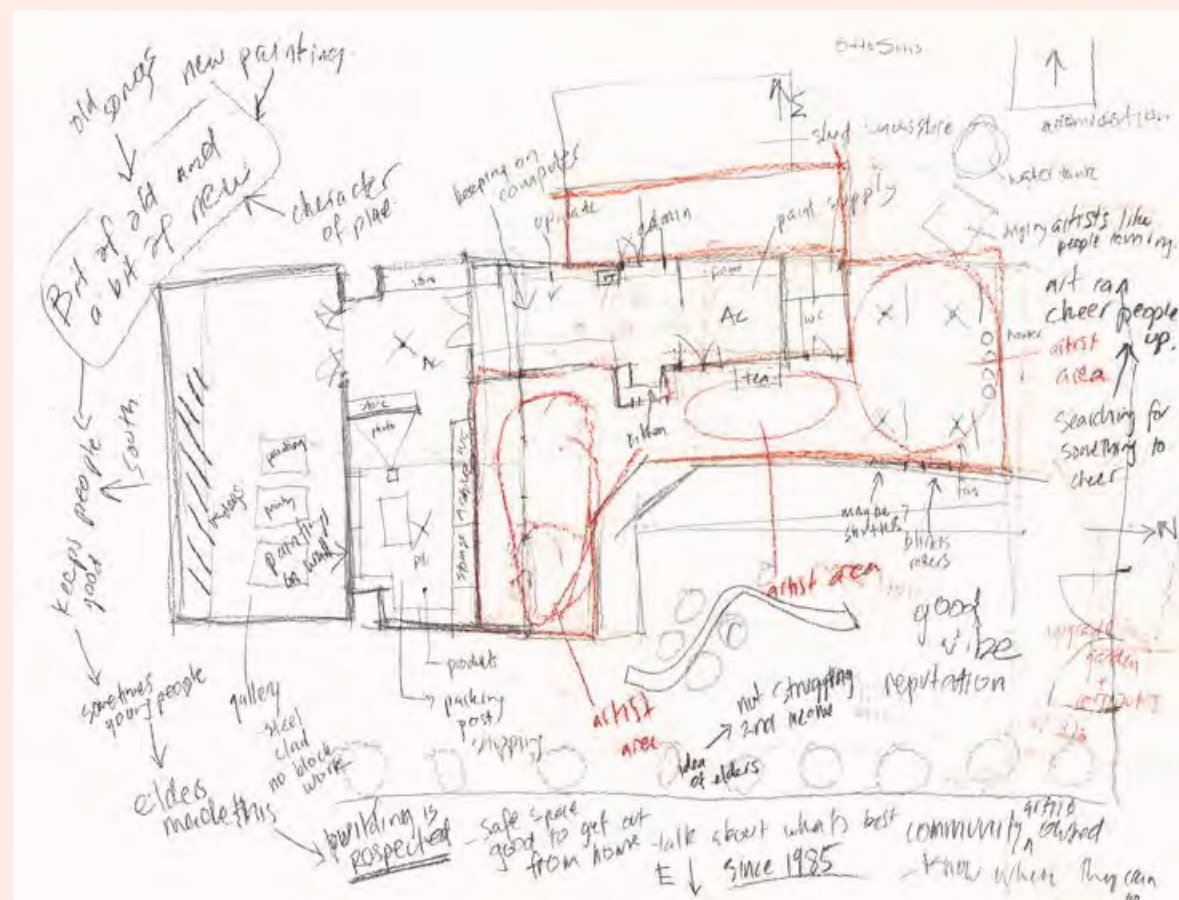
I pulled out the poster and we started talking through and drawing through the building, what made it so special, what made people feel respected in it. We ended up turning the poster over, snapping the charcoal in half and drawing a smudged plan together on the back to really get into the detail of the history, who worked where and why, and the important sense of community enterprise and success that prevailed.



**This page (left):** Large shaded porch for painting in. People can see out but not in.

**This page (right):** Low curved walls prevent dust and wind from blowing through the painting spaces.





**This page (top):** Arts centre plan drawn together with Otto.

**This page (bottom):** Drawing and talking together with Otto.

**Opposite:** The building maximises its informal edge conditions on all sides.

**Following:** Pocketguide filled out for the Youth Services building to try it with a different building type.



Drawing through this plan together the connections between the aerial dot painting style of the Central Desert and the rendering style of architectural drawing became strongly apparent. The flattening of perspective and abstraction of form, ground as in between space and relational positioning all played out on paper in front of us. It was a truly transparent process of two-way learning.

Otto drew us a map of where to camp that night. It consisted of a single line that ducked and turned. Despite drawing aerial ideas together all afternoon, we spent 2 hours driving in circles before we arrived at a special camp called Juka-Juka, an ancient rock formation that marked the birthplace of baby clouds.



- curved wall was welcoming but still practical

- tall & raked ceiling also made it feel different to the houses.

**A Sense Of:**

- Generosity
- Welcoming



- liked the curved walls a bit. made it feel different to the houses.

- posters on the walls in language & english.

- Inspired
- Able To Question
- Positive

translate signs in the shop.

- placed magazines & books on tables for people to browse & be inspired.



**Is there something about this building which helps you feel...**

- computer labs had privacy in narrow space.



- Like Participating
- Engaged

- one big open area

- bifold doors divide the space into 2 separate areas.

- Wanted smaller nooks & flexible spaces that can be changed for privacy & quiet activities.

- Shaded outdoor caged area protecting doorways.

- high roof to stop kids climbing.



- Big ass fans in high ceiling + AC.

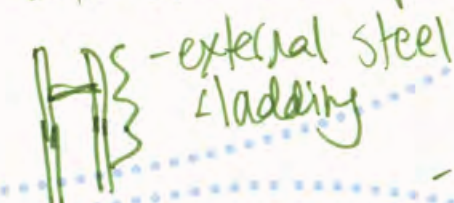
- respected what people wanted to do in the space themselves.

- Wapiti Owned place.



- Comfortable
- Safe
- Secure

- Solid steel door frames



- lit outdoor areas attract kids at night.

- people use it as they want. ↓ Respected.

- good cup of tea space.

- Respected
- Valued
- Able To Be Oneself

- need to make things work well. #1 priority.

- No one messed with it as it fills an important role.

- Included
- Like You Belong

- meals on the walls are good.

- use cap workers + training where possible.

COMMUNITY: Yuendumu

NAME: Dave + Natalie

BUILDING: Nydac youth services building + learning space

DATE: 1.5.19





## 42 BALGO WIRRIMANU

### Poster as Secondary

Balgo proved a very different model of interaction. Upon arriving and introducing ourselves at the arts centre the young energetic manager Poppy excitedly put us to work utilising our architectural skills and willing hands. Within the first day we had sorted through 10 years of archived files and categorised the fascinating architectural history of the arts centre, re painted the large gallery space from bright red to deep purple, and re designed, planned and strategised how to re-purpose the 'music room'. Throughout the trip we repeatedly came across these kind of spaces. We saw music rooms, silk screen workshops, skate rings, kiln and glass studios all built to support very specific skills, training and development programs within the last 5 years and now abandoned or defunct. In Yuendumu it had been silk screening, in Tennant creek it was sculptural welding, and at Balgo it was a whole building specifically designed as a music recording studio. The space was filled with an assortment of expensive gear whilst half of the sound booths had never even been finished before the whole project was abandoned. Much of the gear looked as if it had never been setup and was covered with a fine layer of red desert dust. The now

familiar story suggests that well intentioned government sponsored programs had their funding cut following elections and national budget changes, the facilitators moved on, and skills were never taught or shared, leaving behind a sad trail of expensive 'could have been's' throughout the desert communities.

At Balgo, because of the immediacy of our involvement with the nuts and bolts of the centre the poster became a secondary thing that was jotted down on when I could in conversation in between making cups of tea and cleaning brushes. People would come and see what we were doing, offer their opinion and hang around and watch. These small snippets of interaction proved far more valuable than an interview style engagement. They placed the emphasis on people feeling like they could ask questions of us and engage on their own terms. We were in their space, working to help them.

As architects we have a plethora of skills that could help arts centres both physically and strategically help them to re-frame their current situations. Due to the almost annual turnover of arts centre managers,



there so often seems to be a lack of vision for the centre beyond the individual goals and aspirations of each manager. Basic project management, creative problem solving, strategic envisioning, archiving and archival organisation are all skills of the architect. These skills developed through practice lie in addition to our extensive tertiary education and training to visualise things not yet conceived, make something different a very tangible reality and to use what is available

in a new way. In return for helping, we can gain experience around very real interactions, which offer an insight into the community from the perspective of operating within it. This would provide the foundation for a much improved building project response. In this case, the poster was superseded by authentic community lead interactions.





**This page (left):** Painting the gallery display space inside the Arts Centre.  
**This page (right):** Sawtooth Gorge, a story place near Balgo.  
**Opposite (top):** Repainting and hanging the gallery space.  
**Opposite (bottom):** Sitting, drawing and talking with the elders as they paint.  
**Previous:** Signage at the highway turnoff to Balgo.  
**Following:** Pocketguide filled out from conversations with the elders and the manager Poppy.







- new media centre connected to cultural centre is wrong.

because 2 very different programs youth + keeping place.



- painting verandah looks out to edge of the pond + the cemetery.

**- Inspired  
- Able To Question  
- Positive**

- comes from country.

**Is there something about this building which helps you feel....**

- old people able to walk there.



**- Like Participating  
- Engaged**

- tourists come + are welcomed.

- good position in community. Not too close to shop (humbung) or mission church. old people chose it.

COMMUNITY: Balgo

NAME: poppy (studio manager)

- progression of spaces.

- no kids allowed  
- one main entry door.



**- Comfortable  
- Safe  
- Secure**

- Caged outside area for painting in protected from dogs.

- big canvases on the floor for sitting on.

- painted banner on outside of building  
Symbolising first mens painting.

- Building has extended over time.

**- Included  
- Like You Belong**



liked having the keeping place close.



- All safe here.  
- Spirit here.  
like the arts centre as it is.

- multiple areas to paint in for different family groups and generations.



- mens mural on the cultural centre floor

**- Respected  
- Valued  
- Able To Be Oneself**

- murals on the walls.  
- women's mural on gallery floor.

BUILDING: Waliyerti Art centre

DATE: 4.5.19.





## 48 WARMUN WARRAMUN

### Poster as Record Post Conversation

In Warmun, the arts centre, its program and its building are directly tied to the history of the community. In recent years this is characterised by radical and violent change overlaid upon extraordinarily powerful and resilient continuities carried through deep time.

In 1886 a telegraph station was established in the area to service the camel trains carrying provisions for the brief but intense gold rush in Halls Creek.<sup>1</sup> The local Gija people were put to work by European farmers who came to exploit natural resources and run cattle on their traditional lands, marking the beginning of the traumatic displacement of Gija people and their cultural traditions.<sup>2</sup> The Equal Wages Award for Aboriginal stock men in 1968 forced many Gija people off the stations and drifted into fringe camps around the telegraph station that together form Warmun community today. Over the years the community has slowly grown around the telegraph station and the old building

has been continually re-purposed, first as a and ration depot, then shop, then as the arts centre for the community.<sup>3</sup> Elders began to build an art collection that was used to teach kids from the Ngalangangpum School the Gija stories. The first classes and dances were held under the Boab tree that still stands in front of the telegraph station. Today Warmun Art Center is one of the largest and most significant cultural institutions in northern Western Australia. This claiming back of that original architecture of oppression is something that the community are very proud of. After the trauma of events tied to the architecture of the telegraph station, the Gija now speak of it as their building now, the physical heart of their community.

In 1998 The Daiwul Gija Cultural Centre was constructed directly behind the telegraph station as a modern arts centre facility to replace the old building and house the community's precious collection of over 340 paintings, wooden carvings and sculptures. The devastating 2011 flash flood damaged over 90 per cent of the paintings housed in

<sup>1</sup> Massola, C. (2012). Jarragbu-nungu warrambany flood in Warmun. *Artlink*, 32(4), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Pelusey, J And Pelusey, M (2006), *Life In Indigenous Communities. Warmun, East Kimberley, Western Australia*, Macmillian Education Australia, Melbourne

<sup>3</sup> GIGA TOTAL HEALTH <http://www.kimberleysociety.org/images/kimbsoc---alochirupu.pdf>



**This page:** The old telegraph station that now houses the art collection

this new centre and the collection was sent interstate for conservation and storage.<sup>4</sup>

Just before our arrival in Warmun the elders had made the decision that the collection should be returned to the community and housed back in the old telegraph station, one of the few buildings that survived the flood unscathed. They believed that this cultural knowledge, artifacts and paintings needed to be held on country and the knowledge and stories that the collection represents should be held safely in the heart of the community.

This strong history points to the resilience of Indigenous peoples to continuously evolve their story.

My own understanding of the importance of this old telegraph building and the position that it occupies in the eyes of the community came about through the experience of sitting in on a meeting with the art centre board, made up exclusively of community elders. With the addition of tea and our gift of a bag of Arnotts assorted, the meeting

<sup>4</sup> McDowell, C. (2011). Warmun floods devastate a community and its art. *ABC Kimberley*.

turned into an intense session of sitting and listening to the stories that each board member had in connection to that building, from babies being born in the shade of its veranda to reminiscing about learning the Gija songs in the dancing circle out the front. From listening, it became obvious that the collection could never be stored interstate, that the 1998 cultural centre was palace for tourists, not a keeping place for the precious collection. The telegraph station and the collection together play a huge role in teaching younger generations and both are cultural objects in their own way. The community faces ongoing battles with national conservationists wanting to preserve the valuable collection off site.

In Warmun this splitting of the tourist gallery from the arts centre keeping place came about through a process of trial and error over the years. I am coming to understand that this is one of the most important considerations when working with this typology of community building. Is the building for the people or the tourists? Is it for cultural preservation or economic determination? Can both coexist in one space?



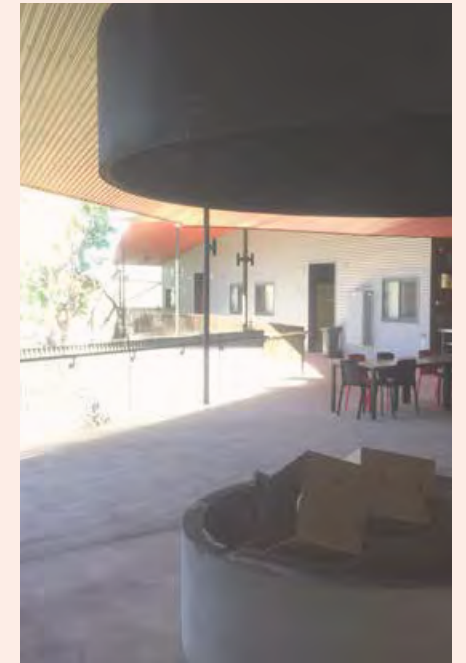
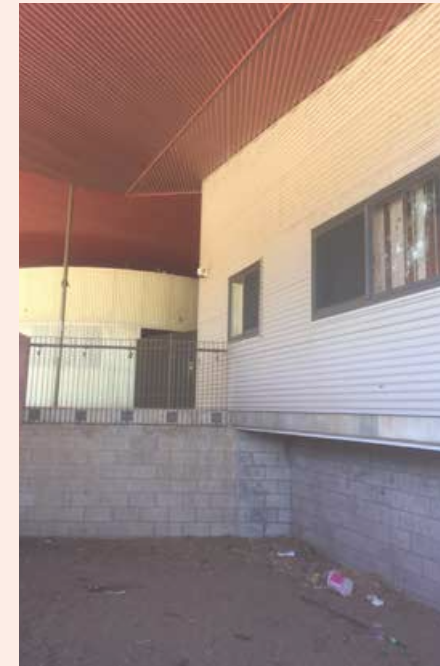


**This page (top):** Board meeting of elders. They prefer to meet underneath the new facility.

**This page (bottom):** Storage inside the telegraph station.

**Opposite:** Walumba Elders Centre in a sad state of repair.

**Following:** Pocketguide filled out with Lindsay, a local artists and arts centre worker.



These fundamental yet not obvious questions were raised on multiple occasions by the pocketguide as conversations turned to issues of ownership, safety and generosity. Although the questions have been raised repeatedly and discussions taken place it seems that there is no one answer, rather it is dependent on the community, the place, the history, the building and the management. One thing that became clear from the Warmun experience was that it was the communities ownership and pride in an old piece of utilitarian colonial infrastructure that has made their arts centre one of the strongest in the Top End.

Maybe architecture has nothing to do with Freespace. Maybe Freespace is about the act and process of ownership and occupation.

This idea was reinforced in Warmun as I went to visit the award winning Iredale Penderson Hook Walumba Elders Centre.



*“Though there were many candidates for the overall award, the Walumba Elders Centre stole the show as it demonstrates the skills and understanding required to*

*design truly sustainable buildings. Where some buildings achieved great energy performance or high results through certification programs, this project illustrated sensitivity to people and culture, a respect for environment and building response and delivered it with ingenuity rather than a large budget.”*

- Competition judge

Winning the Multi-Density Category prize and the Best of the Best award at the 2015 Sustainability Awards. The architects intention was:

*“To act as a focal point for bringing the community back together, and to aid in the transmission of the unique aboriginal lore, Gija language and cultural knowledge to the younger members of the community”*

- Iredale Penderson Hook

However upon arrival we were greeted by a sorry sight. The beautiful building had never had the chance to be occupied by community before it was forced to close its doors.

Tragically it fell victim to corrupt contractors who ripped \$5 million from the community that had been allocated for the running of the centre. Another victim of bureaucratic external powers the project now stands as a painful ‘could have been’. Now the community has no way of finding the money to staff the new facility so it sits with its gates chained, slowly corroding whilst kids throw stones at its windows for a game.

Perhaps the pocketguide and its associated values need to be considered equally in the design of buildings, community programs and services, as each can not function without the other. Walumba proves that the best well intentioned building is nothing without the service infrastructure to keep it running. As architects perhaps we need to look beyond our siloed field of design and place greater value upon the human social mechanisms that make buildings work.



**A Sense Of:**

- Generosity
- Welcoming

- big green board tree at the centre.

- gallery welcomes the tourists, but they don't come into the rest of the precinct.

- elders control all aspects of the centre.

- Inspired
- Able To Question of country.
- Positive

- inspired by country + ownership

**Is there something about this building which helps you feel....**  
**SYMBOL OF COMMUNITY STRENGTH.**

- have to earn your painting spot at the art centre. Paint at home until then.



- encourage new technologies  
- proud to be continuing culture.

- Like Participating
- Engaged

- Active continuation of culture.

- Strong learning culture. Pass on skills.



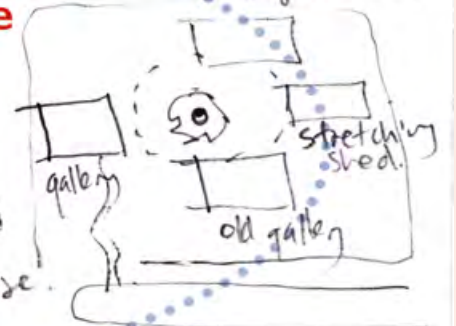
- cool breeze blows through precinct.  
- lots of shade.

- artists aren't looked at by tourists.

- Comfortable
- Safe
- Secure

- painting areas all outside.

central grass space complex of buildings manages house



- Art centres independence is strength.  
- self supported, self determined, self governed, self managed.

- Respected
- Valued
- Able To Be Oneself

- collaborate space out front.



- keeping house is central. only for family or increased upon approval.

- Included
- Like You Belong

- Warmun history is centred around the art centre. Original building, now keeping place was the old telegraph station (1920s) that people walked off country too after 1967 referendum.

- strong history of place.



- CENTRE OF THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY: WARMUN

NAME: LINDSAY (arts worker + artist)

BUILDING: WARMUN ARTS CENTRE

DATE: 6.5.19.



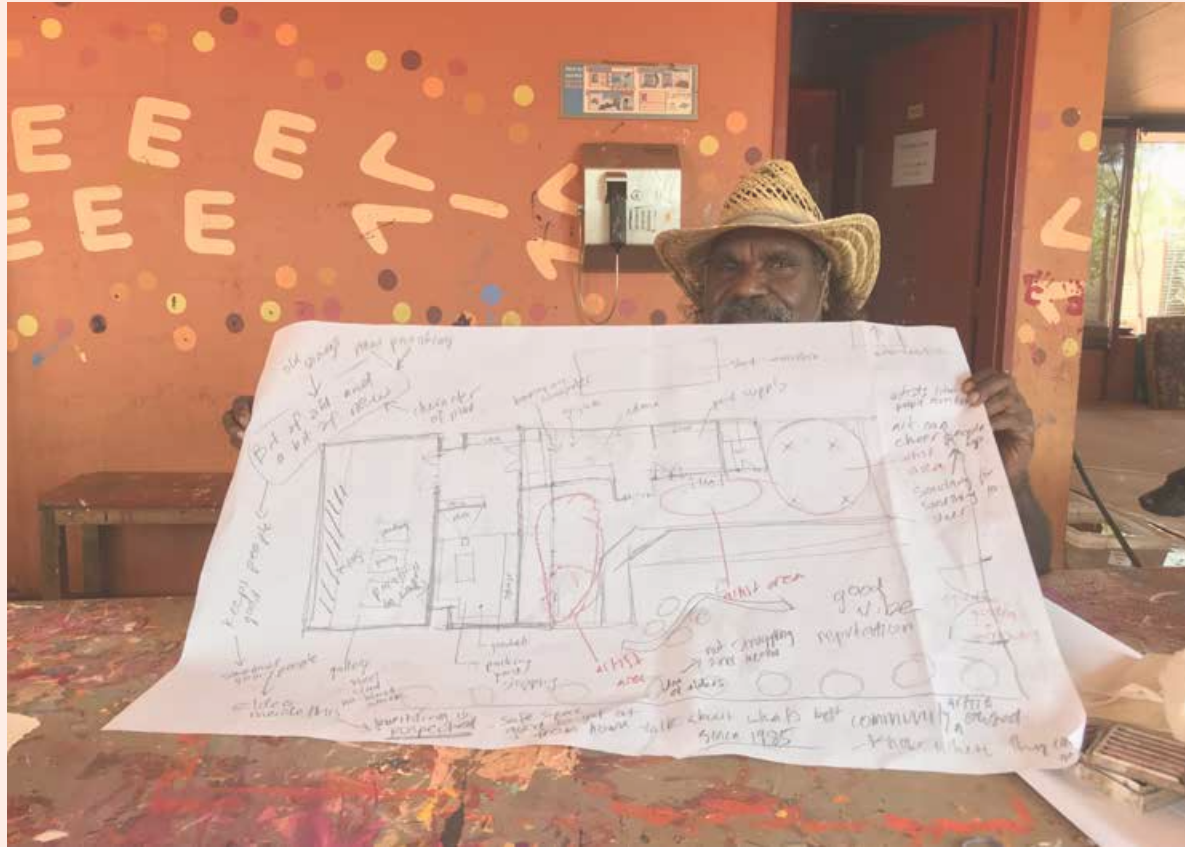
# 5

## FINDINGS SEEN AND UNFORESEEN





56



**Previous:** Halfway along the Tanami Track, the mid point of our journey.  
**This page (top):** Otto with the building plan we drew together.  
**Opposite:** Prized car bonnets used as signage across the top end.

## HOW THE POCKETGUIDE SHAPED UP

In speaking about the findings of this Byera project, some relate specifically to the pocketguide whilst others have arisen simply by being out there spending time in conversation with particular people in particular communities. Some of the findings you could say were expected whilst others were so unlikely they could not have been foreseen.

Perhaps one of the most profound and personal lessons has been to come to understand that in Indigenous thinking it is not important whether A follows B, follows

C, rather the importance lies in seeing the interconnectedness, the relationship between A, B and C. We have much to learn.

So in writing these findings perhaps it is not important to speak of what came first, what comes next under another heading and what follows, rather it is more appropriate to sketch out for the reader an array of findings where each is seen in relation to the other and at the same time is understood as having a bearing on the other.

57







**This page:** Balgo arts centre manager Poppy showing us the edge of the Balgo Pound.  
**Opposite:** Teams of city arts workers behind the scenes priming and stretching canvas.



## 58 PROJECT FINDINGS

- The pocketguide at a very simple level worked as a great record of conversations. People could see their responses to questions being taken seriously and recorded faithfully on the guide. They felt their opinions mattered and there is a strong sense of transparency and accountability in the process.
- People had strong feelings as to whether their Art Centres supported them and in many cases they didn't.
- Where the Art Centres/Cultural Centres fell short people thought long and hard about how to make them work better.
- Designers need to be mindful that there are likely to be different responses from Art Centre managers, community members and community artists. These differences need to be understood and respected. It is often easier to speak with managers than with community members so care should be given to understanding the role of the person you are speaking/working/engaging with.
- Understandably many managers also felt a need to speak for their artists and community elders which could lead to dismissing of individual artist's needs in favour of the Arts Centre's needs. Remember to fill out a pocketguide for each client and/or client group.
- It is not always easy to speak with community members, especially if you have no contact person. Particular groups within a community might be even harder to access eg, youth groups as they may or may not have a spokesperson who is happy to talk with you. Bear in mind that people don't know you, you have had little opportunity to gather trust.
- Art Centre managers may find big picture thinking difficult as they typically move between Centres every few years.
- Arts centre managers are a unique type of individual, often escapists and artists themselves, they are incredibly knowledgeable about their centres, how they like things to be done, what works and what

doesn't. After visiting a couple of centres it became apparent that there was a consistent lack of big picture thinking possibly due to the fractured nature of time spent in community. Rarely does a manager stay more than 2 years. Across all of the centres the managers shared a 'make do' resourcefulness, making what they could work with little to no money. This poses a challenge to the design of arts centres as over time, a broken tap or a change in arts practice from printing to painting could render half of the building unfit for purpose, unused and a costly accessory. Repeatedly we saw locked unusable services, kitchens turned offices turned store rooms that no longer functioned as anything properly because the shelves had been turned into display plinths.

- Try to remedy one-way or imbalanced exchanges.
- There is an idea that research is taking from community. Linda Tuai Smith in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1991) explores the idea of the 'Other' in research projects with indigenous communities. Notions of the

"other" emerged as inferior to the dominant anglophile "knower", allowing Europeans to refine and define themselves as superior, in a position of power, framing the identity of the colonized and the colonizer. To try and remedy the one-way nature of the exchange I believe that the 'knower', be they architect, designer or contractor needs to begin the process of engagement by offering something first. As you are asking people for their knowledge, a reciprocal thing to offer and bring to the table might be your own story. Sharing your story has the capacity to be a leveling experience, allowing you to engage meaningfully with the client group and explore how both of your stories and your narratives influence and respond to the way you both perceive and conceive designed environments around you. Perhaps you have to give a bit to get a bit. This could be worked into the 'how to.....' part of the pocket guide.

- In relation to the wording and framing of the pocket guide to a First Nations audience, the ideas that I had carefully distilled into the Pocketguide were inseparable from





**This page:** Territories of Resilience, Canadian Pavilion Venice Biennale touches on the evolving nature of culture to ensure its survival.  
**Opposite:** Another half finished and abandoned project outside Halls Creek.



each other. This meant they were answered by another all-embracing idea, the notion of country. In a sense every question prompted by the guide could be answered '... because its my country, I was born here. My grandmother painted here' This immediately took our conversations well beyond the built environment to ideas of country, fundamentally rooted in place not space.

- Upon reflection, this expanding into wider notions of country made me question whether we can really talk about qualitative spatial ideas just in the built environment. People respond to places through feelings and these feelings are not limited to buildings. In an atmosphere where building forms are so compromised by cost, maintenance and demand their importance falls away and the framework of the program becomes the primary support for its users. Over the trip I saw too many instances where the community program fell apart long before the buildings did. The youth program in Balgo where they couldn't use the basketball facility because there weren't enough staff to supervise such a big area. In Warmun we walked through broken gates of the never

operational desolate award winning elders centre by Iredale Penderson Hook

- The qualitative questions that form the basis of my pocket guide need to be asked of the program as well as of the building design. Ideally they would be answered together. Perhaps this project is about making more clear the relationship between building infrastructure and the social frameworks that are needed to operate and make these spaces successful.
- Another explanation for Indigenous people to separate out answers to the guided questions could be explained by the fundamental differences between a western hierarchical way of thinking compared to an indigenous relational understanding of people, places, time and experience.
- The overarching aim of the project was to develop a practical pocketguide for use by architects and consultants when designing with Indigenous communities. Like the Biennale the pocketguide highlights and draws upon the inherent aspects of architecture that so often get overlooked, in

this case due to working in remote or difficult contexts of marginalised communities. The Arts Centre attitude of 'do you know anyone that can help and can they do it cheaply?' or the government's 'lets just get a draftsman in Canberra to design it' nature of building works and construction means that there seems to be a large amount of people working with communities with no previous experience around culturally responsive designing. I believe that this pocketguide could be a useful tool for these new participants in reminding them of the larger goals of decolonisation and reconciliation, with the possibility of it becoming an integral part of the tendering process (inspired by the recent amendments to the NSW Education SEPP Design Quality Principles).

- Perhaps there is opportunity for the pocketguide to be displayed in Arts Centres as a reminder of broader cultural priorities when it comes to embedded community organisations. It could form the basis of ongoing community workshops which identify, draw up and add to ideas, ensuring they are embedded in the operational structure of the organisation along with the

ever evolving building form. Lending weight to cultural resilience in a rapidly changing world.

- This broader thinking around resilience through identity and ownership encourages the Indigenous built environment to start to align with broader reconciliation outcomes and the national 'Closing the Gap' scheme.
- The 2019 Closing the gap report outlines the central role that connection to country has with aboriginal identity, mental and physical health, wellbeing and education. These outcomes are becoming widely recognised across many industries through the nation Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) scheme.
- Perhaps the ideas outlined in this pocket guide also have a place in the every day, acting as a gentle reminder to all about the qualitative nature of how we engage with buildings, a reminder of a way of thinking that puts people, their stories and their differences in the front of conversation.



# 6

## NEW OUTCOMES, NEW SETTINGS







**Previous: Housing stock that forms studio based in Yarrabah community**

**This page:** Students listening to senior community members share their stories.

**Opposite (left):** Exploring the word cloud of themes in the design studio.

**Opposite (right):** Workshopping design briefs in Yarrabah.

This Byera Project has turned into a far greater project than realising my initial intention of generating a pocketguide. Over time and through immersing myself in Indigenous communities, an intense interest and concern to work and walk further down this pathway has become clear. Exploring, practicing and finding effective and inclusive ways of working with Indigenous people is central to what I am now doing in many of the layers of my architectural undertakings. Since being awarded a Byera Scholarship, it is as if a certain momentum has been achieved and opportunities have presented themselves one after the other which have allowed me to extend and build upon the initial scholarship undertakings and for that I am grateful.

I feel this project has given me unique opportunities to open my eyes and experience the realities of our nation.

It has helped propel me into a scholarly position of action and be part of a network of thought leaders in this field. I have forged strong friendships with fellow Byera scholars exploring overlaps and connections between our projects through talks, panels and forums. Connecting with a new generation of young Indigenous architecture students and graduates that will no doubt go on to champion changes is an inspiration. Led by Kevin O'Brien and Dillon Kombomuri, and including such people as Tiana Furner (BVN), Marni Reti (Kaunitz Yeung), Sam Rich (Design Inc.), Joel Spring (Future Method Studio) and Jack Gillmer (Rothelowman), it is an honour to count these people as friends and future collaborators. Collectively they have all been involved as critics and guests in a design studio that I have co-developed with Indigenous architect and scholar Michael Mossman at the University of Sydney.



## USYD FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE DESIGN AND PLANNING - DESIGN STUDIO

*' Architectural education is empowered with agency and a capacity to critique socially inequitable issues. It offers unique opportunities to make an impact with communities beset with challenges of infrastructural inequality. '*

Stanford paper., co written by Michael Mossman and I.

Together Michael Mossman and I co-wrote and teach a design studio for second year architecture students as part of a studio titled 'Let Every Voice Be Heard'. The studio collaborates with the Indigenous Australian community of Yarrabah situated on Gungganyji country about the critical issue of housing. It is a reaction to the ongoing housing crisis in Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire, and the current unsatisfactory 'one size fits all' approach to housing for Indigenous people.

Our method encourages students to engage the narratives of self, reflecting upon their own stories to facilitate a process of reciprocal cultural exchange and explore a heightening of cultural difference. This experience enables the emergence of new and authentic dialogue in the design studio and encourages exploration of qualitative spatial implications, unpacking the connection

between story, comfort, environment and values. Beginning with the web of words developed as part of the Byera pocketguide, this studio's line of enquiry expands outwards, crossing over multiple layers of research, at times looking into broader Indigenous issues to do with identity, notions of country, story telling and performance, how to design for self-determination, an architecture of possibility, down to specifics such as the ramifications of building in remote, tropical environments, what this means for building materials and construction techniques, staged implementation, use of local skilled and unskilled labour and training opportunities. This project challenges young architects to develop:

*"Fundamental projects that sponsor, support and affect the day-to-day events of the Aboriginal community at large and ultimately present a stage for a constantly changing cultural experience."*

Aboriginality and Architecture, Kevin O'Brien University of Queensland, 2005

This is the very same challenge my Byera project sought to explore.





**This page & Opposite (left):** Presenting a workshop based on my word cloud of themes at the ACSA conference at Stanford, 2019.

**Opposite (right):** Using the word cloud to explore stories of self in design at a workshop for the AMAGA conference, 2019.

## 66 STANFORD CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2019

Last September Michael Mossman and I successfully presented a workshop and were invited to co author a follow up paper entitled 'Narrative, Self and Engagement: an Immersive T(r)opical Experience' (see appendix) for the 2019 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) Fall Conference, hosted by Stanford Architecture & Yale School of Architecture. The ACSA is an association of over 200 Universities across the world. Through these schools, over 5,000 architectural members are represented with ACSA providing a forum for ideas on the leading edge of architectural thought. Themed LESS TALK / MORE ACTION: Conscious Shifts in Architectural Education, the Conference aimed to investigate the evolving pedagogy and curriculum that is responsive to the real-time needs of students, the profession, and society, and how this can consciously shape the future of Architecture.

*"Even as [architecture] practice becomes increasingly expansive in its considerations, and recent research in education advocates for a more*

*integrative curricula and pedagogy, our teaching methods and structures have remained resiliently tied to centuries-old models."*

- conference overview <http://www.acsa-arch.org/programs-events/conferences/fall-conference/2019-fall-conference>

Taught in the method of the pedagogy being shared, we presented a hands on workshop that gave participants opportunity to explore how self-reflective participant stories and narratives influences and responds to the way designed environments are perceived by those around them. Stories of self and foregrounding that knowledge enables an engagement with and exploration of other stories, unpacking both the commonalities and differences between.

Using the challenging lens of housing and notions of the home, this workshop offered participants experience in understanding how architecture can engage as the interface between cultures and people, and the needs of specific communities within broader societies.



## AMAGA CONFERENCE

67

Presenting on a global stage a methodology that we developed out of our own experiences with communities was a once in a lifetime opportunity. The many hours spent sitting with the pocket guide on the floor in communities, talking through what was important, listening deeply, recording accurately and fairly and sharing stories in return has developed into a pedagogical approach that notably impressed senior academics from the world's leading architectural schools. Dean of Yale Deborah Bourke commented:

*"One of the most engaging sessions at the conference" and "proposed a method that could be adapted to a range of institutional settings."*

-Deborah Berke, FAIA, LEED AP, architect, educator, and the Dean of the Yale School of Architecture.

Earlier in March this year I developed and presented a workshop at the Museums Galleries Australia National Conference 2019, 'Our People, Our places, Our practices'. Titled: *Beyond The Functional: Culturally Responsive In Practice And Theory*, this workshop provided participants experience in understanding how Architecture and exhibition design can respond beyond pragmatic project requirements to support the cultural needs of Indigenous communities, creating responsive environments which can in turn become places of learning and active cultural practice.

Closely linked to the Pocketguide, the topic responded to a very real and urgent need, how to appropriately, competently and productively engage with Indigenous communities on design projects, in ways that respect and mobilise cultural distinctiveness. The workshop focused on designing spaces that connect to country and community, creating culturally responsive architecture, and encouraging Indigenous voice in the built environment. It addressed processes that are often overlooked in stakeholder engagement, aligning with the conference themes of Indigenous agency, identity, methodologies, communities and relevance.





**This page:** Working with the reconciliation action plan working group.  
**Opposite (left):** PNYX article June 21, 2019.  
**Opposite (right):** Acting as Indigenous engagement facilitator, presenting at Hayball architects.



## 68 PNYX ARTICLE

The AMAGA workshop formed the basis of an article similarly titled: *Beyond The Functional: Culturally Responsive Design In Practice And Theory*, written for PNYX, a paper published by the Architecture Associate in London, which I have included in full as an appendix to this report.

## INDIGENOUS AWARENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Both of these conferences have been fully supported by and dovetail into my current architectural work at Hayball Architects, with offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Within the company I have stepped up to a role of Indigenous Engagement Facilitator, and work across all projects to help facilitate Indigenous engagement where appropriate. I am also responsible for delivering internal presentations around the relevant changes to legislation and promoting workplace change, shedding light on the responsibility and due diligence of us as architects to ask questions of our clients around how they intend to address Indigenous heritage in their projects.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP

Over the last 12 months I have worked closely with Sam Rich and Michael Mossman who form part of the Institute of Architects' Reconciliation Working Group to help support their vision of a RAP for the NSW chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. This involved researching relevant and previous RAPs and synthesizing a draft response to be workshopped and refined by the working group.

I see this project and the things that have followed on from it as providing opportunities to support the work of Indigenous architects, taking part in the conversation and sharing the responsibility of exploring how to address Indigenous culture in the built environment. The changes that need to happen are far greater and need to happen far quicker than the few practicing Indigenous architects can manage themselves. They need the support of like minded people in the industry to spread their message and echo their questions.

## AASA INDIGENOUS RESOURCE PORTFOLIO

The wide ranging research required to develop this Byera project has resulted in an extensive collection of published resources around Indigeneity and Architecture. This resource has formed the basis of my now ongoing work with The Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA), to develop the first online archive of this material that will be accessible to all architecture schools across the Australasian region. This research has expanded to include publications around architectural design, architectural education, university contexts, design performance and evaluation, planning, policy as well as New Zealand and Pacific contexts. This archive of resources now includes over 300 papers that can be actively drawn upon as a learning tool through a portal on the AASA website. This research task is being overseen by Michael Tawa, Professor of Architecture and Associate Dean Indigenous at University of Sydney.





**This page:** Doug and I pulled over on the side of the Tanami track to admire the ant hill architecture.

## 70 CONCLUSION

The opportunities afforded by the Byera Scholarship have enabled outcomes far more extensive and broad reaching than ever I had initially intended, with the Pocketguide now sitting within a wider context of research, writing, presenting and teaching.

The unfolding methodology of this project has been informed by Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. The project has evolved from the pocketguide, into a broader process for sharing lived experience that can inform future architectural design process. Sharing stories is an essential part of continuing culture as is finding new expressions and evolving new stories that assemble community and pass on both new and old traditions.

The Pocketguide is intended as a starting point and a place to begin for those who want to enter the conversation. It is a tool that facilitates a slow form of dialogue, one accompanied by sharing of stories, drawings, histories and futures. It is about recording these in a transparent process. It is about creating opportunities to reference, recall and interpret these in design. It is a tool to

help translate dialogue into architecture, generating an infrastructure of emergence as a framework in which new unanticipated things can arise.

Having the privilege of sharing stories with many community members has given me a new perspective on the role, value and place of design in social transformation and community development.

More broadly this project has given me unique opportunities to open my eyes and experience the realities of our nation. In so doing it has challenged the essence of who I am as both a designer and white woman with colonial heritage. Working with people from many different nations has taught me that both deep listening and bringing your own story to the fore are important parts of the design process as they allow you to have a conversation around difference and new ideas of resilience.

The project has grown into an exploration across multiple platforms of the relationship between architecture and indigeneity, an acknowledgment of its long and fraught

history and a path moving beyond in a soft manner through subtle reminders of ethics, transparency, equality and cultural specificity. A process that aligns with notions of reconciliation rather than decolonisation.

In order to develop culturally responsive design, designers must first try and understand through conversation, listening, difference and shared experience what it is that flows in the gap between themselves and their client, the layers of history, significance and values that are both specific to each and every one as well as generic aspects of humanity. Everyone has the right to good design. We just seem to forget that sometimes.



# 7

## APPENDIX





74

1.

## BURRI GUMMIN: ONE FIRE,

University of Sydney, 2019.  
Second year design studio unit  
outline.

Produced by Michael Mossman and I as  
part of the 'Let Every Voice Be Heard  
Housing studio co-ordinated by Michael  
Muir. with student workshops.



75



**“Just as the discovery of culture is a journey, not a destination, aboriginal architecture should be a ‘process’ and not just a ‘product’”.**

- Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, Art and Wellbeing (Sydney, Australia council for the arts, 2004 pg 99)

The aim of this design studio is to develop appropriate and sustainable housing solutions for members of the Yarrabah community.

This project is a reaction to the ongoing housing crisis in Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire, and the current unsatisfactory ‘one size fits all’ approach to housing for indigenous people.

Indigenous architect Kevin O’Brien speaks of the relationship between Indigeneity and Architecture and the challenge to

Unpacking our own stories: By reflecting upon our own stories, a process of reciprocal cultural exchange and a heightening of cultural difference will be explored. This experience will enable the emergence of new and authentic dialogue in the design studio and encourage explorations of qualitative spatial implications, unpacking the connection between story, comfort and

architects to develop:

**“Fundamental projects that sponsor, support and affect the day-to-day events of the Aboriginal community at large and ultimately present a stage for a constantly changing cultural experience.”**



**asks for a  
community  
'wellbeing precinct'  
in the heart of  
Yarrabah. Within this  
masterplan you will  
develop 2 specific  
housing solutions  
that all follow the  
Murri Way:**

## Supporting the self-determination of Indigenous people in their housing choices.

**They are intended as buildings which both the specific users and the wider community can engage with and come to feel to be their own.**

**This studios line of enquiry crosses over multiple layers of research, at times looking into broader Indigenous issues to do with identity, notions of country, story telling and performance, how to design for self-determination, an architecture of possibility, down to specifics such as the ramifications of building in remote, tropical environments, what this means for building materials and construction techniques, staged implementation, use of local skilled and unskilled labor, training opportunities and so on.**

**There is not one line of enquiry, rather it is like trying to follow a porous tracery of fine threads at times aligning, coming to the fore, receding behind or trailing off.**

**It is about seeing the overall lie of the cloth, or maybe it is the land.**



**The Precinct plan will be an exploration of the existing community services in Yarrabah such as:**

- The shop
- The post office
- The church
- The school
- The market
- The childcare
- The council chambers
- The reporting centre
- The pharmacy

- Any new additional services can be added into the precinct as determined by your research and approach.

- To address the housing shortage in Yarrabah, the precinct will include the addition of at least 2 new intergenerational housing solutions.

-Designed and developed in detail, these can be renovations to existing houses, new houses, multi family houses, a modular expandable house system, Youth housing.... etc.

- All of these new houses will need to be accessible.



# Overarching Project Principles

This project aims to:

- Describe a generosity of spirit and a sense of humanity at the core of architecture's agenda, focusing on the quality of space itself.
- Focus on architecture's ability to provide free and additional spatial gifts to those who use it and on its ability to address the unspoken wishes of strangers.
- Celebrate architecture's capacity to find additional and unexpected generosity in each project - even within the most private, defensive, exclusive or commercially restricted conditions.
- Provide the opportunity to emphasise nature's free gifts of light - sunlight and moonlight, air, gravity, materials - natural and man-made resources.
- Encourages reviewing ways of thinking, new ways of seeing the world, of inventing solutions where architecture provides for the well being and dignity of each citizen of this fragile planet.
- Be a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. There is an exchange between people and buildings that happens, even if not intended or designed, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene. Architecture has an active as well as a passive life.
- Encompass freedom to imagine, the free space of time and memory, binding past, present and future together, building on inherited cultural layers, weaving the archaic with the contemporary

## This Project Will Explore The Questions: (in roughly this order)

**How do you design buildings that are culturally responsive?**

- Embed in community
- Understand the significance of relating to country, narrative, performance,
- To be cultural responsive in practice and in theory

**What might the buildings be like – atmosphere, character?**

- Strong connection to country, to place
- Provide more than functional brief, what might this be?

**What sort of spaces might be included?**

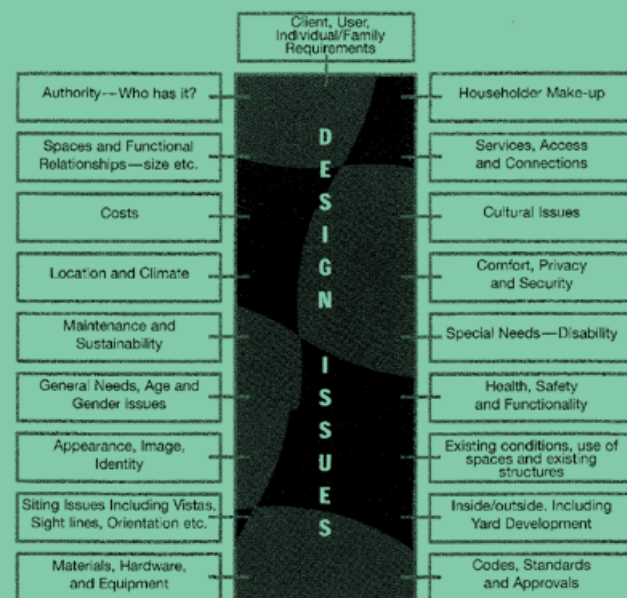
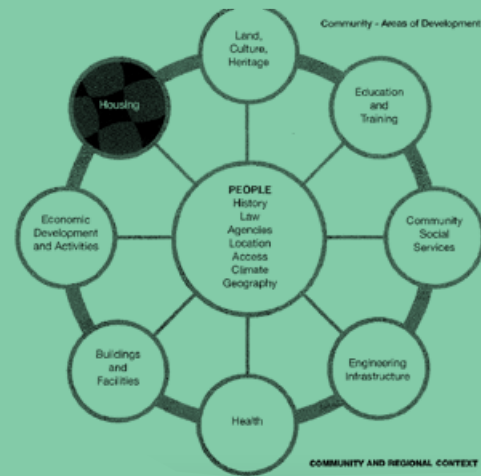
- Liminal space, edges, thresholds. Places to chat, to meet, to gather, to reflect, to hang on the edges of
- Spaces which trigger creativity
- Spaces which are safe, are comfortable,

**What expression might the building have?**

- Non patronizing, not rough or agricultural, neither overly simple, nor crude



Diagrams from Take 2:  
Housing Design in Indigenous  
Australia, edited: P. Memmott,  
C.Chambers,2003



# Educational Aims Of The Project Include: (please read these as you may be marked against them)

Spend time working on site to investigate cultural considerations when designing with indigenous communities

Become familiar with the accessible housing guidelines:

- Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
- Housing for Health guidelines established by Health Habitat.

Understand and appreciate:

- The specific needs and functional requirements of different clients
- the culture of the clients,
- the way traditional, tropical and existing buildings in Yarrabah are constructed
- their unique relationship to the area.

Establish an overall strategy for housing to address:

- existing site conditions (orientation, micro-climate and surrounding context)

Understand appropriate design and siting to:

- create a network of buildings and communal spaces;
- foster and reinvigorate ideas of self determination, pride in culture, bright futures, and inclusive practices.

Explore the implications of:

- site repair and maintenance;
- buildability, local labor, and skills training.

Develop your emerging design process to:

- building on your experience of designing to date;
- develop an integrated approach to architecture, landscape, construction, environment, structures and people!



# Themes Informing Your Design Principles



## ARCHITECTURAL TECTONICS

ie. building elements, materials, form, relationships, requirements, the how

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

a combination of building elements assembled with a logical rational

## ARCHITECTURAL THEMATICS

ie. concept, theory, design principles, logic, reasoning, the why



## How to design a building which is culturally responsive?

To explore this question in your design scheme you will need to develop a line of enquiry.

A line of enquiry is a path of research that gives weight and meaning to your design. It provides the factual basis of your concept to expand upon.

You keep developing this line of enquiry as you progress your building design. They may be expressed as a series of statements, facts or research framework that inform your design principles.

Your line of enquiry research and design work will start by exploring 3 themes from the list of key themes on the following page.

This list has been developed to help you.

Through your research these three themes will give rise to a constellation of further themes, that will be investigated to develop a thematic framework for your project. This framework will become the basis of your design principles and strategies and will be developed in parallel with architectural ideas of planning, construction, and site pragmatics that come together in your design (see diagram above).





## THEMES

IN-BETWEEN	THIRD SPACE	EMERGENT
INTERSTITIAL	LIMINAL	FLUX
CULTURAL	PERMEABLE	EVENT
		RHIZOMATIC

## SUB THEMES

GENEROSITY	CARING	TEMPORARY
HUMAN	SOCIAL	PERFORMATIVE
UNFINISHED	POSITIVE	FLUIDITY
COMFORT	EVERYDAY	LAYERED
NARRATIVE	SYMBIOTIC	ENGAGEMENT
SELF-	OWNERSHIP	RESPONSIVE
		POSSIBILITY

## 25 PROJECTS

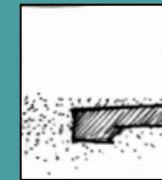
CLAIMING	INDIGENIZING	GENDERING
TESTIMONIES	INTERVENING	ENVISIONING
STORY-TELLING	REVITALISING	REFRAMING
CELEBRATING	CONNECTING	RESTORING
REMEMBERING	REPRESENTING	RETURNING
SHARING	NEGOTIATING	DISCOVERING
DEMOCRATIZING	NAMING	CREATING
NETWORKING	PROTECTING	

## DESIGN QUALITIES

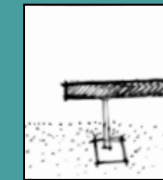
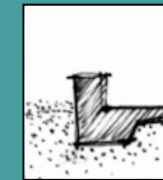
ROOF



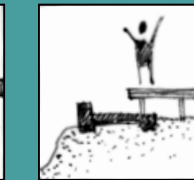
NATURAL  
GROUND TO BE  
CONNECTED



SLAB ON GROUND ABOVE GROUND  
TO STRENGTHEN SLAB TO EDGE



PLATFORM TO  
ELEVATE



PLATFORM/ SLAB  
COMBINED TO VARY

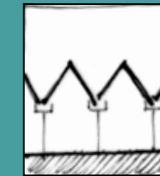
GROUND



SPREADING  
ROOF FOR GEN-  
EROSITY



ENFOLDING ROOF  
TO PROTECT



SERIES ROOF  
TO EXISTING



LAYERING ROOF  
TO SHUTTER  
SPACE

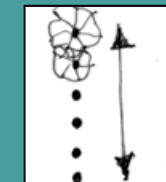


JOINING  
ROOF  
TO ENTER  
THROUGH

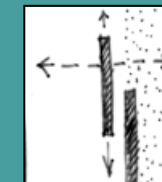


SHADING ROOF  
TO OCCUPY  
EDGES

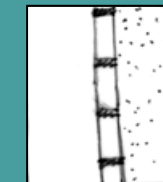
WALLS



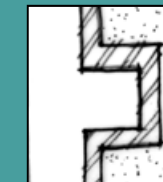
SUGGESTED  
WALLS TO GUIDE



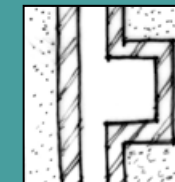
MOVABLE WALLS  
TO OPEN



FRAMED WALLS  
TO DIVIDE



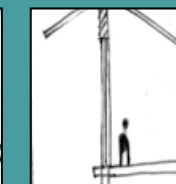
MASONRY  
TO SECURE



PAIRED WALLS TO  
HOLD



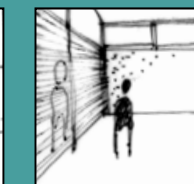
LOW WALLS  
TO SIT ON



LOFTY WALLS  
TO STAND BESIDE



ENCLOSING WALLS  
TO SHELTER



SCREENING WALLS  
TO SEE THROUGH

OPENINGS



OPEN WINDOWS  
TO SEE OUT



SECURE WINDOW TO  
SEE OUT BUT  
NOT GET IN



WINDOW TO  
SIT IN AND  
LOOK OUT FROM



WINDOW TO LOOK AT  
DISPLAY



# The Site



- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 KNOWLEDGE CENTRE        | MASTERPLAN REDEVELOPMENT  |
| 2 MEETING / OFFICE SPACES | REFURBISH                 |
| 3 COMMUNITY SPACE         | RETAIN KNOWLEDGE CENTRE   |
| 4 PRIMARY SCHOOL          | RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT |
| 5 SHOP                    |                           |
| 6 RESIDENTIAL             | LAND   SEA INTERFACE      |
| 7 CHURCH                  | BUSH   URBAN INTERFACE    |
| 8 PARK                    |                           |
| 9 PRE-SCHOOL              |                           |
| 10 BEACH                  |                           |
| 11 MISSION BAY            |                           |
| 12 OLD CEMETARY           |                           |
| 13 BUSHLAND               |                           |
| 14 SHIPWRECK              |                           |

# Schedule of Spatial Requirements

## Each Dwelling Should Include (As a minimum requirement):

- Outdoor food preparation/laundry/wash area (bench, large sink, drain, protected from extreme weather)
- Outdoor fireplace/cooking place
- Shaded/rain protected outdoor space (seating, easily accessed from house)
- Living spaces indoor (large openings, ventilated using prevailing winds, )
- Bedroom (refer to clients requirements, ventilated using prevailing winds)
- Accessible bathroom (toilet, shower, basin, laundry, ensure that all wet area facilities are not located in one room)
- Possibly additional bathroom to be accessed from outside (refer to clients requirements)
- Kitchen (with clear circulation of at least 1500mm, not located near toilet access)
- Lockable storage area
- Accessibility ramp to front door
- Fencing (gate to allow car access)
- Washing line
- Rubbish area

## Communal Outdoor Space Should Include:

- Outdoor food preparation area
  - Seating (for individuals and large groups)
  - Outdoor fireplace/cooking area
  - Shaded outdoor space
  - Access to water
- \*Consider ways that outdoor spaces might support cultural practices and relieve over-crowding at peak times.

## Precinct Design Should Include:

- Communal shaded eating /bbq area for day to day use and special events and functions
- Landscaping/trees as privacy screening between units.
- Pathways to houses
- Each house has fenced yard area



## Narrative, Self and Engagement: An Immersive T(r)opical Experience

**MICHAEL MOSSMAN**  
University of Sydney

**ANNA EWALD-RICE**  
University of Sydney

**We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the Country<sup>1</sup> on which this paper was composed. This is the Country of the Gadigal People.**

**Architectural education is empowered with agency and a capacity to critique socially inequitable issues. It offers unique opportunities to make an impact with communities beset with challenges of infrastructural inequality. One such challenge is the right to adequate house, a basic human right stipulated by the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> Indigenous Australian community ways of being, knowing and doing are predicated through traditional, historical and contemporary narratives that coexist within a settler-colonising framework. Architectural engagement with housing is a challenging issue within communities that is both celebrated and commiserated with endless permutations in between. Immersive and experiential inquiries that activate understandings of this dialogue have little visibility in architectural education studio environments. This paper reflects on a participatory workshop that engages participants in these inquiries about self relative to a specific Indigenous Australian community issue.**

### INTRODUCTION

An architect once asserted that ‘the embodiment of architecture requires the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion’.<sup>3</sup>

As an inclusive act, this paper is conscious that the rights of Indigenous peoples requires sustained and innovative approaches to architectural learning and teaching. Narrative through storytelling, as a method of investigating the self and engaging with interstitial spaces through the power of immersive environments provide the ‘how’ and the ‘now’ to substantiate this ‘Why’.

Demonstrating a participatory pedagogical approach, a hands-on workshop provided to participants a first-hand experience of coming to understand how architecture can draw upon people’s own experiences and a process of self-reflection to acknowledge the cultural needs of a specific Indigenous Australian community. The workshop provided an opportunity to draw, discuss and explore how self-reflective participant stories and narratives influences and responds to

the way designed environments are perceived and conceived around them. Stories of self and foregrounding that knowledge enables an engagement with and exploration of other stories, unpacking both the commonalities and differences between. This approach aims to embed cultural differences and acceptance into design studio thinking, creating active culturally responsive educational environments where the importance of Country, community and contextualised performative acts all have a presence.

Using the challenging lens of housing and notions of the home, this workshop offered participants a first-hand experience in understanding how architecture can engage as the interface between cultures and people, and the needs of specific communities within broader societies.

The following questions underpin this line of enquiry:

- How do architectural educators include narratives of cultural difference when teaching design methods?
- Why is it important to teach students to story tell their own narratives of self to understand others?
- What are outcomes of self-reflective engagement with culturally specific qualities in the application of good design for others?

### NARRATIVE & PLACE

Both of us live and work on the land of the Gadigal people. Acknowledged as the traditional custodians, Gadigal is a word that describes place with Gadi translating to Grass tree and Gal translating to People. The thriving metropolis of Sydney, Australia’s largest city now occupies this territory. This Country has never been legally ceded.

It is important to recognise that the Australian continent was invaded, colonised and settled through global British expeditions of territorialisation. After the events of the American Revolution, land was required to replenish this loss of North American continental territory.<sup>4</sup> . The Independence-related narratives of new cultural differences in the American new world not only impacted land illegitimately obtained from

## NARRATIVE, SELF AND ENGAGEMENT: AN IMMERSIVE T(R)OPICAL EXPERIENCE.

**LESS TALK | MORE ACTION: Conscious Shifts in Architectural Education, Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) fall conference held by Stanford Architecture & Yale School of Architecture.**

This workshop and paper was co-written and presented by Michael Mossman and myself at the conference in Stanford University California in September 2019.





Figure 1. Encouraging students to develop sensitivity to the specific cultural needs and values of this unique tropical Indigenous Australian community, image: Anna Ewald-Rice

First Nations peoples in that space, but also the Aboriginal societies of the Great Southern Land.<sup>5</sup>

An examination of the indigenous map of Australia demonstrates diversity, difference, multiplicity and many cultures existing upon the island continent. The boundaries are fluid yet distinct, blurred yet understood through learning and experience. In contrast to these soft non-cartesian edges, the current map of Australia outlines a federation of Colonial States, forming a Commonwealth Nation claimed by the British Crown. These binary boundary conditions could be described as smooth and striated.<sup>6</sup> Smooth as means of describing traditional methods of acknowledging, understanding and living with space. Striated as a method of overlaying cadastral information over space regardless of how it impacts the terrains of land and sea. It is important for students to consider that both conditions can coexist in all their multiplicity of forms.

The cultural differences that exist within the Indigenous map of Australian was and is reciprocated in the cultural diversity that exist within the invaders, colonisers and settlers. This is an over arching commonality that breaks down the binaries of black and white and facilitates self-reflective practices. Acts of engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous has occurred consistently across time to inform changes and allow new ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies to emerge. This workshop provides an opportunities to

engage with new audiences to acknowledge and appreciate these new dialogues.

#### POSITIONING ONESELF

“Storytelling must begin with the teller positioning themselves. Before re-telling narratives, we must start with our own.”

— McGaw and Pieris<sup>7</sup> summarises Mueke<sup>8</sup>

In an architectural education context, stories of self are important to self-reflect on own histories and narratives to appreciate those of others. This occurs through storytelling, a humanistic action that is demonstrable through various methods. In architecture, all senses are engaged with some more prevalent than other. Storytelling makes truths and is based on participant actors positioning, not within one side of the binary or another, but within the possibilities between, within, across and below binaries.<sup>9</sup> It is important to acknowledge the continual states of becoming that we exist within to query the binaries of society, that it the black or the white, the left or the right.

I am Kuku Yalanji<sup>10</sup>, I was born and raised on Gimuy Walabara Yidinji land which is Cairns Australia. I finished my architecture degree in 2001, worked in practice for 15 years and engaged in projects with many Aboriginal communities. While I am a registered architect, I am now a lecturer and doctoral candidate at the University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning. I am Michael Mossman.



Figure 2: Students experiencing the realities of housing in Indigenous Australian communities

I am Anna Erica. I was born and raised on the back of North Head in Sydney Australia.<sup>11</sup> This is Cammeraygal Country.<sup>12</sup> I finished my architecture degree in 2017 and have worked for 6 years with internationally recognized artists and remote indigenous arts centers prior to my current position with Hayball Architects.

As co-authors, these stories and experiences inform our roles as both educators and professional practitioners in architecture that live and work on Gadigal country. The disparate nature of these two narratives and histories has led to the development and evolution of an architectural studio that explores the self-reflective qualities of students through a semester long iterative exercise. A self-reflecting exercise as a form of engagement with client is a critical quality of architectural practice. Privileging Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in architectural education and practice is important to influence, impact and transform emerging thought leaders in the profession. We see this as the power and responsibility of educational practice.

The conference workshop presented a learning experience we conduct with by second year architecture students in a studio titled ‘Let Every Voice Be Heard’ developed by lecturer Michael Muir. The studio is in its third iteration and collaborates with an Indigenous Australian community situated on Gungganyji country about the critical issue of housing. A workshop carried out in the first week of semester instructs students to tell

their stories and narratives through illustrative maps within the context of overcrowding and homelessness in Aboriginal communities. The maps are reflective and conducive to a variety of expressions based on the personal experiences of the author. This can then inform how the student further engages with the studio by indicating the depth of illustrated knowledge being shared.

#### SHARING AND ENGAGEMENT

This narrative inquiry opens possibilities that stories of self are shared for others to appreciate, critique, understand and acknowledge commonalities and differences. This act of engagement endeavours to connect to their lives, stories, narratives and experiences through an illustrative format. It is process that is in turn reciprocated through exchange and a reminder of the humanity of storytelling and the campfire setting inherent in each of us. Storytelling through oral and illustrative traditions such as Aboriginal communities in Australia is a process that is based on up to 65,000 years of ancestral knowledge and experiences. While factors such colonialism have deeply affected the narratives of Aboriginal communities prior to colonisation, the generosity and spirit of such evolving communities to share narratives with others is clear and present when engaging with them directly.

The interaction of worldviews exposes complexities and contradictions to creates spaces of engagement:

“Not only recognize the commonalities and tensions involved with communities of difference, but extends a zone of continuous negotiation between binary positions, now to open to new emergent possibilities”<sup>13</sup>

—Michael Mossman, Our Voices Indigeneity and Architecture

This was the first time many students had explored the studio setting so all were exposed to new ways of being, knowing and doing based on, historical understandings, listening to expertise in community and appreciating specific environmental conditions of place. This experience combined with their own lived experience enacted a studio learning quality different to any previous curriculum tasks.

The architectural studio learning experience was critical for the students to explore and share their own narratives to acknowledge and connect with the narratives of the community. The outcomes of this workshop remain uncertain, however it is process-driven and enabled an innovative mode of learning. The Stanford Conference provided an opportunity to refine the tasks associated with the workshop and share the contents of the workshop to an architectural educator audience. The specifics of the workshop tasks are outlined below in their entirety as presented in the workshop.



EMERGING VALUES			INDIGENOUS VALUES		
IN-BETWEEN	THIRD SPACE	EMERGENT	CLAIMING	NEGOTIATING	DISCOVERING
INTERSTITIAL	LIMINAL	FLUX	TESTIMONIES	INTERVENING	ENVISIONING
HUMAN	PERMEABLE	EVENT	SHARING	REVITALISING	REFRAMING
PERFORMATIVE	UNFINISHED	RHIZOMATIC	CELEBRATING	CONNECTING	CREATING
FLUIDITY	EVERYDAY	LAYERED	REMEMBERING	NAMING	RETURNING
SELF	RESPONSIVE	POSSIBILITY			

Figure 3: Emerging Lexicon of terms.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

TASK 1: DRAWING US...

Take a piece of paper and put it on your head. In the next 30 seconds, turn to the person next to you, and leaving the paper on your head, start drawing a little portrait of the person next to you in the middle of your page. Try to draw it without lifting the pen off the paper. Ok now you are going to give the portrait to that person.

This first task is designed to warm up the room, break the curse of the blank page and to break down any fear of good or bad drawing. It also demonstrates the power of assumptions and just how inaccurate and misleading they can be whilst placing the participant at the centre of the story, bringing them into direct relationship with the ideas that are about to be shared.

Figure 3 outlines the key pieces of scholarship to our architectural pedagogical approach. On the right, are values put forward by Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her seminal book Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.<sup>14</sup> On the left are some emerging values that include themes and ideas from a range of sources. Some come from the 2018 Venice Biennale themed around ‘Freespace’<sup>15</sup> and the fundamental humanitarian role of architecture to support daily life. This list acts as a starting point as is constantly evolving through our practice. As an emerging lexicon together, these values focus on concepts and terms that borrow from fields describing continually changing complex systems. Architecture as evolving and changing with culture in opposition to memorialising a static system.

TASK 2: DRAWING YOUR STORY...

Now that your portrait has been done for you by your peer and you have been introduced to key values. Please spend the next 5 minutes drawing your story on the page

in front of you. Something to accompany your portrait. Rather than just described yourselves by your jobs or your status, we want you to step back and draw the people, events or places around you and how this influences where you are now and how you got to be in this room today. We would like you to try and identify your own key values in that story. Maybe they are in the list provided, maybe not. Please work these into your story map.

This understanding of your own story and how this influences your values and positioning of others is important. it’s what make us feel safe and comfortable. This are qualities that makes us human. This task acts as a self-reflection on the spaces of engagement that have impacted participants trajectories, and a questioning of certain crucial life events and how they have impacted their being.

Bhabha calls this third space, a liminal space where meaning where the negotiation of difference creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences.<sup>16</sup> Your being and ways of knowing are the outcomes of disruptions, to you, your ancestors, your neighbours, to your landscapes. Delueze and Guattari describe an intermezzo<sup>17</sup> an in-between that is outside binaries, this is your truth. We are in constant flux, in movement through space and time, always discovering something about and reflecting on our own identities.

Your being and ways of knowing are the outcomes of disruptions, to you, your ancestors, your neighbours, to your landscapes. Delueze and Guattari describe an intermezzo an in-between that is outside dualisms, this is your truth. We are in constant flux, in movement through space and time, always discovering something about and reflecting on our own identities.

TASK 3: SHARING YOUR STORY..

We now want you to turn to the person next to you and spend a minute each sharing your stories. Starting from



Figure 4: Walking down the street facilitates a unique exploration of the housing typology within community, image: Anna Ewald-Rice





Figure 5. Using drawing as a tool for exploring values, image: Anna Ewald-Rice

being in the room here today, try and find points where your stories diverge or overlap? The spaces of engagement may emerge as the zones in-between cultures.

As professional practitioners, it is critical to respectfully engage in this mutual two-way learning process at a basic human level, exclude the excessive jargon and technical understandings that can dominate and therefore take control of the information and the language.

We try to educate students on why it is important to acknowledge and understand the interface of cultures that exist within our society. The cultural interface describes:

“Spaces constituted by points of intersecting trajectories and dynamic relations of time, place, distance, knowledge traditions and politics all composed of different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas, aspirations and responses.”<sup>18</sup>

- Martin Nakata, Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines



Figure 6. Students experiencing housing conditions first hand, image: Anna Ewald-Rice

From this understanding, the question arises, How do we facilitate immersive and experiential inquiries that centre this dialogue in the architectural studio environment?

Our method encourages students to engage the narratives of self within these interstitial spaces. In order to demonstrate this process of engagement with self and associated values, we explore immersive environments, centring our investigations around housing and notions of the home. A home is a basic humanitarian need and it links people across the world. All cultures unite for the need for shelter and refuge.

#### TASK 4: DRAWING YOUR HOME...

What you are each going to do is draw your home in your own community. This can be your home now, or a home that you had in the past. Maybe even a home of a family member you might have spent some time with recently. Think about that space? We want you to draw a quick sketch, can be plan, section, diagram at any scale illustrating the key components that make up your home, a dining room, kitchen, bedroom, couch



Figure 7. Students speaking with construction and housing providers in community about the delivery process, image: Anna Ewald-Rice

table. Focus on how your values identified in your story map, contribute to this space? How do they present in your home? Demonstrate these values in your drawing. Beyond shelter and refuge, what makes this home yours?

Please place your drawing on the table. You will now pick one that you like that isn't your own and tell the table what you think is a particular value present in the drawing. What does it say about their lifestyle and who they are? What are some ideas that you think are driving each drawing?

This experience of participants having someone else interpret values from their drawings in front of them, offers the opportunity for new unforeseen values to emerge beyond 'typical' requirements of a house. This method uses the clarity of insight generated from having distance from a situation and facilitates qualitative analysis between peers. Exploring the qualities that these intrinsic values gives the home translates this cultural understanding and awareness of the other' into built form.

“for me, big windows lets me see out to a far horizon because it gives me a sense of distance so valued in dense city living.”

— Participants quote

The next layer of the workshop is about facilitating immersive and experiential inquiries that centre this dialogue in the design process that is relevant to the architectural studio brief.

#### TASK 5: EXPANDING YOUR HOME...

We now want you to adapt your home drawing to accommodate you and you nearest and dearest 15 family members. Brother sisters, parents, grandparents, children, nieces and nephews. The previous task instructed you to reflect on your own experiences. Now you are being asked to accommodate a new hypothetical experience, the lives of 15 of your family with divergent needs, into a single home.

This kind of living is the reality of the 'home' in many Indigenous communities across Australia. The one size fits all government housing model delivers fundamentally inadequate and culturally inappropriate solutions with devastating national health, education, and wellbeing implications.





Figure 8. One of the authors supervising on site as students experience the local tropical environmental conditions, image: Anna Ewald-Rice

98

The following extracts from a local government submission paper<sup>19</sup> on Yarrabah reports the situation. Yarrabah is 45 minutes drive from Cairns, a national tourist gateway to Australia’s Great Barrier Reef. Yarrabah consists of 4,000 people living in 365 houses, a situation that is a crisis and challenging to alleviate. Stories include the following:

‘...applicant lives with mother/mother in-law in a four bedroom home which is overcrowded with 16 people, ten children and 6 adults. Applicant and family of 8 were camping on the beach in a tent and tired of being homeless moving from family to family’

‘Applicant’s living situation causes stress, leading to arguments which is not healthy when working full-time’

‘Applicant suffers from a chronic respiratory condition and the constant damp and overcrowding in their house is causing his respiratory symptoms to increase, thus his health is deteriorating’

This task encourages participants to challenge their assumptions around the qualities of architecture and immerse themselves into socially inequitable issues. Architecture is a means to assist and facilitate the rights of Indigenous peoples through sustained and innovative approaches to include and empower lesser heard voices. This architectural educational exercise connects and contextualises seemingly disparate worldviews of the student and the community with a measured and emotional leap of faith to enable rich, previously unknown expressions for exchange.

To aid participants in this complex process of using their own values to expand the accommodation of their home to include 15 family members, we encourage students to develop a set of design principles. This kit of parts activates their chosen value across a range of different aspects and scales of the design and weave its qualities together through the design.

CONCLUSION

This paper is a reference tool for educators who wish to expand their design studio learning environments, sensitive to the values of marginalised cultures and communities. It outlines a workshop methodology that embeds cultural differences and acceptance into design studio thinking. It aims highlight the complexities of acknowledging and understanding the interface of cultures that exist within our society.

As a means to activate future thinking in this space, the word lexicon promotes values, qualities and themes that imply soft edges and fluidity around meanings, acknowledges overlaps, interpretation and translation. Single or combined words can be continually overlaid onto for students to reflect upon your own narratives and those of others. This morphing adds to its meaning and becomes a part of the process of drawing these themes together in the design process to familiarise design contexts for greater understanding. The workshop instructs students to start with their own story and richness of experiences. It is critical for them to recognize the commonalities and tensions between their own lives and the lives of others. Creating and extending a zone of continuous negotiation between binary norms opens new emergent possibilities for architecture to privilege lower visibility issues, and to advocate and champion change for a better future.

ENDNOTES

1. Daniele Hromek in Kiddle, Rebecca, Stewart, Luugigyoo Patrick, and O’Brien, Kevin. Our Voices : Indigeneity and Architecture First edition. San Francisco Bay Area: ORO Editions, 2018 : 205. Hromek describes Country as ‘everything within the landscape; land, water and sky, and soars high into the atmosphere, deep into the planet crust and far into the oceans. Country – which incorporates ground, space, site, environment – is aesthetic, environmental, landscape and terrain ... cultural connection to Country encompasses narratives and knowledges, incorporating traditions, practices and art, linked to identity, language and community’
2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – The Right to Adequate Housing
3. Venturi, Robert. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture 2nd ed. London: Architectural Press, 1977.
4. Lockwood, Matthew. To Begin the World over Again How the American Revolution Devastated the Globe New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019
5. Great Southern Land is a colonial reference to the Australian continent.
6. Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987 : 479
7. Muecke, Stephen. Textual Spaces : Aboriginality and Cultural Studies Rev. ed. Perth, W.A: API Network, Australian Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology, 2004 : 72-75
8. Janet McGaw and Anoma Pieris, Assembling the Centre Architecture for Indigenous Cultures : Australia and Beyond New York: Routledge, 2015 : 20
9. Bearn, Gordon. “Differentiating Derrida and Deleuze.” Continental Philosophy Review 33, no. 4 (October 2000): 441–465
10. Kuku Yalanji is the Australian Aboriginal tribe located north of Cairns, Queensland Australia. A person claims ancestry to place by stating it as part of one’s being.
11. The name Erica derived from Banksia Ericifolia, the native wildflowers that grow on the headland on Cammeraygal Country
12. Cammeraygal Country is on the northern edge of Sydney Harbour in Australia. It is directly connected to the Pacific Ocean
13. Michael Mossman in Kiddle, Rebecca, Stewart, Luugigyoo Patrick, and O’Brien, Kevin. Our Voices : Indigeneity and Architecture First edition. San Francisco Bay Area: ORO Editions, 2018 : 205
14. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous People, 1999 : 142-162. See Chapter 8 for an extensive list of ‘projects’. The objective of each ‘project’ is to frame thinking of particular issues relative to Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.
15. Attiwill, Suzie, and di Venezia, La Biennale. “Freespace: The 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale.” Artichoke, no. 65 (2018): 97–100.
16. Homi Bhabha Location of Culture, 1994 : 312
17. Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987
18. Nakata, Martin N. Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines : 323
19. Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council Submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission, 2017 : pp39-42

99



### 3.

## BEYOND THE FUNCTIONAL: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN IN PRACTICE & THEORY, WORKSHOP

Australian Museums and  
Galleries Association, National  
Conference: At the Centre,  
Our peoples, our places, our  
practices. 2019.

This workshop explored how to create  
culturally responsive environments which  
can in turn become places of learning  
and active cultural practice.

### 4.

## BEYOND THE FUNCTIONAL: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN IN PRACTICE & THEORY, ARTICLE

PNYX, June 21, 2019, ISSUE 68.  
The Architecture Association  
School of Architecture's  
fortnightly journal.

This article was based on a workshop by  
the same title which was presented at a  
conference in Alice Springs in May 2019  
(see photos).





# P N Y X

WEEKLY COMMENTARY, RESEARCH, AND REVIEW

June 21, 2019

ISSUE 68

IN THIS ISSUE, Anna Ewald-Rice outlines the need for architecture and design to respond beyond pragmatic requirements to support the cultural needs of Indigenous communities. Anna argues that designing and talking alongside Indigenous understandings such as 'Country' and storytelling can help create responsive environments, which in turn can become places of learning and active cultural practice.—EDS.

## BEYOND THE FUNCTIONAL: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN IN PRACTICE AND THEORY

Anna Ewald-Rice

'DON'T DO IT. It's too hard. You are up against the weight of culture,' echoes a haunting piece of critique from a panel reviewing an Indigenous Youth Artspace I had designed as my masters graduation project.

Settler-colonial societies such as Australia are steeped in the histories of invasion, dispossession, oppression, and ongoing discrimination today—the desire of those indebted to the theft of Indigenous land to disengage from these kinds of questions, for fear of designing out of naivety, or of continuing colonial practices, is understandable.

But alongside these continuing colonial practices there have also always been acts of engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, which over time have allowed new ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies to emerge. Might not architecture's refusal to engage be overcome by starting with observing a genuine sense of respect for Aboriginal people, before asking in what ways we can be allies of Indigenous design practitioners?

This year, the national conference of the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) was held at the nation's geographical centre—Alice Springs, in the Northern Territory. The conference addressed the position of galleries and museums in the context of Indigenous Australia—past, present, and future—as well



Above: Participants of the workshop at the AMaGA conference, Alice Springs, 2019. (Image: author).

as the relationships between institutions, their places, and their communities. Aimed at the nation's many regional gallery and museum directors, curators, public programmers and staff, the conference looked to ask, among others, questions about diversity, equality, and national identity: of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agency; our various publics; of the nature of co-creation and generational transfer of knowledge.

As these themes concerned the role of experience—of hearing stories, of sharing culture—the conference aimed to provide a range of hands-on workshops that would, in particular, engage the people, communities, museums and galleries that call the desert home. The workshop I facilitated offered first-hand experience in understanding how architecture and exhibition design can respond, beyond pragmatic project requirements, to best support the needs of Indigenous communities, that we might create responsive environments, which in turn can become places of learning and active cultural practice.

Informing my approach was the very real and urgent need to foster new methods of appropriately, competently and productively engaging with Indigenous communities in the built environment, in ways that respect

and mobilise cultural distinctiveness.

But critical also to this approach was an understanding of Country—a concept particular to the Australian Aboriginal imaginary. With it came the questions: How can one design for Country? With Country?

In order to understand the thematic landscape of this question one must first try and understand notions of Country. In *Nourishing Terrain: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, Deborah Bird Rose explains, that:

'In Aboriginal English, the word 'Country' is both a common noun and a proper noun. People talk about Country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to Country, sing to Country, visit Country, worry about Country, grieve for Country and long for Country. People say that Country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and feels sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, a today and tomorrow, with consciousness, action, and a will toward life. Because of this richness of meaning, Country is home and peace: nourishment for body, mind and spirit; and heart's ease.'

The workshop served as an opportunity to investigate spatial constructs as an aspect of the relationship between Aboriginality, architecture and design. Through it I have

come to understand that storytelling, via rhythmic expressions of song, dance, painting and performance are the ways in which Indigenous culture remains fluid, existing in multiple temporalities simultaneously. As custodians of that land, it is the responsibility of First Nations peoples to consistently conduct these acts of retelling stories as a form of 'story maintenance'; on a regular basis, on their country, ensuring the land remains healthy. As designers, it is not for us to know these stories, only to understand their role as markers in non-linear time and space, and to allow them to have a presence.

The workshop asked the participants to take an emotional leap of faith, to dive headlong into reconstructing cultural narratives into design thinking. This is something that the global architectural profession is only beginning to try to get its head around. For many of the brave and naïve curators, museum directors and public programmers of the workshop audience it was their first baby steps. I told them at the start that it wasn't going to be easy. But they rose to the challenge and pushed the envelope, drawing upon their own experiences and the tools of their various trades.

This kind of practice is the result of working closely with Indigenous architects and academics Kevin O'Brien and Michael Mossman, both in my own design work, and in teaching at the University of Sydney architectural design studio, respectively. Especially productive was when we took twenty-five second-year students to an Indigenous community in Queensland, where we listened to the Elders, traditional owners, and councillors—an eye-opening and powerful experience. During this visit, we undertook deep listening, provoking reflections on oneself and one's own stories.

In so doing, each student's story was brought forward into a 'space of engagement'—a space, which as Mossman explains in his essay *Third Space in Architecture*, '...not only recognizes the commonalities and tensions involved with communities of difference with all its complexities and contradictions, but extends a zone of continuous dialogue that contests binary norms, to open to new emergent possibilities'. For the students, to bring their stories into such a space helped inform culturally responsive design practices—practices that shed light on the connections that can exist between story, comfort, and environment.

The 'space of engagement' is a recurring theme when working in an Indigenous context. Attributed to Homi K. Bhabha,



the notion draws upon the theory of 'third spaces'; environments which allow and foster conversation, promoting cross-fertilisation of ideas and the considered appreciations of difference, and which architecture as a practice is well-placed to produce.

Architecture has the potential to explore the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles between contending and contradictory positions, in the zones between binary positions, between keeping spaces and sharing spaces, public and private, prospect and refuge. In the words of architect Greg Burgess, who in collaboration with the Anangu people designed the Uluru Kata-Tjuta Cultural Centre in Central Australia, 'These in-between [spaces are] spaces of negotiations that paint a picture of collaboration with communities and cultures'.

Through the process of drawing, listening, discovering, and reflecting, participants of the workshop at the AMaGA conference were both asked about, and thought through, what might be involved in designing for a community. Thrown up by these processes were a paucity of smaller, but critical, questions. Were we designing in a remote, regional or urban context? For which group was it specifically? Was it ethical to set the design in one particular place, and if so, why? These dilemmas touched upon bigger ideas—of Country, of place—and were not easily resolved by the frameworks with which we typically address design in other contexts.

In the process of colonisation, land is spatially and politically redefined as commodity, divided by cadastrally described patterns of ownership. This makes building a political act of reclaiming; re-territorialising through doing, place-making through action. In Australia, where all of the land is Aboriginal land, this political act must be founded upon respect. If we are ever to meaningfully engage with the more than 40,000 years of rich history and living culture that is our nation today.

Anna Ewald-Rice is an architecture graduate and researcher at Hayball Architects. She teaches an architectural design studio at the University of Sydney, works with the Reconciliation Taskforce of the Australian Institute of Architects and is the 2018 recipient of the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship.

Centre: Various drawings of Australia by student participants of the 'Space of engagement' studio, in 2018, in which they mapped their own stories in relation to Indigenous understandings.



## 5.

### HOW TO...

**Printed booklet, A5 bound document.**

oDeveloped to accompany the pocketguide, the 'How To' is a small pocket sized booklet which expands some of the themes in the poster and encourages the facilitator to explore allied concepts and ideas. This should be read by the facilitator before beginning the session. It can also be used to record relevant architectural examples that might be referenced throughout the conversation.

## 6.

### POCKETGUIDE

**Printed poster, A2 or larger.**

The printed poster outlines a conversation framework for discussing and recording information on as it is brought up. It is large enough for the participants to see and contribute too and be drawn on by many people and record comments, observations and concerns. It is intended that a new one is used per conversation.

### HOW TO...



*The role of this project is to develop a tool which encourages qualitative notions of generosity and thoughtfulness to be embedded in the architectural design brief from early stages so as to stand the best possible chance of being present in the building.*

106

## THINK ABOUT:

- The consultation is about talking with not talking at, allowing space for answers. Think about attitude of working with, drawing with, talking with, walking with.
- How you are going to meet people?
- How you are going to have these conversations and where?
  - Can people focus?
  - Is it shaded? I
  - Is it quiet?
- Consider using the poster to draw peoples responses on. Write down peoples comments using their own words so that they can see.
- Explain to people what you are going to do with this material and when they will hear back to follow up.
- Try and remember peoples names (stickers)
- Bring something to the consultation to share: lamingtons, tea, biscuits are all great for sharing.
- Provide textas and markers for people to draw themselves and plenty of paper.

107

## WHEN SHORT ON TIME:

If consultation time is pressing, the following two questions could loosely touch on much of the content in this guide:

- What are some things that make this building good for you? Why?
- Can you tell me if there some things that you think could be better? Why?

Asking 'why' reveals the intention behind the statement. Allow for it to be hard to answer as it requires un-packing. You may need to go over it a number of times.



- COMFORTABLE
- SAFE
- SECURE

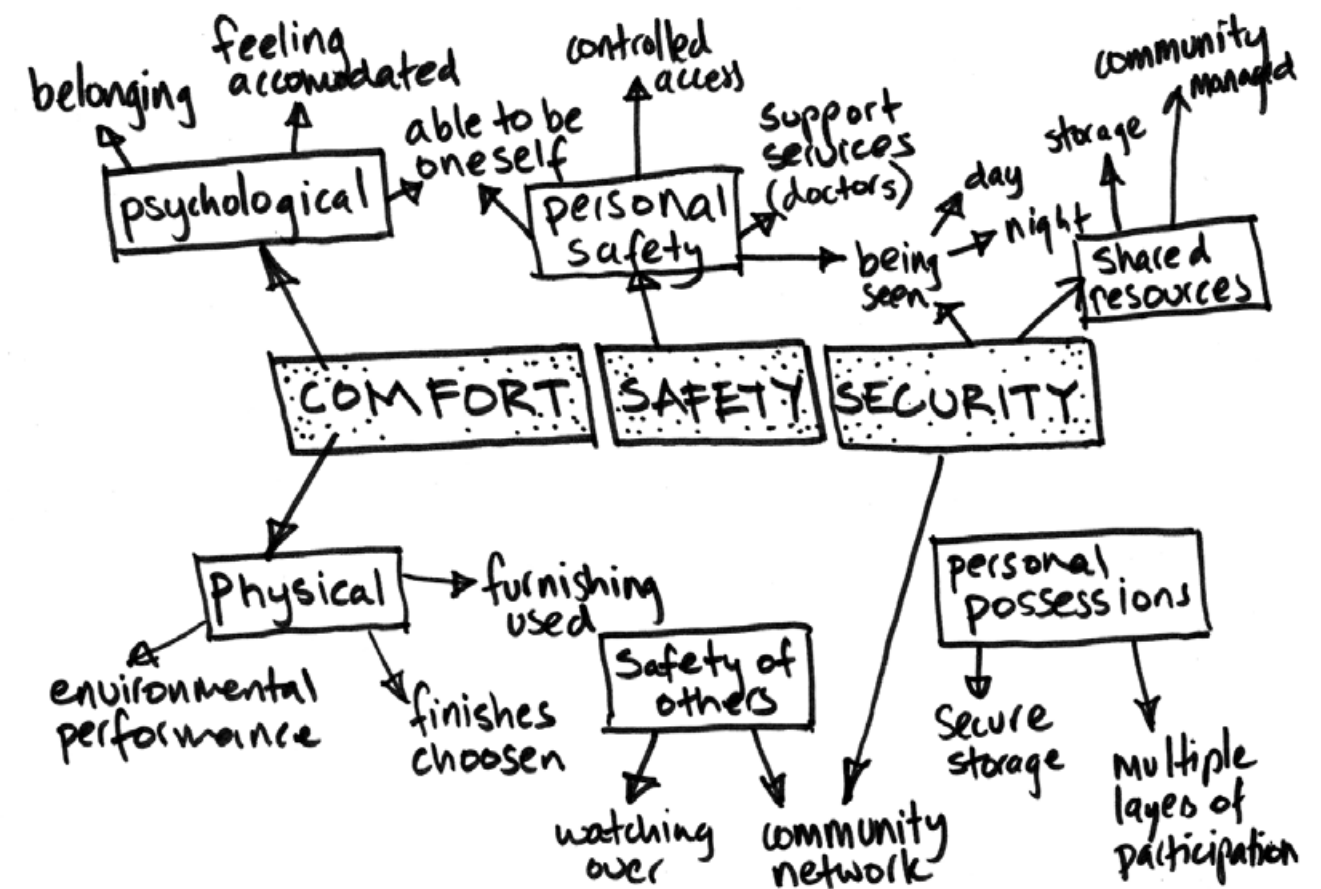


### KEY QUESTIONS:

Does this building help you feel comfortable? Why?

Does this building help you feel safe and secure? Why?

### ALSO CONSIDER:



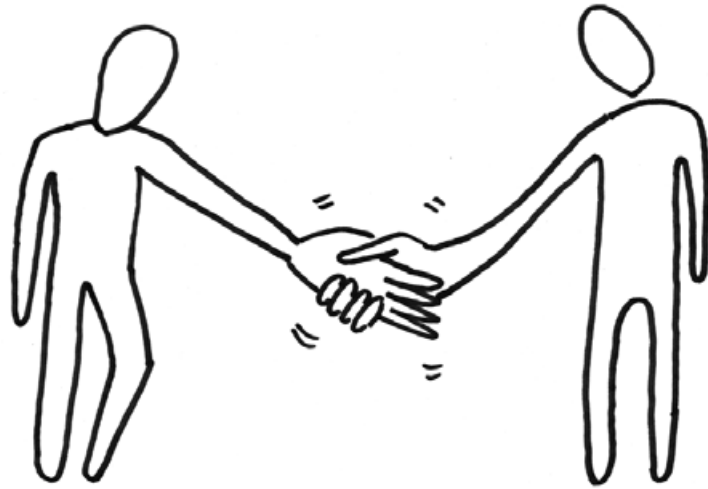
### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

- Value
- Belonging
- Caring
- Everyday
- Wellbeing
- Human

### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:



- ABLE TO BE ONESELF
- RESPECTED
- VALUED



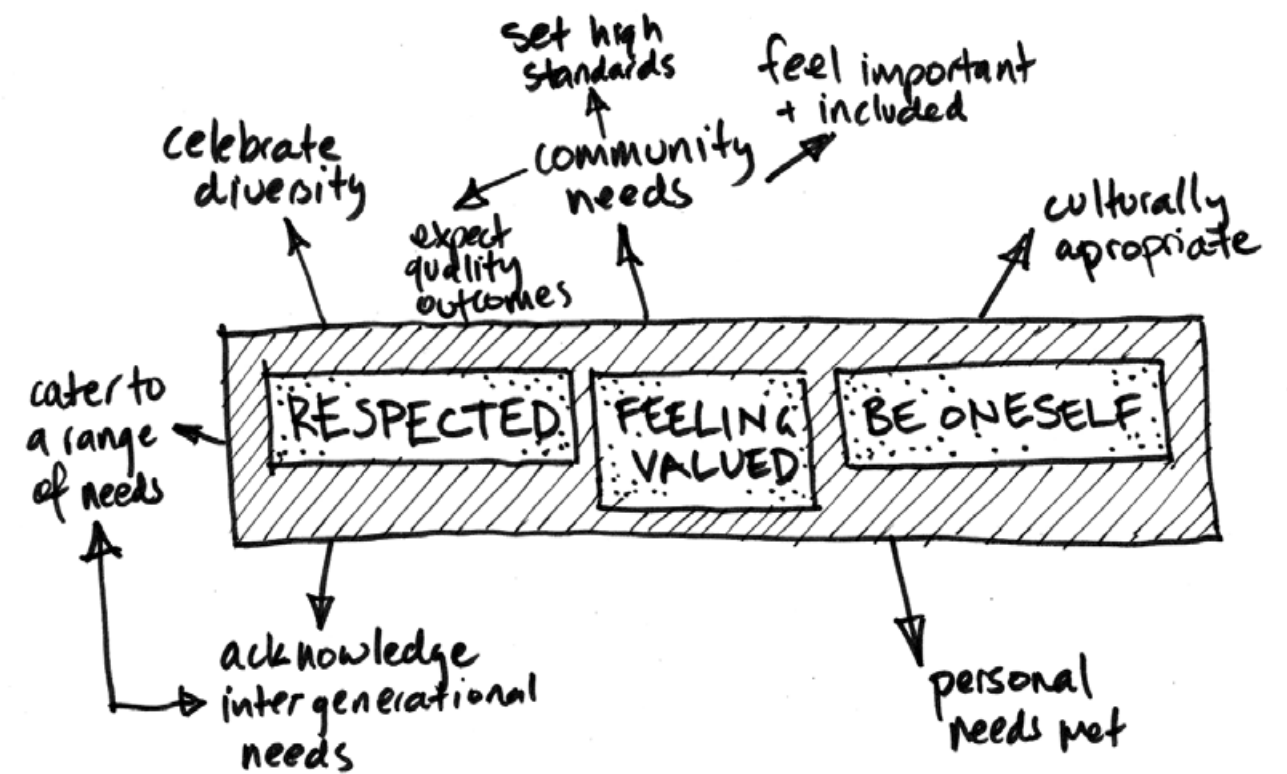
### KEY QUESTIONS:

Does the building help you feel respected? Why?

Does this building help you feel valued? Why?

Can you be yourself in this building? Why?

### ALSO CONSIDER:



### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

- Dignity
- Human
- Everyday
- Valued
- Belonging

### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:



## - LIKE YOU BELONG - INCLUDED



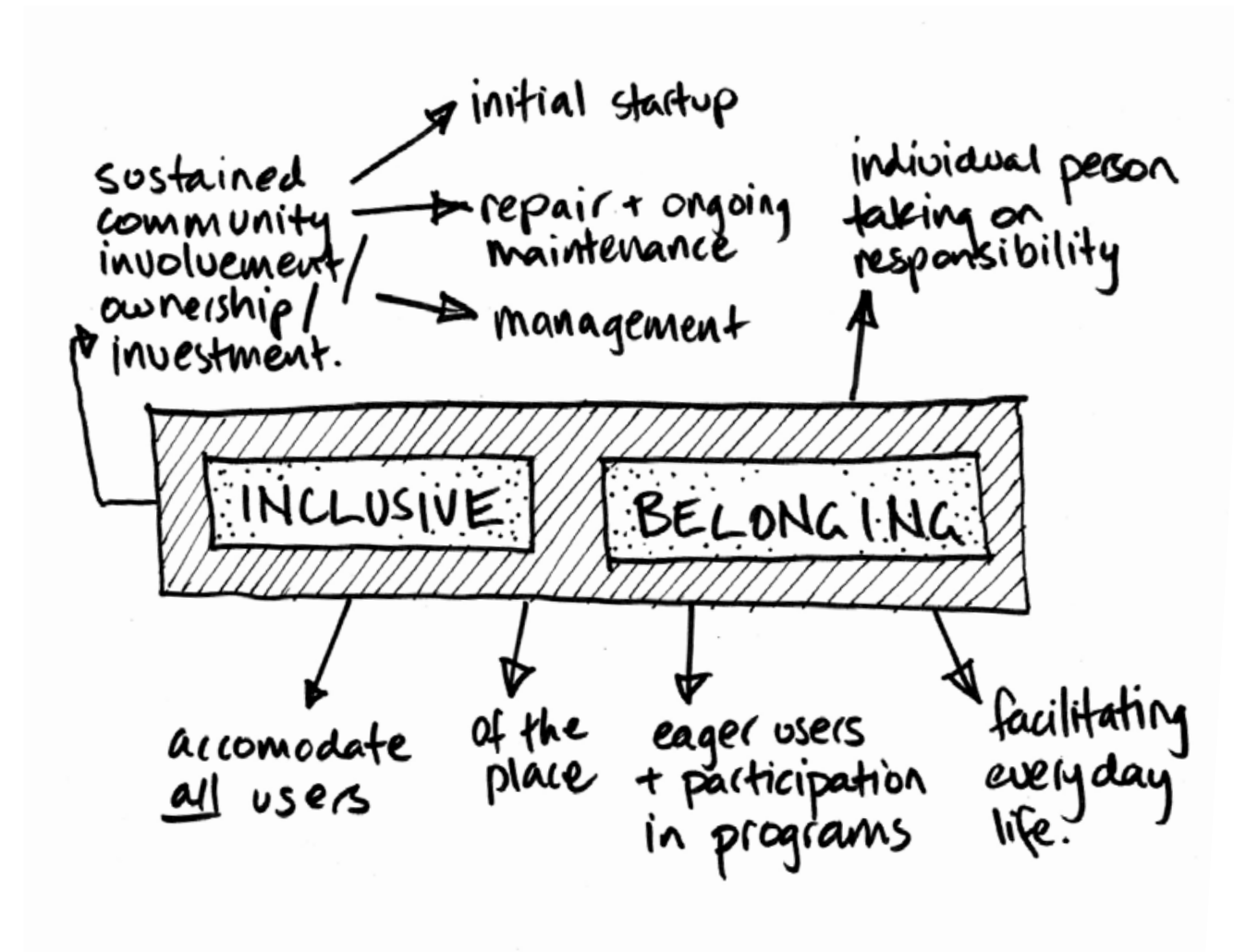
### KEY QUESTIONS:

Do you feel included in this building? Why?

Do you feel like everyone is included? Why?

Do you feel that this building belongs to this community? Why?

### ALSO CONSIDER:



### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

-Of The Place  
-Valued  
-Used

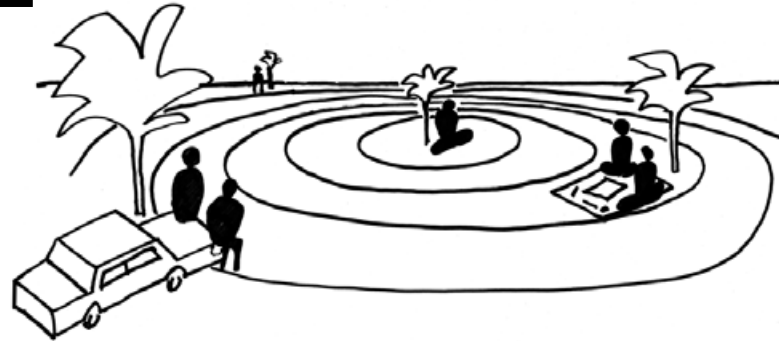
-Claimed  
-Symbiotic

-Social  
-Collaborative  
-Exchange

### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:



# - PARTICIPATING - ENGAGE WITH



## KEY QUESTIONS:

How do you connect with this building? Why?

Is there anything about this building that invites you to participate? Why?

Do you participate in using this building? Why?

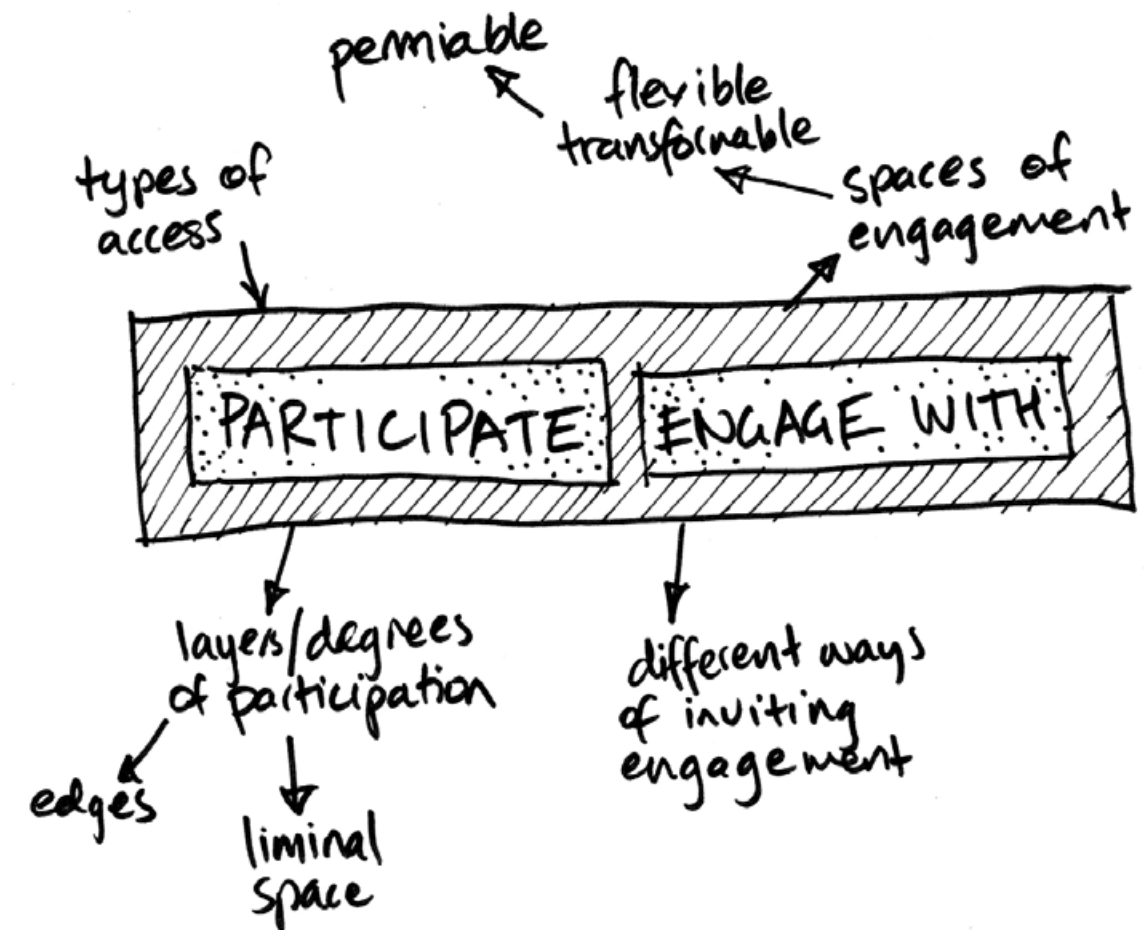
## ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

-Permeable  
-Perifleric  
-Liminal

-Layered  
-Fluidity  
-Flux

-Emergent

## ALSO CONSIDER:



## BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:



- INSPIRED
- ABLE TO QUESTION
- POSITIVE

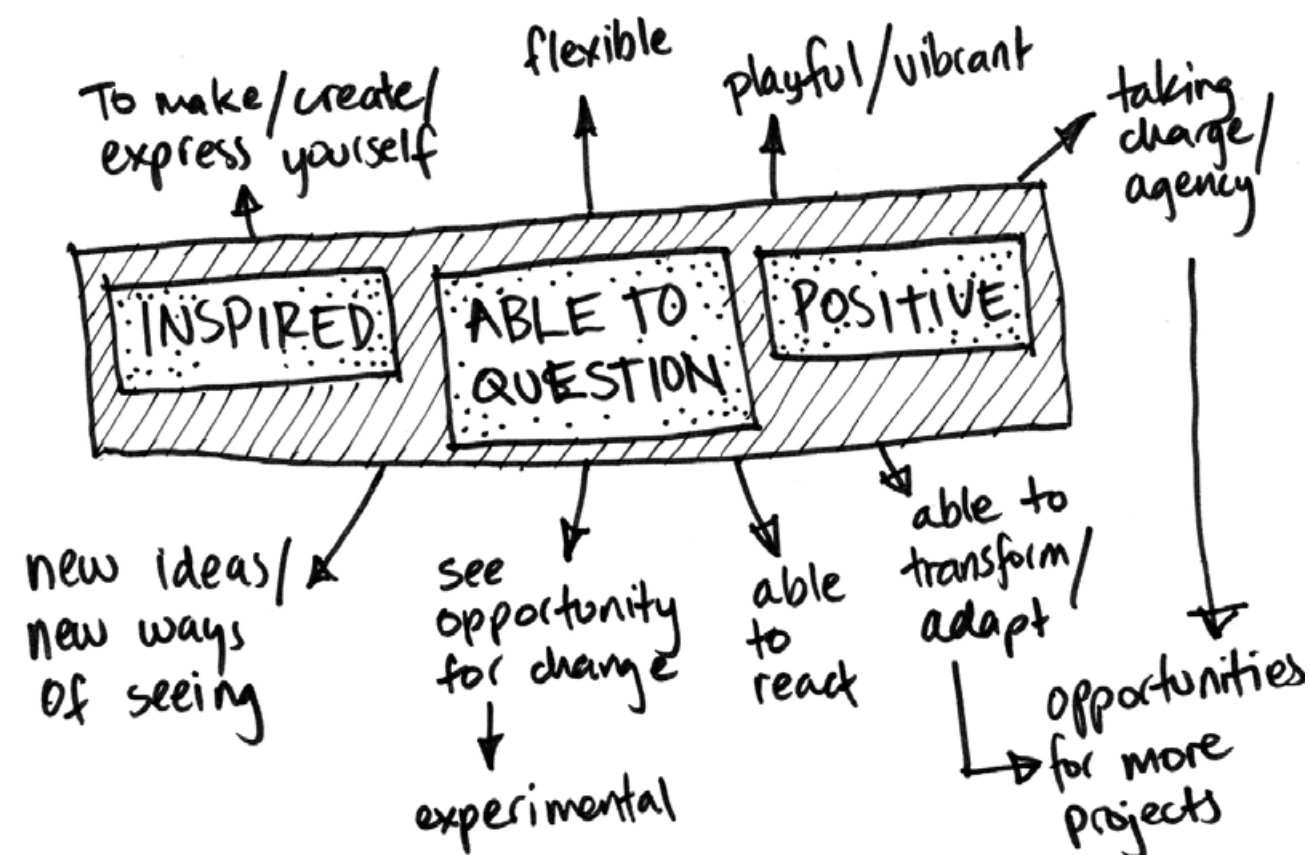


### KEY QUESTIONS:

Does this building help you feel inspired? Why?

Is there something about this building that encourages you to question? Why?

### ALSO CONSIDER:



### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

- |                |                |             |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| -Playful       | -Experimental  | -Reactive   |
| -Atmospherical | -Vibrant       | -Changeable |
| -Positive      | -Transformable | -Temporary  |

### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:

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## A SENSE OF: - GENEROSITY - WELCOMING



### KEY QUESTIONS:

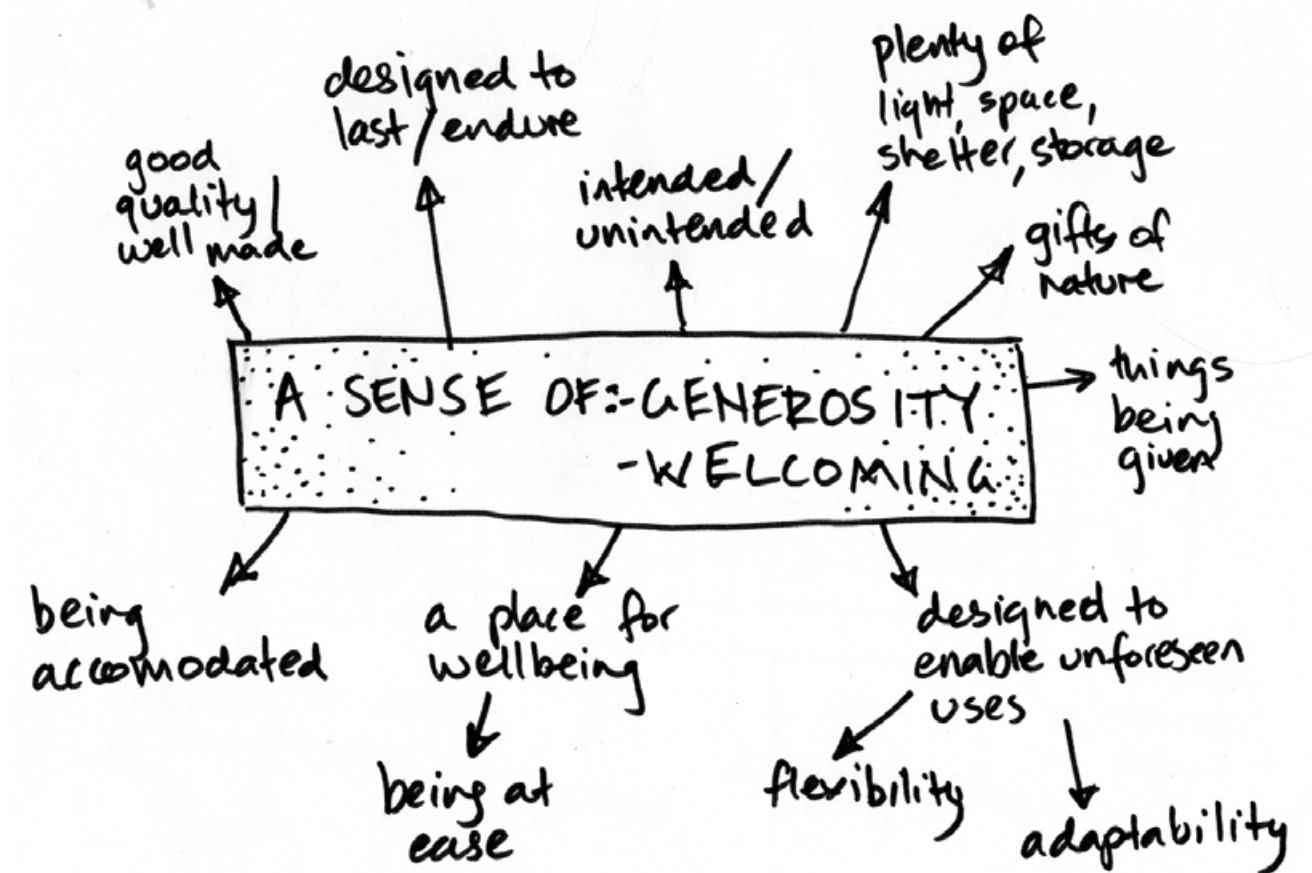
What is the vibe/sense/atmosphere around this building? Why?

Does this building come across as being generous? Why?

Do you feel welcome here? Why?

Does the building feel welcoming? Why?

### ALSO CONSIDER:



### ASSOCIATED FREESPACE NOTIONS:

-Intended gifts  
-Unintended gifts

-Additional  
-Future use

### BUILDING EXPRESSIONS:



# FREESPACE NOTIONS:

These notions are derived from research into multiple exhibits, pavilions and writings that formed a part of the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale.

120

CARING	PARTICIPATORY	INCLUSIVE
SOCIAL	HUMAN	NARRATIVE
COLLABORATIVE	EMERGENT	TEMPORARY
POSITIVE	COMFORT	PERFORMATIVE
ATMOSPHERICAL	TRANSFORMABLE	VIBRANT
EVERYDAY	PERIFERIC	LIMINAL
SYMBIOTIC	PLAYFUL	FLUIDITY
GENEROSITY	UNFINISHED	BELONGING
PERMEABLE	FLUX	LAYERED
REACTIVE	EXPERIMENTAL	CREATIVE

# 'FREESPACE' MANIFESTO...

FREESPACE describes a generosity of spirit and a sense of humanity at the core of architecture's agenda, focusing on the quality of space itself.

FREESPACE focuses on architecture's ability to provide free and additional spatial gifts to those who use it and on its ability to address the unspoken wishes of strangers.

FREESPACE celebrates architecture's capacity to find additional and unexpected generosity in each project - even within the most private, defensive, exclusive or commercially restricted conditions.

FREESPACE provides the opportunity to emphasis nature's free gifts of light - sunlight and moonlight, air, gravity, materials - natural and man-made resources.

FREESPACE encourages reviewing ways of thinking, new ways of seeing the world, of inventing solutions where architecture provides for the well being and dignity of each citizen of this fragile planet.

FREESPACE can be a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. There is an exchange between people and buildings that happens, even if not intended or designed, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene. Architecture has an active as well as a passive life.

FREESPACE encompasses freedom to imagine, the free space of time and memory, binding past, present and future together, building on inherited cultural layers, weaving the archaic with the contemporary.

-Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, curators of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (May 26th to November 25th 2018).

121



Guide prepared as part  
of a 2018 Byera Hadley  
Travelling Scholarship by:

Anna Ewald-Rice  
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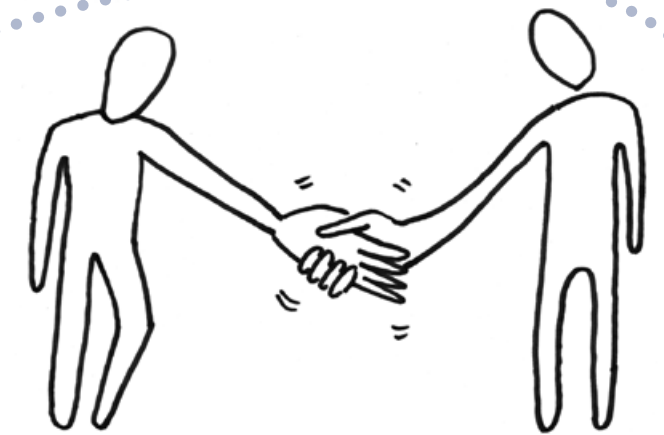
**A Sense Of:**  
- Generosity  
- Welcoming



- Comfortable  
- Safe  
- Secure

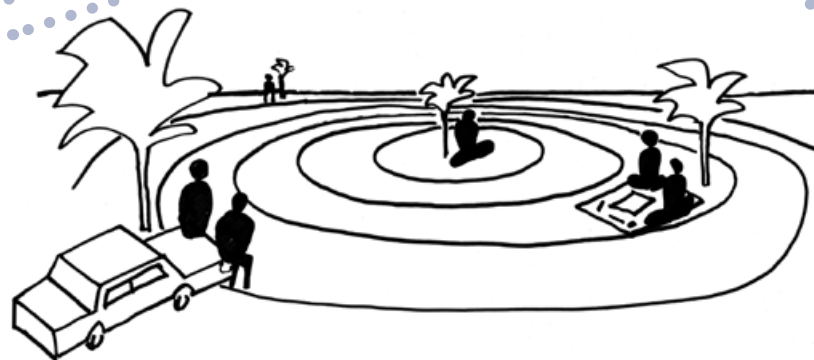


- Inspired  
- Able To Question  
- Positive



- Respected  
- Valued  
- Able To Be Oneself

*Is there something  
about this building  
which helps you feel....*



- Like Participating  
- Engaged



- Included  
- Like You Belong



8

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge all of the people who have made this journey possible. My networks of support now stretch far and wide across the country and beyond. These range from my friends, teachers, peers, mentors, employers and especially members of the many communities that I visited along the way.

I would especially like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my family in particular Sue Rice, who has led me to see the joy of learning through new and by no means straight forward projects.

In no particlar order:

Todd Sidery	Marni Reti	Jimmy
Michael	Fiona Young	China
Mossman	Eleanor Perez	Martha
Doug	Natalia Krysiak	Poppy
Hammersly	Tiana-Jane	Nat
Michael Tawa	Furner	Elise
Michael Muir	Lewis Evans	Jerry
Rose Davies	Erica Izett	Alex
Kevin O'Brien	Georgina B	Dave
Joel Spring	Mary Jane	Natalie
Silvano Giordano	Anna Mcleod	Gloria
Brett Jennings	Stephanie Raj	Heather
Dillon	Rusty Peters	...and many
Kombumerri	Lindsay Malay	more!
Kim Mahood	Judith Inkamala	
David Kaunitz	French George	

9

About the author  
Anna Ewald-Rice

Anna's engagement with architecture involves the weaving together of a number of different strands: architectural design and practice, connecting with Indigenous knowledge both in projects, in theory and through working with remote area communities, working at the interface of the Arts and Architecture, teaching in the design studio, and an interest in wider global humanitarian issues facilitated through scholarship supported travel. Underpinning these is a commitment to and a love of drawing as a means to understand and as a means of expression.

Anna completed her Masters of Architecture at the University of Sydney in 2018, being University of Sydney's nominee for the Australian Institute of Architects 2019 NSW Graduate Medal, with a number of projects focusing on cultural and community buildings within the public realm. Her graduation project, an honors studio under Michael Tawa was developed in response to working with the remote Indigenous community of Warburton in WA and their request for a new Youth Artspace. This ongoing project is currently awaiting government grant funding approval. She was awarded the Ethel M Chettle Prize in Architecture, recognising application to studies, ability and effort throughout the course of my masters degree.

10

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