PART **3**

Practice
& resource
material

BUILDING
CONNECTIONS
Architecture and the Visual Arts Syllabus Stage 6

Building Connections is a multi layered resource aimed at supporting the teaching of architecture units as part of the Visual Arts Syllabus Stage 6. It is divided into 3 parts – the frames, conceptual framework and practice, and focuses on the architecture of six art galleries and museums. It explores the connections between architecture and other art forms, investigating ideas and themes through images, text, artmaking activities and links to other information. Two of the galleries are examined in more detail through essays and descriptions of practice, demonstrating how architecture can be considered within broader discussions of the Visual Arts.

Part 3 includes video footage and interviews as a way of understanding the practice of Frank Gehry and Paul Berkemeier.

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Frank Gehry Practice

CONTEXT

To the south the dialogue is with the city … to the north there is empathy with water, undulations, fluid shapes.

INSPIRATION
Movement /art /architecture

Fish and their movements have always been part of my architectural vocabulary.

SKETCHING

… with semi-automatic writing ... (he) combined the subconsciously–drawn pencil sketches with the requirements of the building program.

BELIEFS
Form replaces decoration

The reason … is to replace decoration, to get passion and feeling into the building.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

See how this unfolds and is welcoming and that curve leads right into it.

MODELLING
Cardboard /many iterations

We work back and forth between the planning and the model.

TECHNOLOGY
Cardboard becomes virtual

A computer program used in aviation design helped to solve the constructional problems.

MATERIALS

You want something that reflects the light and plays with the light.

Interview with Kerry O'Brien

Frank Gehry in the studio

Context
Inspiration
Sketching
Beliefs

Engagement
Modelling
Technology
Materials

Practice Questions

Evaluate the significance of strategy and planning to the successful resolution of works by artists, designers or architects.

Explain how an artist's knowledge and use of materials have determined the outcome of their practice.

Paul Berkemeier Interview

Paul Berkemeier runs a small architectural practice in Sydney. He has had extensive experience in a broad range of projects, including large scale urban design and planning, public buildings, single and multi-unit housing, schools, exhibition, design and heritage buildings. His practice has received numerous state and national awards for its work.

Architecture as an approach not just a plan

Berkemeier received the commission to design the Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) through a selection process that did not involve a plan for the new gallery, but rather a way of thinking about the project, what the possibilities might be, and how his firm would engage with the client.

Berkemeier collaborated with Barry McGregor, both architects having experience in heritage architecture. Berkemeier strongly believes that heritage is embedded in

architecture and that knowledge of history is important. The original buildings were designed by the New South Wales Government architect, Walter Liberty Vernon, and the earliest one, which was built in 1908, is an item of regional and architectural significance. Berkemeier enjoyed learning about Vernon during this project.

Once they were awarded the job, the architects embarked on a study of endless options for how the new building might work on the site, and how they would adapt and connect the older buildings. They needed to balance user-expectation with a large brief, a small budget, the heritage implications of the original buildings, and the urban conditions that exist in Maitland today. By the final proposal stage the council and art gallery were on board and understood the project.

The importance of understanding place

> Part of the architect's job is to really drill down into understanding the nature of the place...

For Berkemeier the understanding of place is extremely important. He also believes that outsiders can often get a clearer perspective of a situation.

Maitland, which has a long history, was once Australia's second largest city. The relationship of Maitland to the Hunter River is important; events such as the Maitland flood of 1955 are deeply embedded into psyche of the town. The town's built heritage is unique and diverse and Berkemeier believes it is one of the best historic towns in Australia. The economy is now experiencing growth with the development of the Hunter region and suburban hinterland. Berkemeier states that 'we can

recognise the roles of the public institution to not only nurture a rebirth, but become a focus for the community'.

Architecture and narrative

The narrative is key to the project 'because it embeds the whole project with meaning beyond the physical space'.

Berkemeier understood the importance of narrative in designing a new art gallery for Maitland: 'the project is a story about the failed ambitions of the original building'. The original building, an ornate Federation structure, was to be an important educational centre however it was not finished due to budgetary constraints and the stripped-back wing of classrooms built a few years later was disconnected. 'We were ready to make a third intervention to highlight the story of civic ambition that didn't happen.' The new infill building is a simple two-storey box which

Paul Berkemeier Interview (cont'd)

refers to the older buildings and Berkemeier aimed 'to make them players in this narrative'. The architects wanted to 'put the energy into the places where the two older buildings entered the dialogue'. Visitors can see unfinished sections of the older buildings with the half-completed brick walls, filled openings and toothed nibs that were ready to take another wing.

The idea was to develop the narrative of the history of the place and, practically, to get a large amount of display space.

Part of the challenge was to resolve the different geometries where the older buildings met the new building, and to create openings between the buildings. This necessitated the need for odd shapes and to distort the way the connections occurred. Key glazing in skylights was used

where old met new, highlighting the links as well as giving a sense of separation. Berkemeier also wanted to integrate the grand staircase into the whole experience by breaking an opening into the historic stairwell.

Methods to think and make things happen

Berkemeier says that he and his associates use several models and hundreds of drawings to explore options and resolve issues. Most architects still draw to help resolve things, and Berkemeier says it is often a good idea 'to use several methodologies simultaneously'. Using language is an effective way to work things out, together with sketching, drawing, computer-generated modelling and model-making.

Working as an architect

The thing about architecture is how you can get competing needs to work together towards a single outcome.

The architects working on MRAG needed to consider budget restrictions, community expectations and display considerations. Energy consumption was to be reduced via the thermal mass of concrete walls and floors, and the tactical placement of windows and skylights. Weaving together the idea of form-making by using materials such as inexpensive sheet metal, with the energy agenda and the connections between the buildings and display space, resulted in a fairly bold form. This was appropriate in the 'narrative of failed architectural ambition with the change from the very ornate building to the very pragmatic classroom. The art gallery coming a century later could then tell a very different

story...' The new infill building is set back from the street and is quite sculptural. As Berkemeier points out, 'if it was built hard up against the street, you would need a greater sense of frontality.'

"All things are in collaboration…"

The design and construction of MRAG was a collaborative effort between architects, engineers, the Maitland Council and Gallery, builders, and artist Lara O'Reilly who created the video "Time Capture" which sits in the fabric of the building.

Wherever you work the crucial thing is the ability to work in collaboration with people in your own team and with the external consultants … The fun of being an architect is that you can orchestrate, that you can create the circumstance that allows that to happen.

Australian Art Galleries & Museums

ART GALLERY NEW SOUTH WALES

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👤 Andrew Andersons

Description

The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) was established in the1870s. It is an art museum whose purpose is to maintain and develop a collection of artworks, and to increase people's appreciation and knowledge of art. AGNSW's collection includes Australian, Aboriginal, Asian, European and Contemporary art. Its proximity to the Sydney CBD means that it is one of the most popular galleries in Australia with over a million visitors annually.

History

AGNSW was designed in 1896 by the New South Wales Government architect, Walter Liberty Vernon, as a neo-Greek temple to art. Constructed between 1986 and 1909 the building reflects the trustees' 'nineteenth century ideas about the cultural role of a gallery as a temple to art and civilising values'.

By the 1960s the Gallery's collection had grown significantly and modern curators called for new and more flexible spaces for installations and exhibitions. From 1968-1972 the Gallery was extended by Andrew Andersons of the Government Architect's Department. The Captain Cook Wing was opened 1972. The alterations opened up the traditional enclosed box of the museum to allow views to the harbour; creating a sense of connection to a place via transparency and permeability.

In 1988, Andrew Andersons was again commissioned to extend the Gallery. To coincide with the bicentenary celebrations the Gallery was doubled in size with the addition of the Eastern Wing, Asian Gallery and an outdoor sculpture gallery.

In 1994 the Yiribana Gallery was opened; this is a permanent display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art.

In 2011 a new exhibition space, designed by Andersons, in what was previously the storage area was opened to house the John Kaldor collection of contemporary art.

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NATIONAL GALLERY VICTORIA

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👤 Roy Grounds, extension Mario Bellini

Description

The National Gallery Victoria (NGV) is Australia's oldest and largest art gallery. The Gallery's collection is spread across two buildings to the South of Melbourne's CBD in the NGV International at 180 St Kilda Road and the Ian Potter Gallery at Federation Square.

History

NGV International was designed by Sir Roy Grounds and opened in 1968. It is a large rectangular edifice organised around three square courtyards, adopting the historical palazzo arrangement. Of significance is the large suspended decorative glass ceiling by Leonard French in the Great Hall.

In 1996 an 'invitation only' competition was held to redesign and enlarge the museum; Mario Bellini won the competition and the extension was completed in 2003. The design included the insertion of galleries into the north and south courtyards. The central courtyard was opened up as a large organising void which includes the information desk, café and other entry/exit facilities.

Key elements of the original building that were retained include the external bluestone façade, the entry arch and the Leonard French stained glass ceiling. As Bellini observed, 'the winning idea was that of returning this great monument to the citizens of Melbourne absolutely intact in its role as an urban symbol, yet, simultaneously, radically rethought and transformed in its role as a museum'.

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MUSEUM of CONTEMPORARY ART

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Future extension
Sam Marshall

Description

The mission statement for the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) is to engage with contemporary art and ideas. Located in Circular Quay, Sydney, the MCA is the only Australian museum dedicated to exhibiting, interpreting and collecting contemporary art from across Australia and around the world.

History

The building of the MCA was originally home to the Maritime Services Board. It was designed by the Government Architect W.H. Withers in 1939, but not completed until 1952 due to the war.

In 1989 the MSB relocated and the building was bequeathed to the NSW State Government. With funding from John Power and the University of Sydney it was established as the site of the new Museum of Contemporary Art. In 1990 the building was redesigned by Andrew Andersons of PTW and the in November 1991 the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) was opened.

In 2010, Sam Marshall, in partnership with the NSW Government Architect was commissioned to undertake the extension. This renovation, due for completion mid 2012, will increase the MCA's space by 4500sqm. This extension includes two five-metre column free galleries, new workshops, office and the National Centre For Creative Learning. The aim of the redevelopment is to 'transform the MCA to create a truly national and international institution serving the audiences of the future', says MCA Director Elizabeth Ann Macgregor.

The most significant cultural shift in the upgrade is the inclusion of the National Centre for Creative Learning (NCCL). The NCCL has been established to manifest the MCA's commitment to being a leader in education. The program will include virtual learning environments for broader community accessibility as well as physical learning and teaching spaces including a lecture theatre, workshops and a room for their Bella program which caters for children with special needs.

In addition there will be a new rooftop café and sculpture terrace to capitalise on the Museum's pararomic views of the harbour. 'This expansion will cement the MCA's role as a locally loved and internationally renowned contemporary art museum, which supports and promotes Australian artists alongside their international peers. Our commitment to education comes from our belief that creativity and education in the arts are the critical building blocks for a dynamic community.'

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http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/aboutsydney/historyandarchives/SydneyHistory/HistoricBuildings/MuseumContemporaryArt.asp

OBJECT GALLERY

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Ken Woolley, conversion by Sam Marshall

Description

Located in Surry Hills, The Object Gallery is the Australian Centre for Design. Founded over 45 years ago the mission of the Gallery is to promote contemporary design, and to provide a hub for artists to connect.

History

The building for the Object Gallery was originally the Chapel of the former St Margaret's Hospital for Women in Surry Hills. The Chapel was designed by Ken Woolley and Harry Renbert and was opened in December 1958. It is an intact example of Post-War ecclesiastical architecture.

The Chapel included a number of innovative design elements such as pre-cast panels doubling as internal and external finish, the structural design of the roof and the use of 'off form' concrete for the thin columns.

St Margaret's Hospital was closed in 1994 and the site was sold for development. Two of the original buildings were retained – the Solarium which was converted into apartments and the Chapel which was transformed into a gallery. The conversion of the Chapel was designed by Sam Marshall in conjunction with Ken Woolley and in 2004 the Object Gallery: Australian Centre for Design was opened.

The design incorporated Marshall's strong ideas about 'sensible' heritage practice and Woolley's modernist principles, creating its own distinctive aesthetic.

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http://www.eviction.com.au/eviction-articles/2004/7/1/blessing-in-disguise/ [31/07/2011]

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NATIONAL GALLERY of AUSTRALIA

Colin Madigan, new work
Andrew Andersons of
PTW Architects

Description

The National Gallery of Australia is located in the Parliamentary Precinct, Canberra. It holds a collection of more than 100,000 works spread across 4 main art areas: Australian, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Asian and International.

History

It was designed in 1973 by Colin Madigan and is an example of 1970s Brutalism.

1997 saw the extension of the existing building by Andrew Andersons of PTW Architects, which involved the building of new temporary exhibition galleries to house large-scale temporary exhibitions. The extension also included a sculpture garden designed by Fiona Hall.

In 2006 the Australian Government announced it would provide the funding for a major building enhancement. Stage 1, designed by Andrew Andersons of PTW Architects, was completed in 2010.

The Gallery is committed to presenting the national collection of art, together with exhibitions, education and public programs and to providing facilities, which meet visitors' expectations, particularly for those visitors with special needs, such as people with disabilities. The Gallery also acknowledges its role as custodian of a significant, heritage-listed public building and sculpture garden. To maintain this commitment, the Gallery building must be extended and enhanced to better serve its visitors by removing barriers to access and to meet the challenges of a growing collection of works of art.[10]

The features of the new development include a new entrance and foyer, gallery shop, a new function and event space, street cafe and 11 new Indigenous art galleries showcasing works from the world's largest collection of Australian Indigenous art.

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http://www.canberra.com.au/canberra-attractions/national-gallery-of-australia/ [2/08/2011]

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NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Johnson Pilton Walker

Description

The National Portrait Gallery aims to increase the understanding of the Australian people – their identity, history, creativity and culture – through portraiture. Located within the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra, the National Portrait Gallery is home to some 400 portraits of significant Australians.

History

The National Portrait Gallery was originally housed in the Old Parliament House, which was designed by John Smith Murdoch and opened in 1927.

A growing profile and collection necessitated the move to a dedicated building. Funding for this project came in the 2005 Federal Budget, with Johnson Pilton Walker awarded the commission of creating the gallery. Construction began in late 2006.

The National Portrait Gallery was officially opened in 2008. 'The concept for the new gallery is grounded in the experience of looking at portraiture, and in its emphasis on human scale the building favours intimacy and connection in lieu of reverence and the monumental.'

It is considered to be the most significant building constructed in the Parliamentary Triangle in the last 20 years.

References

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CIVIC CENTRE, WAGGA WAGGA

 Garner Davis

Description

Located beside the Wollundry Lagoon, the Civic Centre of Wagga Wagga provides a key regional cultural hub. The complex integrates the key administrative and cultural facilities of the city. The Centre is framed by two heritage buildings of the Theatre and the Council Chambers.

History

The Museum of the Riverina was established in the 1967 to capture the local history of the south-western NSW known as the Riverina. In 1998 as part of the Civic Centre redevelopment the Historic Council Chambers of Wagga Wagga were converted to host the temporary exhibitions of the Museum. Charles Hardy built the Historic Council Chambers in 1881

The Melbourne Architects Jill Garner and Lindsay Davis of Garner Davis were selected as part of a competition held in 1997. The Civic Centre formed the new commercial and cultural centre for Wagga Wagga. The Civic Centre accommodates both the Museum of the Riverina and the National Art Glass Collection. More than 40,000 people visit the Centre each year.

The building has four distinct facades with contrasting materials creating varying degrees of opacity. A play on surfaces is also used within the internal 'street', creating an impression on limitless space. The Civic Centre integrates, for the first time, the cultural, informational and administrative facilities of the city.

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International Art Galleries & Museums

Maxxi
Rome
by Zaha Hadid
www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/maxxi/

Design Museum Holon
Holon, Israel 2009
by Ron Arad
www.ronarad.co.uk/design-museum-holon/

The Getty
Los Angeles 1997
www.richardmeier.com/www/#/projects/architecture/icons/1/92/0/

The New Acropolis Museum
Athens
by Bernard Tschumi
www.tschumi.com/projects/2/

Tate Modern
London 2000
by Herzog and De Meuron
www.tate.org.uk/modern/transformingtm/

Salvidor Dali Museum
St Petersburg, Florida
by HOK
www.hok.com/
www.architecturezine.com/architecture-salvador-dali-museum-building-by-hok/

The Resnick Pavilion
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art 2010
by Renzo Piano
www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/9/view/11761/renzo-piano-building-workshop-resnick-pavilion-lacma.html

Neues Museum
Berlin 1841- 59
by Friedrich August Stüler (reconstructed by David Chipperfield and opened 2009)
www.neues-museum.de/index.php?lang = en