

DISCOURSE

04 THE AGENCY OF INFORMATION

RMIT Architecture & Urban Design values ideas-led ventures design experimentation and exploration. To be ventures is to be brave and take risks. At RMIT students are asked to articulate the positions contained in their projects, to be critical and assert their interests and future directions. It is important that architectural projects and ideas are situated within wider discussions in the discipline and that propositions are formed that suggest how a contribution can be made to disciplinary, as well as to wider contexts and ideas in the world.

The Architecture & Urban Design Discourse Series will use five themes as catalysts to initiate conversations amongst design studio leaders and reveal their positions, attitudes and propositions. There is a long standing tradition of discourse at RMIT and this series aspires to reveal our collective and diverse concerns and facilitate speculation on how these might contribute to advancing the discipline and the wider terrains that they engage in. If we drill down and look behind the statements made at design studio presentations, what do they explicitly refer to, what do they suggest and what do they lead to? Vivian Mitsogianni - Deputy Dean Architecture & Urban Design

Friday 28
August 6:15pm

Swanston
Academic
Building (SAB)

Building 80,
Level 4,
Room 11

Convenors
Leon van Schaik &
Fleur Watson

Moderator
Leon van Schaik

Panel
Martyn Hook
Vicky Lam
Ben Milbourne
Kristin Green

The first Affirmative Architecture symposium really began with a question, that seemed in my mind quite specific to Gen-X practitioners – the question being: “Is there an emerging trend to questions and re-evaluating the role of architectural practice in society? A lot of people I initially spoke to said there absolutely was, so I gathered a cohort together to flesh this out in a public way. The critical question addressed is “What contribution can architects and architecture make in each situation and how might their research, strategies and skills make a real difference to everyday life?”
Martyn Hook (2015)

I am interested in how new forms of architecture emerge out of existing models; deforming, breaking down, restructuring or recombining in response to changing demands. As data has become overwhelmingly ubiquitous, the ability to extract meaning, that is to transform data into information, connect users with it and each other, has become increasingly valuable. In this context architecture's role as a meeting place is destabilising, with building types, necessarily evolving and hybridising to accommodate changing ways of connecting people.
Ben Milbourne (2015)

Borders and margins are opportunities for innovation and invention. In nature thresholds such as wetlands and forest edges are where you find the greatest abundance of life and diversity. I'm interested in architecture that inhabits unstable edges, managing flows, forms and competing visions.”
Vicky Lam (2015)

I measure a Client's hopes and dreams against my ethics. I introduce anarchy to test their convictions and preconceptions. The conversation is sometimes acrimonious, often in sync. The exchange is always a dance, where I lead and expect them to follow. When the dance is done the preconceptions are gone, a new dance is possible.
Kristin Green (2015)

The result of the emergence of a new relationship between architecture and the way in which people meet, connect and ‘share’ using extended networks through social media and digital is what Prof Leon van Schaik describes, in his introduction to PAVILIONS, POP-UPS AND PARASOLS (AD May/June 2015), “a fairground assemblage, impelled by an initial wonderment at the emergence of seemingly new forms in an ancient lineage, forms that can be seen to be set in train by the ways in which people currently connect with other people. Brought together here are reflections on this phenomenon, a small swarming of minds around the idea. And indeed, within this collection it is clear that something new is afoot.”

The overarching context for “these manifestations of un-programmed architecture are not the picturesque instrument that is the folly”, but postcapitalism....

“Postcapitalism is possible because of three major changes information technology has brought about in the past 25 years.

First, it has reduced the need for work, blurred the edges between work and free time and loosened the relationship between work and wages.

Second, information is corroding the market's ability to form prices correctly. That is because markets are based on scarcity while information is abundant.

Third, we're seeing the spontaneous rise of collaborative production: goods, services and organisations are appearing that no longer respond to the dictates of the market and the managerial hierarchy.”

Paul Mason, *Postcapitalism, 2015, Allen Lane, London*

...platforms for change (that)...make visible the ritual life of citizens... the (postcapitalist) engines of our existence...release and distil the creative energy of all...

Leon van Schaik, *Pavilions Pop Ups and Parasols (AD May/June 2015)*