

A Timothy H I

Timothy Moore is a director of architecture office Sibling Architecture. Prior to Sibling, Timothy worked at architecture offices in Melbourne, Amsterdam and Berlin, and as an editor for two influential architecture magazines, *Volume* and *Architecture Australia* along with zine *They Shoot Homos Don't They?* He is currently editor of *Future West*.

Moore

Sibling Architecture

Architecture roundtables can be stifling. Rather than sit four people around a table on well-rehearsed positions, another tool for debate, the architectural pamphlet, is called upon. *Architecture: what matters?* celebrates the tradition of the pamphlet as a direct, singular, clear platform for architectural provocation.

Architecture: what matters? invites twenty people involved in the built environment – architects, academics, activists – to deliver an architectural pamphlet on matter that is important to them. The twenty participants also meet in public to discuss these responses; they have twenty seconds to present their case.

What matters?

Participants include:

Leandro Cappetto (TOMA)
Simona Castricum (Simona Castricum)
Dhiren Das (Relative Projects)
Ben Edwards (Edwards Moore)
Charity Edwards (Parlour, Monash University)
Courtney Gibbs (Lyons)
Cristina Goberna (Fake Industries Architectural Agonism)
Joachim Holland (Fieldwork Projects, Assemble Papers)
Nikos Kalogeropoulos (Molonglo Group)
Dongsei Kim (Axu Studio)
Qianyi Lim (Sibling Architecture)
Hannah Lewi (Docomomo, University of Melbourne)
Georgia Nowak (Room 11)
Diego Ramirez-Lovering (Monash University)
Jack Self (Real Estate Architecture Laboratory) represented by Kate Finning
Felicity Scott (Columbia University) represented by Hannah Robertson
Roland Snooks (RMIT University)
Colby Vexler (Parallel For Thinking)
Helen Walter (ARM)

Architecture: what matters? is part of the National Gallery of Victoria's 2016 Melbourne Art Book Fair public program. The full set of pamphlets, designed by Rebecca Ko, are available to download at <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/program/architecture-what-matters>

A Leandro Cappetto I

Leandro Cappetto is an Argentinian architect and a member of TOMA. TOMA is an architecture collective that develops experimental and collective actions in conflictive or forgotten territories in the contemporary neoliberal context.

Cappetto

R C

It is vital that we reinvigorate political content within our lives, in our work, in our social role, in our relationship with nature. We have to reveal what order is questioned by our actions, and also, what order is constructed.

We have to question ourselves, to understand what role we are playing in the complex framework of contemporary power. Because it is this power network that reaches high levels of development, but also scandalous poverty and irreparable damage to the environment.

TOMA

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T E

Never before has our society been so alarmed about the huge number of people living in indecent realities and the damage that we are inflicting to our planet. At the same time, we discover, day after day, dark linkages between economic, media and political powers, bent on continuing down the same path.

The capitalist project, in its current and voracious neoliberal phase, has stressed the reality to radical levels. The double razing, social and natural, is the inevitable consequence of the imposition of a global market culture, and its logic of infinite growth.

In this critical context, architecture must leave the bubble of complicity, and challenge the current model of development and the complex network that supports it. Our discipline handles representation and action tools able to link organisational forms, power structures and social constructions.

What is the shape of our world? What are the structures that support it? What kind of social constructions are generated by these structures?

Urban development, the core of our discipline, is one of the main engines of growth of the contemporary economic model. The other is military spending. There's no doubt that our discipline has been helpful in building the current scenario of global crisis in which we live.

If, for a moment, we thought that the relationship between architecture and buildings was transient, then we can undertake the task of making visible the shape of the world: the shape of the social construction and power structures that are holding it.

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Finally, then, we can proceed to do what we like: to project. But that project can no longer be complicit in the exclusive and infinite development of the current model. This new project will be the radical transformation of the way we organise ourselves as a society and as part of nature.

That is why we question any work in which the political content is non-transparent, even contradictory.

We question any agenda not available to be publicly questioned. The actions of each has consequences on the world for all. Individual development was a mirage. The future will be political and collective, or will not be.

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What matters?

A Simona H I

Simona Castricum is a musician, designer and writer who has just released her third album through Listen Records. Her writing has been published by Vice, Archer and The Guardian.

Castricum

R C

Program is the enemy of function

What happens when program becomes the enemy of function?

Do we adapt as they misalign?

Or do we force them to fit together as we apply a binary judgement?

Or do we celebrate fluidity and facilitate change?

What are the implications of unthinking program versus unlearning function?

What does it mean to destroy, demolish and erase it?

What does it mean to nurture, nourish and parade it?

Simona Castricum

T E

If living in fear means to do anything to survive

– how does one experience the relationship between space, form and surface?

If to occupy the space is to be exposed to violence, abuse, incarceration and ridicule

– how does it affect participation and agency in program and function?

How does lived exclusion from space inhibit or augment the experience of program?

What if taking a shit in a public toilet was itself a political act?

If participation and agency is deliberately gendered by the dominant paradigm in a binary nature

– is it because of its obsession with program?

What are the implications on space and safety for transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people?

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If lives and events are shunned and shamed

– what is the burden of authenticity?

– what is the access to structures of power, financial privilege, and property?

– how robust is connection to community and amenity?

What matters?

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When authenticity and inclusion is threatened by a dominant paradigm

– how does oppression make experience of program different?

What are the implications for architectural practice?

How can we value the difference of ideas when we give it agency?

What if safety became permanent?

A Dhiren H I

Dhiren Das is director of Relative Projects, a strategic design agency and creative think-tank. Dhiren has worked in Australia and the United Kingdom on commercial and culturally driven projects of every scale. As co-director at Foolsap, recent projects include Noma Australia and activations at Barangaroo, Sydney.

Das

What matters is not just the built form and its treatments, but the social and cultural impact of architecture. *What matters* is the less visible yet latent potential for architecture to cultivate human interaction, sharing of knowledge and cultural transfer – for environments of all scales to become places of emotive connection and belonging.

What matters?

The role of the creative thinker (not just architects and designers) in the twenty-first century is to imagine and co-create physical and digital spaces and systems that build a sense of connectedness and identity. As living, working and socialising converge into multi-layered activities, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between these and therefore to design for each situation independently. We must be able to look sideways in order to look ahead.

Technology will of course continue to multiply our ability to analyse, inform and manipulate our environment. Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, describes this as the Fourth Industrial Revolution: whereby exponential development of technologies will, 'allow designers and architects to pioneer a symbiosis between microorganisms, our bodies, the products we consume, and the buildings we inhabit'. How we utilise this new potential in a way that results in an overall positive impact is the question.

In the meantime, we risk becoming lost in a constant stream of information and hyper-stimulation, 'social' media made up of ephemeral snippets of 'meta-places' experienced elsewhere through personal devices. These have the ability to ultimately enhance or break down meaningful interactions. In many instances, our relationship with nature and each other has been distanced.

Architects and designers have the opportunity to act as mediator between culture, technology and the built environment. They have the ability to envision interactions and experiences in which the inevitability of embedded technology can enrich our existence, as a tangible reflection of our intention as a society. Through this process of mediation, we can uncover meaning through a new thought process, whose objective is to produce social situations that value empathy and collective wellbeing over just profit.

Our greatest hurdle to achieving a future of social and environmental equilibrium may well be a question of cultural transformation rather than technology. Engaging in collective design thinking allows us to envision scenarios that can affect change across economies, cultures and geographic locations. This goes beyond creating technology (tools) for its own sake and looks at real human needs (problems) towards enhancing quality of life regardless of location or social standing (solutions).

Architecture and related creative practice, both as a process and an outcome, has the ability to question and reframe what it means to live in the future city, and to look at the medium of the built environment as a component of a much greater remit. What matters are the social and emotive connections that people form with their environment and their communities.

Relative Projects

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Design and creative thinking has the potential to contribute to not just the buildings and products we use, but the way in which we perceive and acknowledge the true value of the things that surround us, moving from the perception of individual property ownership to one of shared cultural capital. Now more than ever, inclusive thinking can lead to a greater collective understanding of what is required to create not only a sustainable future, but an abundant one.

A Charity H I

Charity Edwards is an architect, educator and researcher. As part of Parlour, Charity has also been an active part of **Women.Wikipedia.Design** – an international education and advocacy program working to increase the number of Wikipedia articles on women in architecture and the built environment.

Edwards

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What does matter

It was just over a year ago that the seventh-most-visited website in the world, Wikipedia, included only ten women architects from Australian history. The results were depressingly similar around the world. The matter of architecture – the people who drew it, made it, wrote it and learnt from it – were overwhelmingly represented as male. As in, since the beginning of time.

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As a consequence, an international collaboration formed between Parlour (Australia), Architexx (New York) and n-ails (Berlin); and seed funding was gained from the Wikimedia Foundation to support a series of training workshops, develop how-to-edit guides, and initiate extensive lists of women with links to references assisting the creation of articles in Wikipedia.

Our goal to increase the presence of women designers on Wikipedia drew more than 100 participants over twelve months, and 200 new entries were created in English alone! In Australia, the list of women in architecture added to Wikipedia grew by more than fifty entries. Even better, there are now over thirty active Wikipedia editors continuing to volunteer around the world, improving the representation of women in our built environment - on their laptops, and wherever there is free wifi.

Central to the success of our collective endeavour was learning how to edit the surprisingly rigorous global information commons that Wikipedia comprises. Ironically, we needed to develop a hardcopy pamphlet series – *#WikiD Guides to Wikipedia Editing* – after discovering a complex web of bewildering hyperlinked tutorials formed a sure barrier to many attempting to start editing Wikipedia online. These pamphlets have since been widely used around the world – including at the NY Guggenheim Wikipedia edit-a-thon, adopted by Wikipedia Australia as reference material for their own training workshops, and are right now being translated for a similar project initiated by Wikimedia Ukraine.

We are excited to be part of a global effort to actively rewrite the *what* of architecture, even if it is in our lunch breaks, on weekends, and after work. *What* matters – but we must make it what it is, wherever and however we can.

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Parlour,
Monash
University

What matters?

A Ben H I

R C Edwards

Ben Edwards is a director of Edwards Moore, a Melbourne-based architecture and design studio founded in 2009. Their work ranges from private houses, retail spaces, exhibitions and temporary pavilions, to buildings and large-scale city planning projects.

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Edwards Moore

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To dream, to dare, to question, to make and to aspire, while at all times carrying a healthy optimism for humankind in our hearts. We are be agents of change and the custodians of the key.

What matters?

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A Courtney H I

Gibbs

Courtney Gibbs is an architectural graduate at Lyons. She has taught at RMIT, the University of Melbourne and is currently teaching at Swinburne University. Last year she spent time in Milan working at the Milan World Expo and contemplating the architecture of an Italian city.

What matters: reflection – it's not always about getting an answer

In today's society we regularly hear how busy everyone is – this is a common response to the question 'how are you?'. If life is getting busier, reflection back on it becomes more important. In architecture this involves taking time to process, connect with and contemplate buildings, places or experiences.

Lyons

Beauty and ugliness in my mind constantly change; my thoughts are developing and evolving. What mattered to me in the past may not matter in the future - however the building in question will remain.

Looking to the past and looking to the future both become equally important. We are surrounded by the built environment, reflection is an anchoring part of the profession, industry and creativity, and it can provide information about humanity, our relationship with each other, with nature and with technology.

Putting space around thoughts and ideas.

Architecture demands outcomes – and most of what we do is specific or task-orientated. But what does it mean to me? What does it mean to me today? What did it mean to me before and what might it mean to me in the future? Reflection is an opportunity to consider architecture outside of these constraints.

What matters is a true engagement in the reflection. It could be achieved through writing, discussion or design. This is a conscious understanding that provokes something, demands deeper awareness, and encourages us to form an actual position.

What matters?

A Cristina H I

Fake Industries Architectural Agonism

Cristina Goberna is co-director of Fake Industries Architectural Agonism that is based between New York, Barcelona and Sydney, which recently released a new monograph Architectural Replicas by the Graham Foundation. Goberna is a Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Goberna

The only possible relation with architecture education today is a criminal one

'To England I'll steal, and there I'll steal.'
Henry V, William Shakespeare

T E
The only possible relation with architecture education today is a criminal one.

We need to stop being good professionals of universities, good bureaucrats, good CEOs, good advisers for good job-seeking students, good professors teaching students to become skilful workers, to become our cheap workforce indeed. Professionalisation begins accepting certain ways of doing things in the institution, accepting the aesthetics of the institution, the economic categories of the institution, its exclusions and discriminations, accepting the privatisation of knowledge, its censorship.

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The opposite of professionalisation is that of the fugitive, and the criminal impulse, the illicit desire to make knowledge accessible, accumulated, to steal its privatisation, to protect its productive uselessness, to avoid its demise.

Let's betray the professionalism of architectural programs, the good manners and market-driven limitations of knowledge. Let's betray the idea of a useful and pragmatic university.

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Let's make architecture education as crime.

Note: This piece is a modified version of a text about museums read by Paul B. Preciado at the event 'About Cultural Politics in Barcelona' that took place at the Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart, on November 2015. Special thanks to Paul B. Preciado, Tony Eagleton, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney for being a source of copy and inspiration.

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What matters?

A Joachim H I

Joachim Holland is a Melbourne-based architect and a director of the architecture practice Fieldwork Projects, development company Assemble and publication Assemble Papers.

Holland

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At its essence, architecture is a series of acts that accumulate, create and distil. Love, or perhaps more precisely – desire – drives the architect to create something that is more than functional; a space that synthesises lived experience with imagined; a space that aspires to beauty.

Architects are fundamentally interested in people. It is this focus that makes the practice rich, difficult and complex. To truly incorporate human experience into the process and result, there needs to be a spirit to explore, and battle for what is necessary. A building resonates with love if that is its root, visceral constitution. It will relay the presence, perspective and desire of the architect. Its quality will be directly proportional to the effort and care invested. Through love, we express a tacit acknowledgement that 'to be', to exist, is a shared experience, and that with action comes responsibility, not only to ourselves, but to others. Where this fails, heartbreak happens

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What matters?

Fieldwork Projects/ Assemble Papers

Mapping this in the Australian context, the housing market embodies a tragic example. The love of the work, and in the work, has been stripped out by the ruthless logic of our market economy and investment return expectations. The market is a shell at all levels – ubiquitous yet impersonal. Such a product seems reminiscent of Stewart Brand's observation that 'Seeking to be anybody's house, it becomes nobody's'. The idea of home has itself become a product (or tradeable financial asset).

Housing is at a stage where its loss of love has shrunk the possibility of human experience to define the home. Instead, consumer products fill the void, and depersonalised design (with included extras!) driven by the forever incoming owner-occupier ensure maximum resale value.

An architect that does not trade in love finds architecture much easier. It becomes an exercise in saying yes – yes to every request and action that threatens to undercut the emotional foundation of a project. In this way, it manifests itself as a mechanical and disassociated workflow, solving pragmatic issues and stripping away any sensitivity.

Increasingly, developers, real-estate agents, project managers and the ilk filter our interaction and reshape the priorities of a project. We find ourselves at arm's length from the client, from the individuals who will live in these spaces.

When love is completely value managed out of a project, it is not surprising that the ensuing buildings look like three-dimensional spreadsheets. The spaces are product manifest – to be collected and their perceived lifestyle desired. The owner becomes the owner-occupier; bequeathed this dubious categorical suffix to reinforce their inextricable position in the game of resale.

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A Nikos H I Kalogeropoulos

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What matters is the need to democratise architecture so it forms part of a continuous urban landscape as one dynamic flow of nature and people, indiscriminate and open, restoring the deep human experience found in the natural environment. By liberating architecture from economics, analytic geometry and cultural prejudices we can begin to create spaces defined by the people in them, not by those who create them.

We don't want to be stratified into functional units, cocooned in iterative spaces driven by the bottom line. We desire our inner spaces to be connected to the broader urban context, to feel a belonging to the city and its rhythm, yet have the ability to find intimacy in its nooks and crannies that fluid architecture manifests. While architecture is inherently the force that resists or interrupts the natural environment, it should inevitably embrace it, so its edges dissolve forming a natural urban tapestry.

What matters?

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Design with a social sensibility will emancipate us from the captive banality and post-industrial class structure we toil in every day. Spaces that yield a social diversity create interest and serendipitous encounters that stoke productivity and innovation. The architect has the power to create behavioural cues to activate a space, but it is the plurality of its occupants that generates a multiplicity of outcomes and engagements.

The vision of architecture should not be unequivocally resolved, but rather should be developed through a messy collaborative process that evolves to a resolution. The process of trial and error, iteration and mistakes, allows design to unfold in ways we could never have comprehended. The there and back again approach which underlies messy processes reveals a pathway of agitative discovery that is at the centre of democratic architecture and design.

Nikos Kalogeropoulos is the CFO of Molonglo Group, which wears the dual hats of property developers and creative producers. Having recently completed the NewActon Precinct in Canberra including Nishi and Hotel Hotel, the team of fantasists are working on a new site in Melbourne's Collingwood, multiple publishing and film projects, and the future of Canberra's East Lake Foreshore.

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Molonglo Group

Architecture should create the encounter, not eliminate it. The broad spectrum of emotional engagement we achieve in our natural environment, of awe, excitement, fear, hope and discovery should persist in our planned spaces. To achieve this connectedness requires focus on the negative space, the space that surrounds and penetrates a building. It is through these umbilical connections, doorways, windows, foyers, skylights that offer the opportunity of encounter and surprise. These thin membranes provide an active interface which allow us to modulate the permeability of the building and our experience.

Architecture cannot be understood in isolation of the city. Buildings as free standing monuments are no more than mausoleums. Architecture must liberate us from our hermetically sealed captivity and create an organic urbanity that enhances our experiences in complex ways, celebrating and challenging our sensory curiosity. This urban fabric is the canvas for our human experience.

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A H I

Hannah

R C Lewi

Hannah Lewi is Associate Professor, Architecture at the University of Melbourne, and current vice-chair of Docomomo Australia, an international organisation devoted to the documentation and conservation of modern sites. She is historical advisor for the Australian Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale.

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What matters: keeping buildings and places, or we will regret it when they are gone.

We have learnt to like nineteenth century relics that have managed to wash up onto the shoreline of the twenty-first century. But twentieth-century modernism is still less than trusted, let alone loved.

Docomomo,
University of Melbourne

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Yet modernism reframed everything, everywhere – for better and worse.

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We need to find ways of re-using and re-valuing different kinds of modern spaces and architectures. Relics too of another, now increasingly, unfamiliar social, industrial and cultural era, yet structures that can offer many possibilities into a future life.

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Those reputedly ugly things: those sometimes less than attractive friends that make others around them look more alluring – or what N Quentin Woolf has described as the potential 'wingman' of architecture?

What matters?

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Dongsei

Dongsei Kim is a principal at Axu studio. He exhibited as part of the Korea Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale. He was previously Assistant Professor at Korea University, Seoul and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Columbia University, New York.

Kim

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Act one: image as representation

Simply put, 'image' is a representation of something. It depicts or imitates a reality. This first-order definition seems to be the imperative of contemporary architecture. Through variegated spatial forms, contemporary architecture often operates as an image. It diligently represents and re-presents the proliferating neoliberal reality. This prompts us to ask: what is omitted or hidden in these representations?

Opening act: imagining the impossible

My current preoccupation with architecture is about imagination and its limits, thus its potency. I am interested in investigating a wide range of architectural intelligence that empowers us to challenge the status quo. 'Imagining the impossible' aphorism critically questions our social norms. This alternative image-making process attempts to make some of the invisible structural violence visible.

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Act two: image as subjectification

An image is never neutral. Consuming an image inevitably involves a subject. The subject, with its own personal memories, experiences, and biases; observe, contest, and interprets an image. In reverse, images play a critical role in constructing one's subjectivity. This prompts us to ask: who are the subjects and what agency do they hold?

Act three: image as imagination

Ceaseless visual bombardment of our time drastically hinders our ability to imagine. Surrounded by vivid realism, 'simulacra (faithful copies of reality) and simulation' (copies of things that have no originals) have become indistinguishable. When we know that images are ever more important in constructing the 'hyperreal' (which now is more real than the 'real'), we can ask; what invisible structural violence can we make visible through image-making informed by 'imagining the impossible'?

Axu Studio

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What matters?

A Qianyi H I

Lim

Qianyi Lim is an architect and educator. She is a director of Sibling, an architecture studio that insists on intelligent forms while fostering a positive and social agenda. Qianyi has previously worked at McBride Charles Ryan Architects, Bjarke Ingels Group and Dosmasuno Arquitectos.

R C

Sibling
Architecture

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T E

What matters? Architecture for loneliness. An affliction that is more dangerous for our health than smoking or obesity, loneliness is becoming pervasive in our society.

In our contemporary digital age, we have never been more connected, yet at the same time disconnected from each other. Streams of online affirmations cause our naive sense of belonging; yet distract us from making face to face relationships. With this distraction comes feelings of isolation – have we forgotten how to connect *In Real Life?*

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Architecture is a powerful tool for combating loneliness in our society. By providing spaces for social exchange that encourage genuine relationships, architecture can help us to become better neighbours, co-workers and citizens. It can inspire meaningful social interaction between us, in real space and time. We are a naturally social species; we depend on each other to exist, and architecture can provide the framework for a socially productive and sustainable existence.

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What matters?

A Georgia Hill I

Georgia Nowak is an architect with Room 11, a studio based in Melbourne and Hobart. She has previously worked and studied as an architect and designer in Stockholm, as well as studied sculpture at the Victorian College of Art (VCA), Melbourne.

Nowak

Room 11 R C

This term, identity, can be a difficult thing to define. The rhetoric surrounding it can often be territorial, jingoistic and defensive. The fraught and un-reconciled history of Australia informs this unease, there is a strange insecurity here; an elemental and primitively emotional trigger surrounding simple language and attempts at honest appraisal of self and belonging. The definition of self here can be loose. It is ever changing, ever evolving. It is not based upon one ethnicity, religion or class and it does not hold onto, or at least has not yet reconciled, its colonial past.

This characteristic of inconsistency in our identity and landscape is also its strength. It allows a kind of openness, an opportunity to reflect uniquely without a dominant subconscious cultural and formal predisposition. We are not weighted and anchored by generations of cultural specificity, and as such can aim to define an identity of our choosing. It is this diverse and at times contentious history that is present in our hills, coastlines and plains.

Our histories, myths and stories matter, and the way these histories and stories are wedded to and lay dormant and buried in our landscape matter a great deal.

What matters? T

The architecture that we choose to create in these places has a unique capacity to draw out latent storylines. By working within landscape alongside an understanding of the dense social and cultural associations that reside there, there is the possibility for architecture to be a facilitator to access often unspoken qualities, establishing a necessary dissonance between built work, person and place.

Architecture can act as an interface for our own cultural lens, a device to challenge or redefine our understanding of landscape drawing out old myths for re-appraisal or acknowledgement and thus allowing new myths and stories to be sowed back into the soil. In this way our built works have the capacity to not only be sites of rich phenomenological encounter and inhabitation, but to also become totem; contemporary relics that pay respect to our past and present occupation of this land.

'Knowledge rather than fear might be the emotion governing the landscape. This could be a time when people could know themselves in their place rather than in spite of it, a time when [Australian's] get lost in the profuse negotiations of everyday life, a time at last when difference and change can be welcomed rather than quarantined.'²

1. Ross Gibson, *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland*, University of Queensland Press (UQP), Brisbane, 2002.

2. *Ibid.*

A Diego H I R C Ramirez- Lovering Monash University C

T E

Diego Ramirez-Lovering is Professor and Head of Department of Architecture at Monash University. He is co-founder of the Monash Urban Laboratory, a collaborative design research unit that partners with government and the private sector to explore the dynamic processes shaping the contemporary city and speculate on its future.

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While the contemporary city is facing increasingly complex challenges - from frenzied patterns of global urbanisation, environmental pressures, a growing polarisation of wealth and accompanying socio-spatial inequalities - and is increasingly shaped by the information age and its shared, distributed and networked morphologies, the architecture profession still holds on to fantasies of involvement and control. We must regroup to conceive strategic re-alignments and reposition the role of the architect as persuasive collaborator and visionary mediator, to regain currency and capitalise on design and design thinking as powerful processes to negotiate these dynamic and evolving contexts. R E

What matters?

A H I

Jack

R C Self

Jack Self is an architect and writer based in London. He is Director, REAL Foundation and curator of the British Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale.

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T E

REAL

In Friedrich Engels book *The Housing Question* he said that the communist home would only become possible after the proletariat revolution. In other words, first comes violence, then housing equality.

I disagree: the material design of our homes scripts our behaviour and prescribes our society. Whether a couple sleep in twin beds or a king says a lot about social and gender power relations. We must instead shape society through the design of the banal and the everyday. Progressive reform can be manifest in the design of the home. This stands against violent revolution as a means to build a more egalitarian, inclusive and just society.

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My answer does not concern 'what do I find important?' – it concerns 'what is the material value of architecture?'

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What matters?

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Felicity

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Scott

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Felicity Scott is Associate Professor of Architecture, Director of the PhD program in Architecture (History and Theory), and co-director of the program in Critical, Curatorial and Conceptual Practices in Architecture (CCCP) at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University.

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Columbia
University

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As an architectural historian and theorist, what matters to me right now is developing new and more complex narratives, and conceptual and critical frameworks, through (and within) which the discipline's relation to a transforming geopolitical milieu becomes increasingly visible. With questions of environmental management and humanitarian aid once again at the forefront of the discipline, what matters is articulating a knowing relationship to the political context within which architecture operates and to which it contributes.

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What matters?

A Roland H I

Snooks

Roland Snooks is a director of the architecture practice Studio Roland Snooks and a senior lecturer at RMIT University, where he leads the Architectural Robotics Lab. After studying at Columbia University on a Fulbright Scholarship, Roland taught widely in the US including at the University of Pennsylvania, SCI-Arc and Columbia.

The matter of architecture matters.

Architecture's primary engagement with the world is through matter. It is this built form, its characteristics, qualities, spatial relationships, materiality, atmospheric affects and the consequences that arise from these, that matters.

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Architects too often conflate the role of the discipline with that of social change, or political activism. While these matter deeply, they are external to the substance of architecture, which only has a tenuous capacity to engage with these issues. This is not an argument that cultural production is more or less important than social or political concerns, but simply that architecture operates through built form, which is a blunt weapon for fighting socio-political battles.

RMIT University, Studio Roland Snooks

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The responsibility of architects is to imagine possible worlds, to challenge the status quo, and to search for what architecture might be. The key to this task is risk – the willingness to operate and experiment within a volatile space of design. Architecture should engage with the complexity of contemporary society through the substance of architecture and its processes of formation.

The position argued for here is premised on the belief that architecture is primarily a cultural act, deeply rooted in the humanities, and that it constitutes a valuable contribution to society, which shouldn't be marginalised in the face of apparent crisis. Architects produce the substance, or matter, of form, tectonics, structure, and ornament – it is through this that the architect's specific disciplinary knowledge is able to impact and engage with the world.

What matters?

A Helen H I

ARM

Walter

R C

Helen Walter is a graduate of architecture at ARM, Melbourne.

I have a small baby who used to sleep through the night and nap all day. Now she doesn't. I am lucky to sleep for three consecutive hours. What matters? All that matters to me, now, is *sleep*.

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Sleep matters. But this is about architecture, so I think about architecture and sleep. Can we design for sleep? What does a sleeper need? Silence? Security? Privacy? Maybe. But the best cities, Frank Sinatra told us, never sleep. What about that wonderful kind of sleep we had as children curled up on a pile of coats behind the couch while the grown-ups were having a party. That's the sleep that makes dreams. I wanna wake up in a city that never sleeps. A true city cultivates dreams as well as sleep.

What matters? T E

What matters for architecture is to dream. To dream the whole city. To dream a future city.

The city of our dreams is a parallel one that exists alongside the one we live in. It is the ideal city. It is a horizon to strive for. But everyone has a different picture of the *Dream City*. To some it's a city of equality (where everyone has a place to sleep). To others, it's a city of success and relentless growth. It could be a city of history. Or a sustainable city. It's the diverse city. A city of stimulation. It might be a city of stories and meaning, of image and colour and form. To some it's a safe city, an easy city. No single vision can prevail. The *Dream City* is a mosaic, an argument, a continuum.

Architecture is perpetually making pieces of the *Dream City*. On the scale of a front fence, a house, a city tower, a foreshore, or a new suburb. What matters is to make these pieces, large and small, inspirations for what could be, to imagine this *Dream City* and contribute a part of it now.

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Architecture has a responsibility to the neighbouring building that doesn't yet exist. Not to be careful or polite, nor to second-guess possible future moves and outcomes. But a broader responsibility to consider how the city should grow. What matters is to have a desire and a Good Idea about the shape of the *Dream City* and to act on it now.

The *Dream City* is not about longevity or architectural legacy, but imagining what will influence the next city-making decision. Fifteen, fifty or one-hundred years in the future: it's hoping that something even better pops up beside, within or around our *Good Idea*. That the neighbour who doesn't exist yet continues the conversation, makes a counter-argument and adds to the mosaic, even if our *Good Idea* is forever changed in the process.

Just as it must consider client, user and public, architecture as a city-making force has a responsibility to a dream. What matters is to keep the *Dream City* in mind at every turn, with every decision.

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A Colby H I

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Vexler

R C Parallel For Thinking

Matters

Noun - A subject or situation under consideration

Matters of architecture are in constant flux but architecture's role as a facilitator of matters will always remain the same. Here I have not attempted to explain what matters in architecture today, tomorrow or yesterday but rather what will always remain as matters, that is, architecture as a dialogue between culture and concept.

Culture

Noun - Manifestations of intellectual human achievements collectively

Culture is the fundamental of human existence. It is within our nature to create output, embodiments and manifestations of our achievements. This is in fact the primary influence and departure point of all our doings and creations. But culture is vague, it has many facets, streams and disciplines many of which unfortunately operate in isolation of one another. It is therefore important that architecture becomes a dialogue between culture and concept, as culture is essentially the content and manifestation of concept.

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Concept

Noun - A plan or intention

Concept ensures that culture is clear from intention to realisation of manifestation. Concept is a framework, a refined and considered way to share information or achievement. As Marcel Duchamp explains in his creative act it is the role of the artist, or in this case the architect to transmit their intention into their work. This must be received and understood by the spectator or user in order for the artwork or architecture to be an effective vessel of culture. Concept is in a sense.

Dialogue

Noun - A conversation between two or more people (states)

Architecture is a dialogue that is the conversation between concept and culture. In Joseph Kosuth's 1969 text *Art After Philosophy* he explains that art is merely a dialogue, artists are the facilitators of the conversation and artwork is the progression and continuity of that dialogue. Perhaps we should understand architecture in a similar way. But what is this dialogue about? What are the topics and what's the point? For that we must understand that it doesn't have a fixed topic. Like many day to day conversations, it drifts, wonders and staggers, rolling into new and seemingly unrelated sub-discussions. While its specificities will shift and progress, its loose categorisation will always remain within the definitions of culture and concept.

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What matters?

Architecture: what matters? invites twenty people involved in the built environment –architects, academics, activists -- to deliver an architectural pamphlet on matter that is important to them. The twenty participants also meet in public to discuss these responses; they have twenty seconds to present their case.