

KOHŌ

An offering of New Zealand Architecture and Design.

FREE

Please take one.

Issue One
— 2016 —



10.

The diversity of New Zealand's architecture is highlighted in *Future Islands*, the country's exhibition in the Biennale Architettura 2016.



14.

Class of '15: the creative and inspiring designs that received the highest architectural honours at the 2015 New Zealand Architecture Awards.



26.

Innovative work by design-oriented companies is showcased in the hosting space at the venue of the New Zealand architecture exhibition in Venice.



Joyful architecture

Children playing on the roof of Amritsar, the Wellington house that was a career-long project of Sir Ian Athfield (1940–2015), an outstanding figure in New Zealand architecture. More village than residence, Amritsar has captivated visitors for 40 years. One new fan is U.S. critic Alexandra Lange (see page 9). Photograph courtesy Athfield Architects.

The story up to now

Architecture in New Zealand is an island narrative of exploration, arrival and ongoing adaptation.

By Bill McKay

Our archipelago has been discovered by a succession of voyagers and explorers over the centuries but was one of the last significant land masses to be peopled. Around 800 years ago, in the last thrust of human expansion throughout the Pacific Ocean, expert navigators sailing sophisticated doubled-hulled vessels landed in the southern reach of Polynesia ('many islands') and adapted their way of life to a colder, more temperate land.

These people, Māori, built quite different structures from those in the Pacific. Low-roofed, single-roomed dwellings (whare) woven from plants were dug partially into the ground to insulate them from strong winds and cold. However, one feature that remained common throughout the Pacific was the marae ātea, a large, open space of communal,

cultural and spiritual importance around which dwellings were clustered.

As the Māori population increased and society became more tribalised, strategic hillsides were secured during periods of warfare by large-scale earthworks and palisades known as pā. The history of New Zealand architecture is not just one of arrival and the adaptation and evolution of building forms but also of transforming the landscape to meet the needs of people.

Throughout Oceania there is a strong relationship between the technologies required to construct ocean-going craft and those used to create buildings. What were once seen as simple dug-out canoes and grass shacks are now recognised as skilfully built

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THE NEW ZEALAND EXHIBITION

FUTURE ISLANDS

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KOHA

New Zealand's participation in the 2016 Architettura Biennale in Venice is an opportunity to consider the wider achievements of New Zealand's architecture and design practitioners, the increasing diversity of their practice and production, and their contribution to the life of the country. *Future Islands*, the official New Zealand exhibition created by Charles Walker and Kathy Waghorn and commissioned for the New Zealand Institute of Architects by Tony van Raat, puts some of these concerns on the international architectural radar. But, of course, there's a lot going on beneath the surface of the show: island environments have long been regarded as nesting grounds for evolutionary development.

This publication tells some more of our island's design stories. It takes its name from a Māori word for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity. We want to learn from the Biennale, and offer information in return. Our stories may be news to many people – we believe it's good news. *Koha* covers the continuum of architecture and design in New Zealand, looking at how we got to where we're at (voyages, arrivals and adaptations), what's happening now (design tendencies and contemporary projects), and why the outlook is propitious (the promotion of inclusiveness, the push for equity and the promise of youthful talent). *Koha* also profiles the innovative companies who see New Zealand's presence at the world's leading architecture event as a chance to tell their stories in a forum dedicated to the exhibition of imaginative propositions and the realisation of creative ideas.

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THE STORY UP TO NOW

By Bill McKay

structures that responded to local climatic and material conditions and that evolved in response to changing circumstances. The large double-hulled vessels became single-hulled canoes (waka), manned by paddlers and suited to coastal and riverine conditions. And the early whare, thanks to abundant timber and excellent woodworking skills, developed into larger structures benefiting from a rich carving tradition that culminated in elaborate elevated storage houses known as pātaka.

European explorers such as Abel Tasman (in 1642) and James Cook (in 1769) touched the shores of New Zealand in search of *Terra Australis*, the fabled Great Southern Land, but turned away, disappointed. Not until whalers, sealers and flax traders established more permanent contact did lawlessness and dubious land sales prompt Britain's acquisition of New Zealand. The treaty signed by the British Government and Māori tribes was the signal for a rush of settlement after 1840 and a radical transformation of the landscape. Forests were felled, roads were made and new agricultural techniques introduced that rapidly affected native habitats, flora, fauna and, not least, Māori culture.

The New Zealand colonial project did not so much involve the adaptation of European architectural forms to New Zealand conditions as the transformation of the landscape to suit imported forms. In Auckland, then the country's capital, the first government residence and Parliament were prefabricated

kitsets. Most early dwellings were simple cottages, stripped of decoration and with rooms gradually added as means allowed. These early houses were nearly all constructed of wooden framing and cladding as a result of the extensive milling of timber to clear farmland, although in the south of the South Island, in particular, use was made of cob and other earth construction techniques.

Corrugated iron – actually steel, but known colloquially as tin – was used abundantly for roofing and even walls as it could be efficiently stacked and shipped to New Zealand from the factories of Britain. This was the same Industrial Revolution Britain from which mostly urban working and middle-class colonists were fleeing; for them, land in New Zealand was the answer to their aspirations for an agrarian lifestyle and improvement in social class.

Corrugated iron remains an iconic material in New Zealand, and the first choice for roofing domestic houses and constructing farm buildings. Although today brick is produced in reasonable quantities from the country's abundant clay, it performs poorly in the land's equally abundant earthquakes, and is generally used only as a cladding over more resilient timber framing. New immigrants to New Zealand are still surprised to see sprawling suburbs of typical timber and tin houses that seem not that much more technologically advanced than the dwellings of a century and a half ago.

Conflict between Māori and the rapidly growing population of British settlers saw warfare from the 1840s until the 1860s. One striking building type arose from this conflict: the meeting house. Known in Māori as the whare nui (large house) or whare whakairo (carved house), the meeting house adapted European materials and techniques to compete with churches in scale, and provide a place for Māori to come together and discuss issues. The meeting houses became highly carved and decorated and

supplanted pātaka and war canoes (waka taua) to become the centres of society and repositories of identity in a time of cultural erosion. Today, meeting houses – with their large forecourt open areas and ancillary buildings, known as marae – are perhaps the most significant architectural forms characterising New Zealand and Māori architecture and culture.

The late nineteenth century saw the creation of suburbs and the evolution of the cottage into the larger but still free-standing, single-storeyed and timber-constructed villa. In the early twentieth century the bungalow arrived from the West Coast of the United States. The verandah had been a feature

In the 1930s and '40s New Zealand's suburbs were expanded through mass social housing, namely the state house, which was derived from Britain's Garden City Cottage movement. But this was the last time New Zealand looked to its 'mother country' for architectural inspiration.

of early New Zealand houses and other buildings – it was also common in other lands colonised during the nineteenth century – and remains another iconic trope of the country's architecture.

In the 1930s and '40s New Zealand's suburbs were expanded through mass social housing, namely the state house, which was derived from Britain's Garden City Cottage movement. But this was the last time New Zealand looked to its 'mother country' for architectural inspiration. New Zealand was occupied during the Second World War, not by enemy forces but by American troops en route to the Pacific theatre. Before the war, New Zealanders referred to Britain as 'home'; after the war, the country looked to the United States. The suburban house in the late 1950s and '60s swiftly acquired the elements of the Californian Ranch-style house. With its open plan and free flow between the interior and the great outdoors – the perennial national preoccupation – this housing type remains popular today.

One other icon of New Zealand architecture deserves mention: the bach, a small, shack-like holiday home near a beach or lake that many New Zealanders



05

visited in summer. Some of the most interesting contemporary house designs toy with, react against, or invoke the spirit of our various types: vernacular farm buildings, villa, bungalow, state house and bach.

The house has always been and remains a central concern of New Zealand architecture. It is central to the practice of most architects, surprising as that is to those in countries that look to other building types to satisfy architectural ambitions and express identity. In its first one-hundred-and-fifty years, New Zealand's government, institutional and commercial buildings were largely similar to those in many other countries during the same period.

This isn't unusual as New Zealand was one of the last transplants of the British Empire, and was expected to develop as a branch of imperial growth. Many of the country's nineteenth and twentieth century buildings were constructed of brick and stone, but in scale they are small and in style they reflect the same concerns of Victorian Britain and its Battle of the Styles, although with marginally more Gothic Revival than Classical, especially in church architecture.

The destruction of the city of Napier in 1931 had a happy side-effect when the city was rapidly rebuilt in the Art Deco style, becoming for a brief period 'the most modern city on the globe'.

Schools, however, were more innovative in form, especially during the twentieth century, when a wave of progressive educational ideas also found architectural expression. Classrooms became large and sun-filled places that spilled onto verandahed spaces. The destruction of the city of Napier in 1931 had a happy side-effect when the city was rapidly rebuilt in the Art Deco style, becoming for a brief period 'the most modern city on the globe'.

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THE STATE OF PLAY

By Pip Cheshire

Is it possible that we architects in New Zealand are damned by a too beautiful and unpopulated land? That such is the abundance of one after another outstanding natural landscape that the works of human endeavour are eclipsed?

Well, not really: hills throughout the country are sprinkled with pastel-coloured farmhouses craning their hipped roofs for yet wider views. Above them are hilltops notched with terraces, remnants of defensible enclosures built by Māori, the country's first inhabitants. Nineteenth-century clearing of the country's thick native forest cover to form pastureland heralded European colonisation and the transformation of the land with roads, railways, hydro dams, towns and cities. We have made these, until the late twentieth century, with a sense of isolation, of being at great distance from the northern hemisphere's sophistication and modernity.

If distance has lent us a backward, provincial air, it has also given us room to make a society freed from the received constraints of class and tradition, a place in which it is said 'Jack (and Jill) are as good as their neighbours'. While an egalitarian society was founded on progressive and idealistic legislation, the rapid building of the country's infrastructure revealed a tough pragmatism. Rivers have been dammed for hydro power, waterways filled to make harbours from which our agricultural produce is exported, and hills levelled to make roads, towns and cities.

In the main, the buildings of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century towns appear as if transposed from English provinces. The latter half of the twentieth century has, however, seen rapid urbanisation, mass overseas travel, wider sources of immigration, the growth of car-based suburbanisation and an increased concern with the expression of national identity in the country's art and architecture.

With few exceptions, the more recent commercial buildings of the cities are dominated by the stripped-back internationalism so beloved of developers for its avoidance of detail, cost and grace. In earthquake-ravaged Christchurch, a city once lauded for its pre-cast-concrete Brutalism and playfully reworked colonial Gothic, one sees a significant collection of new commercial buildings and, perhaps, might discern a new aesthetic canon.

Though it is 'early days' and many construction cranes still swing on Christchurch's skyline, one sees a transition from the ubiquitous pre-cast-concrete way of building to coloured and

Continued on page 7...



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04. A burgeoning state house suburb in Levin. Photo by John Dobrée Pascoe. Ref: 1/4-001183-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. 05. 'Hut on Sleds' by Crosson Clarke Carnachan Architects. A rethinking of the 'bach' – the traditionally small, often ad hoc, houses (or shacks) that are prolific on the coast. Photo by Simon Devitt.



02



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The first tentative arrival of Modernism between the wars coincided with a period of progressive thinking, an egalitarian social climate and a burst of industrialisation. Some new architectural ideas were expressed in factories and commercial buildings, albeit to a limited extent due to the effects of the Great Depression and the generally conservative taste of most of the population.

The first tentative arrival of Modernism between the wars coincided with a period of progressive thinking, an egalitarian social climate and a burst of industrialisation.

Modernism took off during the post-war economic boom. In the 1950s and '60s there was a proliferation of new government, institutional and commercial buildings built in the concrete and glass International style. Brutalism was particularly important in New Zealand, and often featured concrete and blockwork that imitated timber post and beam construction.

At a time when New Zealand was self-consciously searching for a national identity it's not surprising that Modernism, especially in domestic architecture, took on a regional accent. Architects argued that building form should acknowledge local climate, materials

and the influence of vernacular structures such as the farm woolshed and the Māori meeting house. In contrast to this brief era of Regional Modernism, the late 1960s and '70s saw a more relaxed aesthetic and a humanistic focus, a development that could be traced to international sources but also resonated with egalitarian inclinations, do-it-yourself attitudes and a vernacular revival.

The architectural achievements in these years were significant, even if they were mainly confined to the domestic realm, and did not greatly affect what had become a stifling atmosphere of dull commercial and institutional Modernism. Post-Modernism landed in New Zealand at a time of radical economic and political change. Consequently, it was controversial. Post-Modern architecture was regarded by some as *laissez-faire* looseness lacking a moral compass, and by others as an expression of freedom from the strictures of Modernism or the introverted preoccupation of generations with national identity. Recent decades have seen a welcome shift away from the house as an architectural focus and an improvement in commercial and institutional buildings.

Oddly enough, in a nation that has always been one of the least religious in the world, it is in New Zealand's churches that one can see not just a clear reflection of the concerns of each period in our country's history but also significant architectural achievement. Missionaries came to New Zealand at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Some of the earliest churches erected by Anglican and Catholic missionaries from the 1820s were built by Māori for Māori congregations using flax and *raupō* (bulrush) while incorporating imported elements such as lancet windows. These structures were early examples of

06. Āpirana Turupa Ngata leading a haka at the 1940 centennial celebrations, Waitangi. From 'Making New Zealand Centennial Collection'. Ref: MNZ-2746-1/2-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

a genuinely cross-cultural architecture that became even more significant in a group of large churches including Rangiatea (1851) at Ōtaki.

Early wooden churches were envisaged as temporary until those of 'permanent materials' (brick and stone) could be built, but a lack of good-quality stone and masonry skills, and the land's tendency to quake meant that it was only large urban churches that were substantial. New Zealand's settlement in the nineteenth century paralleled the period of the new and radical Gothic Revival, and spare, timber versions of this style of church, featuring a beautiful exposed structure crafted from native timbers, are widespread and constitute, as prominent historian Michael King put it, "our one memorable contribution to world architecture".

Later-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century churches reflect the international Battle of the Styles with a series of Classical Revival Catholic basilicas, in particular, being a high point. But, again, it is the response of Māori to the pressures of European settlement that result in distinctively New Zealand adaptations of European forms to be at the service of Māori needs. This is seen over the course of several decades, from the Catholic churches of the Mill Hill missionaries (1890s), the churches and the revival of meeting house construction by Āpirana Ngata in the 1930s, and the churches and marae constructed by the Rātana movement in the 1930s–1950s.

The full-scale arrival of Modernism in the post-war period, combined with a spate of church construction in expanding cities, the liturgical reforms of Vatican 2 and a continuing concern with the expression of national identity, that led to a large number of remarkable churches that are distinctively of this

country and no other. Examples are Richard Toy's All Saints, Auckland (1958), and John Scott's Futuna Chapel, Wellington (1961).

The twentieth-century revivals of Māori traditions and crafts have signified and contributed to the development of a bicultural society, and this development is now frequently reflected in architecture. There is a related openness to the architecture of other cultures, especially those of the Polynesian diaspora – the people of Tonga, Samoa and other Pacific islands – that make Auckland the largest Polynesian city in the world.

Today, immigration to New Zealand continues as it has always done and a new wave of immigrants from Asia will add significantly to the spectrum of the currently European, Māori, Polynesian, Indian and Chinese population. Given that New Zealand architecture consists of imported ideas and models that crash into or alight on our islands, that are imposed on or adapted to local conditions, it is only a matter of time until this new wave of immigrants contributes to a new architecture.

Architecture in New Zealand has never been primarily about form or function, landscape, materials, tectonics or climate: it is a cross-cultural conversation that has been at the heart of our best architecture since different peoples started meeting each other here.

As a young nation, New Zealand knows its past more immediately, intimately and obsessively than many, but, like any adolescent nation, is also very self-conscious of its present and its place in the world. The settlement and growth of New Zealand continues and as the increasing diversity of population connects our islands to more and more shores, these islands, in an era of contracting physical distances and new digital, virtual and multicultural dimensions, are looking to new and multiplying futures.

07. Interior of Rangiatea Church, Ōtaki, 1851. Sketch by Charles Decimus Barraud, lithograph by R.K. Thomas, London, Day & Son [ca. 1852]. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. 08. Futuna Chapel, Karori, Wellington. A "church distinctively of this country and no other". Photo by Duncan Winder. Ref: DW-0198-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. 09. Extension to Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2011) designed by FJMT in association with Archimedia – a Pacific pavilion alongside a weighty French Renaissance-style 'chateau'. The Gallery was judged to be 'World Building of the Year' at the 2013 World Architecture Festival. Photo by Patrick Reynolds.



07



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patterned high-performance glass skins stretched over seismically engineered structures. In the immediate aftermath of the first earthquake, the public's reluctance to enter buildings, and certainly high-rise ones, has led to a constraint on the height of rebuilding. In addition to limited height, many ingenious seismic devices are on display, each designed to ensure, and show, that buildings can not only be evacuated safely, but be brought back into alignment and reuse.

One suspects this is something of a short-term phenomenon and as the memory of that awful 'quake dulls, those more complex concerns of history, morphology and culture may be more evident. At present, perhaps only Architectus's new transport hub eschews seismic exhibitionism in favour of those aspects of inculturation and maturation that made architecture a blood sport in pre-earthquake Christchurch.

Further north, Auckland, the biggest city, aims at being the most liveable in the world. While one might think it reasonably well set up for a run at the title, with harbours, beaches and picturesque volcanic cones, it suffers from a heart that has been the proving ground for decades of legislative tinkering with the nation's finance system. At various times this has included a King Canute-like attempt to outlaw wage and price increases and, at the opposite extreme, the dismantling of any sort of constraint on banking and speculation. In this environment the survival of any building of quality in Auckland has been more by happenstance than deliberate act.

If the buildings of the nation's commercial sector are, at best, a work in progress, institutional buildings are something of a curate's egg, the best showing a knowing sense of place and an awareness of both the specifics of site and a wider understanding of the New Zealand cultural condition. One might look to the reworked Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki by FJMT/Archimedia and Stevens Lawson's Blyth Performing Arts Centre in Hawke's Bay to find projects that are at once of international quality and local in character.

Given the preponderance of easily accessible open land and the clearing of native forest to create pasture as a prevalent mythology during the country's colonial occupation, it is perhaps not surprising that the specific conditions of site and climate are invariably identified as prime determinants of form and programme, invariably at the cost of a more studied engagement in architecture as a discrete research or creative activity.

It is in the country's bespoke houses that the combination of the concerns of site and climate, those of creative endeavour, research and engagement in a global architectural discourse, reach their zenith. Although the number of architect-designed houses hovers around only eight per cent of all houses built, a mixture of good craft building skills, spectacular sites and a near-universal belief in one's right to a stand-alone house has generated a body of outstanding domestic work within the country.

A generally benign climate and a ready supply of timber suitable for building has engendered a highly developed way of constructing lightweight houses. The relatively low cost and high speed of timber construction has spawned large nineteenth-century houses on high-country sheep estates, mass government-sponsored state-owned housing from the 1940s, architect-led experimental housing in the post-Second World War years, and continues now with sophisticated and highly crafted houses and an increasing use of engineered timber panels in prefabricated housing.

A recent trend to heavier in-situ and pre-cast-concrete houses suggests that perhaps we have begun a more permanent occupation of the land. If this is so, rapprochement with a resurgent Māori culture and their ways of building and relating to the land is, as yet, an unfinished programme.

The critical case for regionalism

New York architectural writer Alexandra Lange visited New Zealand early in 2016. She talked to John Walsh about some of the surprising discoveries she made on her journey.



John Walsh: I'm guessing that before you visited New Zealand you didn't know that much about the country, let alone its architecture.

Alexandra Lange: I knew nothing, absolutely nothing. Growing up, my best friend's aunt married someone from New Zealand and it was as if that aunt had moved to outer space – they saw the family at best every five years. So my sense of it was far away, green, sheep and (I'm sorry) *The Lord of the Rings*.

Yes, we're doomed to live in Middle Earth for as long as the marketers can eke out that branding journey. A nation of hobbits – not the most aspirational of goals. Given that you had few expectations, did you encounter any surprises?

It wasn't until my fourth stop, in Wellington, that the branding kicked in. Because my idea of New Zealand was at least twenty years out of date, I wasn't expecting the architecture I saw to be as sophisticated and as mainstream, vis-à-vis the United States, as it was. There seemed to me to be a more general acceptance of Modernism there than here, as well as in some cases a higher quality of construction. The Britomart pop-up commercial area in Auckland, for

example, is very elegant and combines landscape and texture in an interesting way.

It is also always fun to see other countries' versions of architectural movements. I was impressed by the concrete architecture of Warren and Mahoney in Christchurch – some would call it Brutalism – that was so sensitive to climate and siting. A friend runs the website 'Fuck Yeah Brutalism' and he had none of it. Why is so much contemporary New Zealand architecture using unshaded glass when you have that example?

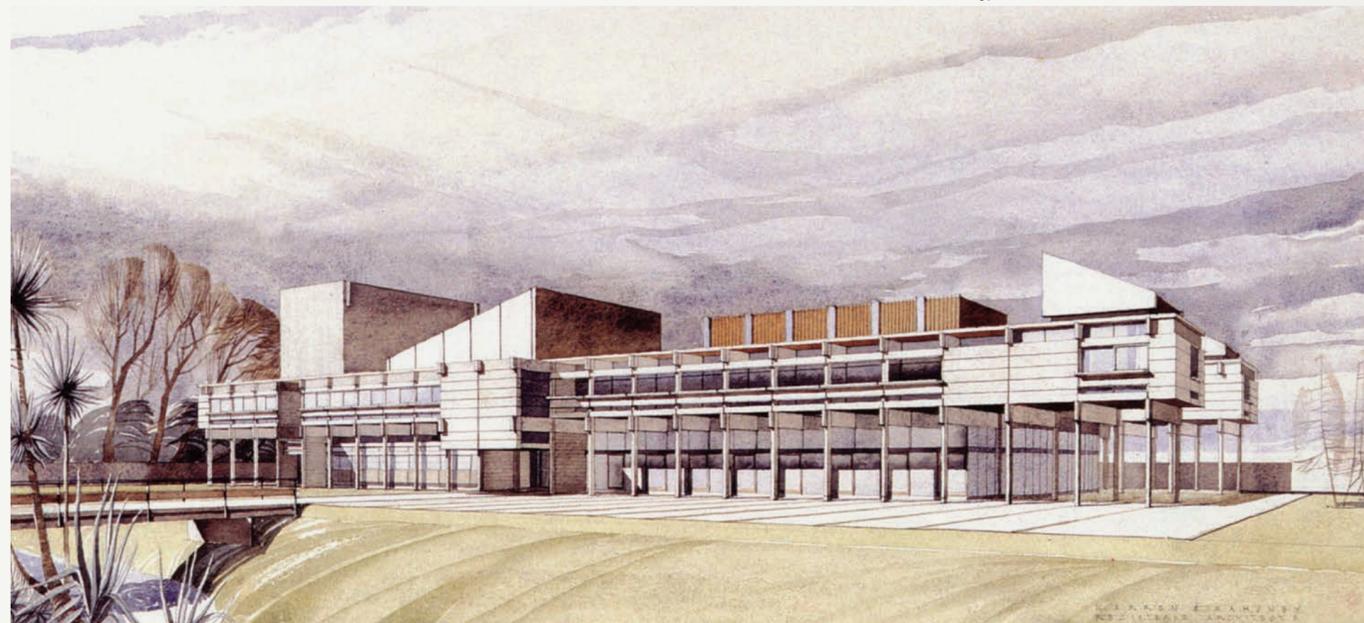
A good question. There are all these highly glazed office buildings in Auckland that must have looked good in a render, and they're festooned with interior blinds or just sheets of paper that the occupants have stuck to the glass so they can read what's on their computer screens as they try to adjust the air con on steamy summer afternoons. Perhaps it's to do with compulsion to offer, and market, a view – as much of a view as possible. Isn't this a universal condition?

It is, but, since everyone kept reminding me about the strength of the sun, it seems like New Zealand

01. Rore Kahu, the Marsden Cross Interpretive Centre, by Cheshire Architects. Photo by Nat Cheshire. **02.** Student Union Building, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1967, a meticulously detailed example of New Zealand's New Brutalism designed by Warren and Mahoney. The building is an assembly of post-tensioned pre-cast concrete frame and pre-cast panels. As Sir Miles Warren put it, "we were interested in how you put it together... coming from a carpentry tradition". Watercolour image courtesy of Warren and Mahoney.



01



02

cities might be an extreme case for solar heat gain. Why not make something beautiful and characteristic out of that? Otherwise the waterfront could be anyone's waterfront, and in fact a number of the five to ten-year-old commercial buildings are. It seemed like domestic architecture is doing a better job of showcasing views and still making a comfortable, enclosed environment.

There are a couple of issues there. As you say, everyone's doing waterfront regeneration these days: how do you develop something that is not generic or ubiquitous? And, as you noticed, many domestic projects are well adapted to climate, environment and context. A besetting challenge in New Zealand architecture is the translation of the qualities evident in well-designed residential architecture to big buildings. And that in turn raises many issues, including the expectations of clients, budgets, leadership at a city and national governmental level, and the sheer ability of architects to deploy their skills at scale.

I know you mentioned that Australian architects often end up getting larger urban projects, which can lead to frustration as local architects don't get the opportunity to stretch. I'd say to commissioning bodies that, as someone from abroad, I'd rather see designs I wouldn't see anywhere else, and that showcase the special topography and climate of Auckland or Wellington or elsewhere. Colour, for example. I saw beautiful colour at the home [in Cox's Bay, Auckland] of Pete Bossley and Miriam van Wezel, but not a lot in the cityscapes. I have to say that I thought the Auckland Art Gallery (by Australians!) did a good job of combining a handsome contemporary vocabulary with a striking wood veneer canopy that was made for New Zealand. The prominent coffee bar seemed appropriately local and approachable too.

Let's talk about some of the other things you saw on your visit. What else did you enjoy?

I loved the coastline near Kerikeri and in the Bay of Islands – that was where I got my first sense of the scale and complexity of the New Zealand landscape. The Marsden Cross Interpretive Centre had a great combination of simplicity and design, giving arrival at that spot a sense of ceremony.

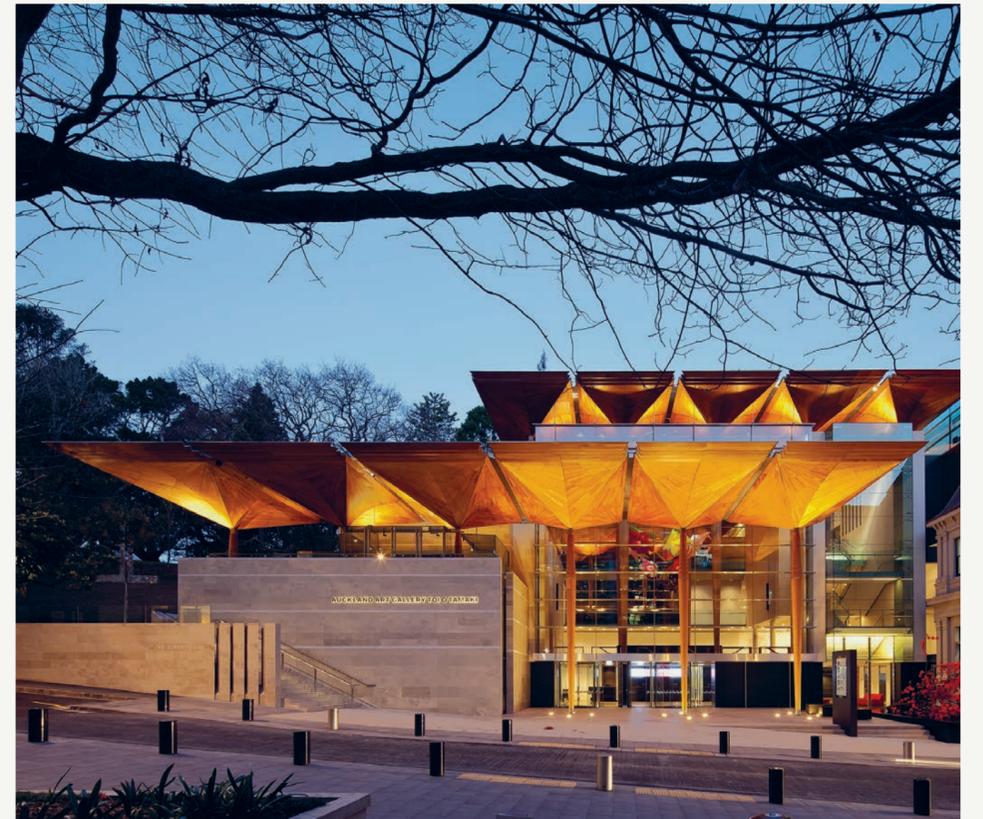
In Christchurch I did not feel encouraged by the current state of the central business district or the cathedral, but there were fascinating developments around the edges. My favourite was the Margaret Mahy Family Playground, which is big and bright and was filled with families, even though there seemed to be little housing around it.

And in Wellington I was blown away by Amritsar House by the late Ian Athfield (see cover), which is really like nothing else I've ever seen. A truly astonishing place. I wish someone would make a dramatic miniseriess about how it came to be.

You also saw some landscape projects, or projects in the landscape, of some scale. Human intervention in the landscape is no new thing in New Zealand, of course – our economy was built on it. But the contrived fashioning of the land is quite new, and sometimes it's intended to repair the depredations of settlement. You also saw some urban landscaping work too, for example at Auckland's Viaduct Harbour. Did you get any sense of the landscape-architecture relationship here?



03



04

03. Ortolana, a restaurant within a temporary pavilion, at Britomart, Auckland. Photo by Jeremy Toth. **04.** Extension to Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2011) designed by FJMT in association with Archimedia. Photo by Patrick Reynolds.

A return to native planting, and landscape architecture that heals as well as beautifies the environment are not new ideas, but I was intrigued by a couple of New Zealand-specific examples: Megan Wright's waterfront project in Wellington – a garden which artfully combines recreation and some beautiful wild moments, and acts as a filter for the harbour, and Thomas Woltz's Orongo Station, near Gisborne. This is a huge private project of reclamation and reforestation, combined with more responsible farming practice, that seems like a whole new model of how to live in the landscape. It requires some mental rearrangement to see all those sheep as interlopers who are destroying the hills – via erosion and grazing – that they look so pretty on.

One last question, and this relates to Rem Koolhaas's 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, which examined a century of modernity and its homogenising effects: how much space do different countries – or regions – need to have to meaningfully express their difference, or

their characteristics, in their architecture? That is, beyond the application of motif or pursuit of pastiche. Or should we not get hung up on this? If buildings work and do their job and are enjoyable to occupy and look at, and are environmentally responsible – is that enough?

This is actually the theme of the essay I'm working on about the trip – places in New Zealand that exemplify what used to be called Critical Regionalism, which I personally would like to see more of. A world of practically the same buildings in good taste may sound like a good thing when ninety-nine per cent of the built world is out of architects' hands – but then, why would we travel? It's the differences of climate or politics or cultural dynamics or even individual personality that push ideas in architecture along. I feel that no matter how many digital images we consume, I always hope the versions – of blackened wood cladding, or ethereal white steel, or swoopy roofs – turn out differently.

Don't look back

New Zealand's inaugural exhibition at the Biennale Architettura was about the country's architectural origins; that ground having been covered, the second exhibition looks to the architectural future.

By John Walsh

LAST, LONELIEST, LOVELIEST

—2014



After a couple of brave but abortive attempts to enter an official New Zealand pavilion into the Venice Architecture Biennale, the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) assumed responsibility for the country's participation in the world's leading architecture exhibition in 2014.

The inaugural New Zealand pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale was curated by a team led by Auckland architect David Mitchell, a director of the Auckland practice Mitchell & Stout Architects and the recipient of the NZIA Gold Medal for design excellence. Like the other Biennale curators, Mitchell sought to respond to the theme set by the event's director, Rem Koolhaas: 'Absorbing Modernity: 1914–2014'. Koolhaas wanted national exhibitors to consider the effects of a century of modernity on their architecture: what had been lost ("the erasure

of national characteristics") and what may still be found ("the survival of unique national features and mentalities").

For many curators, Koolhaas's theme was a prompt to examine the relationship, in their country, between local traditions – cultural as well as architectural – and Modernism, the architectural lingua franca of the twentieth century. Modernity, Modernism, Modernisation: the terms could get slippery, and, not surprisingly, most exhibition curators opted to cast the theme as a simpler question: What, if anything, is different about your country's architecture story over the past century?

David Mitchell's proposition was that what differentiates New Zealand architecture is its inherited Pacific construction tradition – a legacy of lightweight, post-and-beam timber structures, with wood infill panels and big sheltering roofs. "This architectural tradition was carried by migratory voyagers through the islands of the Pacific Ocean, arriving with the Māori eight hundred years ago," Mitchell wrote. "It survived European colonisation and has adapted to modernity, rather than being subsumed by it." This evolving tradition is what sets us apart, Mitchell posited in his exhibition, which he titled *Last, Loneliest, Loveliest*.

Mitchell's show was not just a declaration of difference but also an argument for optimism. "Given the world's concerns about climate change and the sustainable use of resources, and New Zealand's own worries about its seismic circumstances," Mitchell wrote, "the Pacific architectural qualities of resilience, flexibility and reparability have a lot to offer."

The message of *Last, Loneliest, Loveliest* was matched by the exhibition medium. A tent-like form, with fabric sides printed with images of Pacific and New Zealand structures, took centre stage and the theme of lightweight construction was continued in a small post-tensioned tower bearing architectural models. Visitors were greeted by a carved whatārangi, a single-poled Māori storehouse. In a wry exercise in cultural inversion, the whatārangi contained a model of a European-style storehouse, the 1929 Auckland War Memorial Museum, which itself houses the celebrated Māori storehouse Hotonui. A treasure within a treasure, within yet another treasure – the Palazzo Pisani in Cannaregio, the venue for the 2014 New Zealand Biennale exhibition.

01. Visitors at *Last, Loneliest, Loveliest*, New Zealand's inaugural national exhibition at the Biennale Architettura. A tent-like form, which referenced the lightweight constructions of Aotearoa New Zealand and other Pacific Islands, was the centrepiece of the exhibition. 02. *Future Islands* concept drawing showing suspended 'islands' dotted with projects that present multiple perspectives of the country's evolving architecture. 03. The *Future Islands* creative team: Top row, from left: Bruce Ferguson, Jessica Barter, Maggie Carroll, Kathy Waghorn, Jon Rennie and Minka Ip. Bottom row, from left: Stephen Brookbanks, Rewi Thompson and Charles Walker. Photo by Jane Usher.

FUTURE ISLANDS

—2016



Where the 2014 New Zealand exhibition told a particular story, the 2016 exhibition, *Future Islands*, curated by a team led by creative director Charles Walker of AUT University and associate creative director Kathy Waghorn of The University of Auckland, presents multiple perspectives of the country's architecture – nearly fifty projects, many of them unrealised, designed by big firms, small practice and students, are modelled in the exhibition. It's quite a different narrative, yet told in response to a similar question.

When they contemplated entering the competition to create the 2016 New Zealand exhibition, which was prior to Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena being chosen as Biennale director, and before he announced his theme, 'Reporting from the Front', Walker and his team were "thinking about what we could say about architecture in New Zealand, and how and why we might say it, in a meaningful way, in an international context." Basically, "what, if anything, constitutes 'New Zealand' architecture?"

The answer, according to *Future Islands*, is diversity, which might surprise not only outsiders who presume New Zealand is relatively straightforward but also many New Zealanders who haven't quite caught up with the extent of the country's heterogeneity.

"New Zealand is actually one of the most dynamic societies in the world in terms of population demographics, political economy and culture," Walker says. "And also, as academics interacting with people in the early stages of their architectural careers, Kathy Waghorn and I are very conscious of how the profession is attracting a wider range of people, and there is now a greater variety of approaches and influences than our histories tend to record."

There were other exhibition influences, too, Walker says, for example Michel Houellebecq's novel *The Possibility of an Island*.

"The book might take a rather pessimistic view of the future, but I do like the line about how 'there exists, in the midst of time, the possibility of an island' – it probably sounds even better in the original French," Walker says. "We're from an island place, after all. We started to think more about islands as sites of possibility for alternative ways of living, or metaphors for the ways in which architects work, their practice cultures, and their relationships to other practices. We are certainly playing with the romantic fictions, aesthetics and historical ambiguities of the island metaphor, but as we developed the exhibition concept we focused on the architectural profession as clusters of practices, as archipelagos."

What else influenced the curatorial perspective? "I've always been a fan of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*," Walker says. "In the book, Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant who went to China in the thirteenth century, is telling the Kublai Khan stories about the wondrous cities he's seen on his travels. The emperor is entranced by these stories, and also slightly suspicious of them. As it turns out, Polo is describing his own city of Venice over and over again, in different ways and from different perspectives. We wondered whether we could do something like that about New Zealand."

Future Islands looks at what is happening now, and what might happen," Walker says. "It's not meant to be didactic, and does not set out to define New Zealand architecture. We used the exhibition as a

platform for some research, but we're also very aware that the Biennale is an event experienced by an audience, and not all of the audience are academics or architecture practitioners.

"We wanted the exhibition to be atmospheric, and in our very first proposal we said we wanted it to be beautiful – which perhaps is an uncool thing to say these days – and we wanted it to be intriguing," Walker says. "*Future Islands* is designed as an exhibition through which people wander, much as they might find their way around Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. People can navigate the exhibition – they'll have a map – but not necessarily in any order. Things are left hanging, you might say.

"We wanted to make the host building – Palazzo Bollani in Castello – part of the exhibition. Our 'islands' would float within the building. They could be read as landforms, clouds, waves, or volcanic fields, or as bodies in space – we wanted them to introduce a fluid, organic quality to the exhibition venue.

"We also like that Palazzo Bollani has a watergate – a door onto a canal," Walker says. "In a way, that door opens directly to New Zealand. The canal is part of the water mass that covers the globe. You could go out the door and get to New Zealand, eventually, with a bit of navigation."

And a fair bit of time. Because New Zealand is so far from Venice – and it takes such a long time to ship things from here to there – the creators of *Future Islands* had to start work well before Alejandro

Aravena announced his Biennale theme. Even so, Walker says, "I don't think *Future Islands* and 'Reporting from the Front' are that far apart.

"Perhaps our manifesto has a gentler character than Alejandro's call to arms, but I think we're both looking forward with the optimism that all architects have to have.

"I was struck by an image Alejandro used to illustrate his theme – Bruce Chatwin's photograph of the German mathematician and anthropologist Maria Reiche, who became obsessed by the Nazca lines in Peru and studied them for half a century. In the photo, she's up on a stepladder, gazing out to the desert.

"For me, this image suggests that a slight shift in perspective opens up a new way of understanding the world. Take our archipelago of islands. Archipelago has come to mean a group of islands, but originally it meant the sea in which the islands were found – the sea that connects, as well as separates. That's rather a comforting perspective or, at least, not such a lonely prospect."

More information about *Future Islands* and architecture in New Zealand can be found at:

www.venice.nzia.co.nz

NewZealandInstituteofArchitects

@NZIArchitects

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02



03



Photo by David St George

MINKA THE MODEL MAKER

By John Walsh

One of the first people Charles Walker called when he learned he had been selected as the Creative Director of New Zealand's exhibition at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale was Minka Ip.

Walker's exhibition proposal, *Future Islands*, called for numerous architecture models, and if you want architecture models, Minka is your man. Over the past decade his Auckland-based company Architecture + Design Fabrication Workshop has emerged as the go-to model maker for curators, architects and developers.

Ip started making models as a student at The University of Auckland's School of Architecture, and while at the School he made models for exhibitions at Objectspace Gallery and Auckland War Memorial Museum. He worked in architecture practices for a few years in New Zealand and then in Hong Kong, where he grew up, but when he decided to get serious about model making he returned to Auckland and set up in business with then-partner Kenny Cheng. Ambe Masatake, another fellow student, is a long-time worker in Architecture + Design Fabrication Workshop too.

In Hong Kong, Ip says, he found the scale of model-making too industrial. "I like making things with my hands. Technology helps to speed up the process, but I like the craft element of model-making, and there's room for this approach in New Zealand."

Ip says the commercial appetite for architectural models has increased over the past five years. "In the last property boom everyone wanted computer renders, but since the Global Financial Crisis people have gone back to physical models. We've been crazily busy since 2013. Architects have always liked models. Real-estate agents also like the physical model, and clients like the craft. People may not understand architecture, but they can understand the object."

Upwards of twenty of the architecture models in *Future Islands* have been made in Ip's workshop in inner-city Eden Terrace, Auckland, which houses several large 3-D printers, and the other exhibition models have been subjected to his quality control. Ip's ambitions for Architecture + Design Fabrication Workshop include moving into larger-scale modelling and boutique joinery, but the crafting of architecture models remains core business. "You can still be an architect," he says, "when you're making models."

Weaving many strands

Putting 'our faces in our places' is the aim of a new design framework that will allow Māori design culture to be woven into strong cultural landscapes.

By Desna Whaanga-Schollum

Māori are committed to working towards reinstating and developing a physical and metaphysical understanding of cultural landscape within contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. In January 2007 a set of guiding principles – the Te Aranga Principles – was developed by Māori professionals and supporters spanning many areas of design, arts, health, education, local and central government. The principles assert that “the development and articulation of the Māori cultural landscape will contribute to the health and well-being of all who reside in and visit Aotearoa – through realising our unique Aotearoa and Pacific identity.”

The Te Aranga Principles articulate a mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) view of the cultural landscape as a holistic environment that informs and sculpts our identities:

“As Māori we have a unique sense of our 'landscape'. It includes past, present and future.

It includes both physical and spiritual dimensions.

It is how we express ourselves in our environment.

It connects whānau and whenua, flora and fauna, through whakapapa.

It does not disconnect urban from rural.

It transcends the boundaries of 'land'scape into other 'scapes': rivers, lakes, ocean and sky.

It is enshrined in our whakapapa, pepeha [tribal saying], tauparapara [incantation to begin a speech], whaikōrero [a formal speech], karakia [ritual chants], waiata [song, chant], tikanga [correct procedure, custom, lore, method], ngā kōrero a kui ma, a koroua ma [the words of our elders] and our mahi toi [art and architecture].

It is not just where we live – it is who we are!”

A few months after the promulgation of the Te Aranga Principles a hui (gathering) convened at Apumoana Marae in Rotorua titled 'Designing Māori Futures'. The hui's purpose was the establishment of a Society of Māori Design Professionals as a vehicle to carry forward the Te Aranga Principles. The outcome of the hui, which was supported by the tertiary education provider Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, was the formation of Ngā Aho, Māori Design Professionals Incorporated Society.

'Ngā Aho', a name originally provided by kaumātua (respected elder) Haare Williams, translates as 'the many strands'. It suggests the weaving together of the many strands of Māori design culture: strategy,



01. Te Uru Taumatua, a new centre of governance and a meeting place for the Tūhoe people in Te Urewera National Park, in the central North Island. The Tūhoe iwi was adamant the new development fully aligns with the tribe's inherent connection to the land – mana tangata. The building, designed by Jasmx, is made of Te Urewera materials – native timber from Te Urewera, pine from Kaingaroa, clay from the region – and made by Tūhoe hands. Photo courtesy of Arrow International.

planning, architecture, landscape architecture, visual communications, product design and education. In essence, Ngā Aho creates a multi-disciplinary professional platform to progress complex cultural issues which span economic, social and ecological concerns. This approach seeks to support wider Māori identity aspirations in an Aotearoa where we can clearly see 'our faces in our places'.

Ngā Aho sits alongside other mainstream design professional associations such as the New Zealand Institute of Architects, Designers Institute of New Zealand, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and the New Zealand Planning Institute to support the needs of Māori design professionals and their Māori client bases. Central to this position is actively maintaining reciprocal relationships with Māori communities and therefore providing responsive and skilled support.

Ngā Aho is based on Māori principles while offering technical and analytical professional experience to stakeholders who are whānau (family), hapū (sub

tribe), iwi (tribe) and mātāwaka (pan tribal) organisations. Māori design within Ngā Aho is framed as applied research with the stakeholders' participation and evaluation being core to further development of appropriate professional tools.

Ngā Aho also promotes the development of policy and structural industry approaches leading to the regenerative presence of Māori culture in the designed landscapes of Aotearoa. Seen through capacity building of Māori design practitioners, in collaboration with their communities, this central principle of community connection within the Te Aranga Principles is termed 'mana'. So, Ngā Aho provides “a platform for working relationships where mana whenua values, world views, tikanga, cultural narratives and visual identity can be appropriately expressed in the design environment.” This tikanga-based approach to Māori design for Ngā Aho was seeded in conversations with Arnold Wilson, a kaumātua of Māori art and design in Aotearoa.

The ability for design discourse to be open-ended,

and therefore continually evolving as suited to context, is a frequent request from Māori communities. This is particularly relevant when forming contemporary agreements such as a memorandum of understanding, strategic partnerships, and resource co-management agreements, and is reflected in the contemporary application of Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi).

It is important to understand that agreements are regarded as guidance frameworks rather than prescriptions. All iwi are different, as are all projects. Knowledge is built from collecting and communicating learning from successive projects, rather than from a set 'traditional' approach. Cultural approaches, if seen in this light, can be given the room to be dynamic and globally connected.

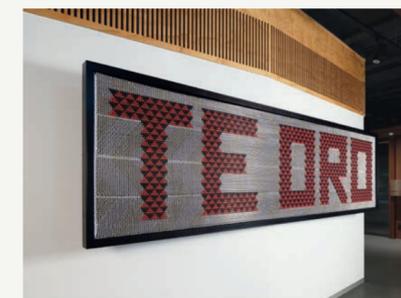
This approach to tikanga Māori is recognised in the Treaty. The principle of 'development', the New Zealand Law Commission stated in 2001, “recognises that culture is not static. The integrity of tikanga Māori is not threatened; rather, it is enhanced by its ability to adapt and evolve as society changes.”

Committing time to defining collectively agreed upon principles at the outset of each project is an essential step towards ensuring bicultural outcomes with integrity. The agreement to a dynamic discussion and place-making approach between those who are more mobile in their occupation patterns and indigenous communities supports the progression of a built environment without the eradication of distinctive place traits. The collaboration of the two understandings of place brings exciting new opportunities for design growth, both in process and outcome.

In 2012 Ngā Aho partnered with the Designers Institute of New Zealand and introduced a new Ngā Aho Award to the annual Best Design Awards. Designers submitting work for the Ngā Aho Award have commented on their growth of understanding in projects which have pursued solid cultural connection with iwi/Māori via relationship development and 'co-design' process. This is described in the award parameters as “designers and clients working effectively Kanohi ki te Kanohi – Pakahiwi ki te Pakahiwi, face to face and shoulder to shoulder, exhibiting trust, respect and rapport.”

This is a significant shift in mind-set for the New Zealand design industry, both in championing an Aotearoa New Zealand design vernacular, and encouraging designers to challenge the commonly held assumption that the 'designer knows best' within a project. The co-design proposition opens up communication and value channels that support genuine dialogue and respect for each party's needs within a project, creating new opportunities for unexpected outcomes or solutions to design problems.

At the forefront of design development in Māori cultural landscapes is a steadily growing body of work focusing on the articulation of Māori values and methodologies that illustrate respectful, reciprocal relationships. The Te Aranga Principles have been formally adopted by Auckland Council in the *Auckland Design Manual* and are now becoming visible in collaborative Māori design processes around the country. Ngā Aho is moving cultural and social objectives for Māori forward and enabling design professional associations to help envision a future Aotearoa New Zealand.



02 & 03. Contemporary tukutuku panel work, designed by Alt Group and Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki, at Te Oro, a new arts and music facility in Glen Innes, Auckland. Tukutuku panels – a type of woven latticework – are traditionally used to decorate Māori whare nui (meeting houses). Photos courtesy of Alt Group. 04. Wooden block letters and carving tools developed for Tourism New Zealand's Pure Pākati branding campaign. The typeface was designed by Phil Kelly, Rangī Kipa, Karl Wixon and Kris Sowersby. 05. Spread from the catalogue for Lisa Reihana's exhibition, *In Pursuit of Venus*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2015. Lisa Reihana will be New Zealand's artist at the 57th Venice Art Biennale in 2017.



Class of '15

Each year, the New Zealand Architecture Awards recognise the very best new buildings from across the country. At the awards, the pinnacle of architectural achievement is the New Zealand Architecture Medal, which is awarded to a single building that the awards jury regards as the 'best of the best'. Below this tier, three awards, named for the respected New Zealand Architects Sir Miles Warren, John Scott and Sir Ian Athfield, acknowledge excellence in the categories of commercial architecture, public architecture and housing. In 2015, bucking the trend for national awards to be dominated by projects from Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, the big prizewinners were from a small North Island town and, perhaps less surprisingly, Canterbury, a region still in the process of rebuilding itself following the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011.



Photo by Mark Smith



NEW ZEALAND ARCHITECTURE MEDAL

Project: The Blythe Performing Arts Centre

Architect: Stevens Lawson Architects

Location: Havelock North

Although four of the past six New Zealand Architecture Medals have gone to buildings in Auckland (an acknowledgement of the more complex projects and bigger budgets available in New Zealand's largest city), 2015 proved that there can be exceptions to the rule. You'll find the Blythe Performing Arts Centre at a secondary school in the small North Island town of Havelock North. Designed by Stevens Lawson Architects, the graceful form perhaps alludes to the landscape of nearby Te Mata Peak, or the sinuous shape of musical instruments played within. It is a welcoming design that glows warmly against the dark. "On this project, client and architects reached for the sublime – and they got there," the awards jury said.



JOHN SCOTT AWARD FOR PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

Project: Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre

Architect: Patterson Associates

Location: Christchurch

Christchurch is known in New Zealand as "The Garden City", although a good part of its profusion of parks and gardens was ruined by earthquake-generated liquefaction. However, it was to garden history that the architects looked when modelling the elegant form of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre. A botanic theme cuts through the building, illustrated most literally though a dappled leaf shadow that was replicated on pre-cast concrete panels and in a flooring pattern comprised of blown-up images of plant microbes. The structure is thoroughly contemporary but it strongly connects with the typology of traditional garden greenhouse buildings. The awards jury described it as "an exhilarating contemporary take on the traditional garden greenhouse and an adroit and sympathetic piece of place-making" and it is an inspiring contribution to the public realm.



Photo by Emma Smales

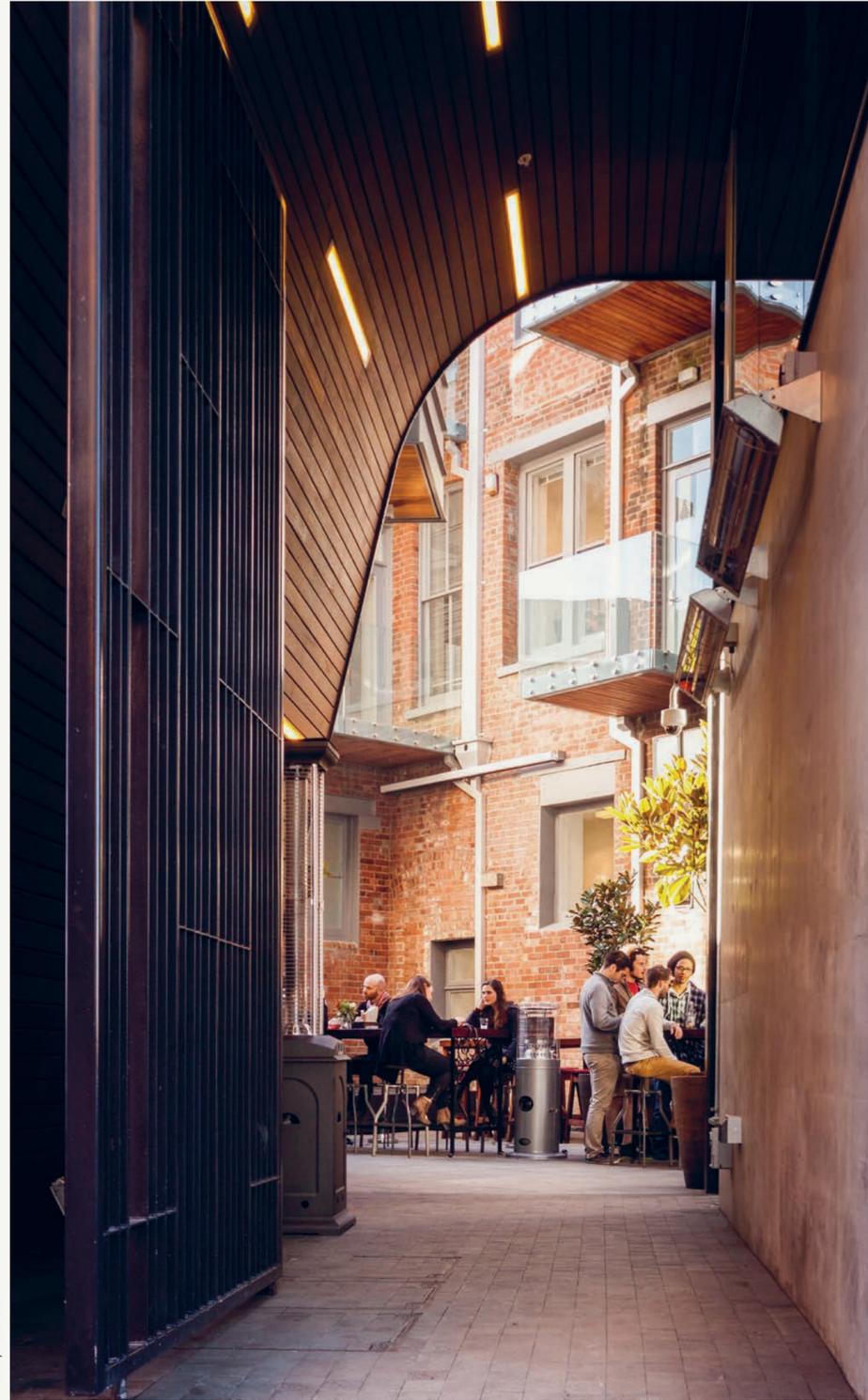


Photo by Peter Cui



SIR MILES WARREN AWARD FOR COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Project: The Stranges & Glendenning Hill
Building Replacement

Architect: Sheppard & Rout

Location: Christchurch

As the name suggests, this structure replaces another that once stood on site. Completing the Christchurch clean sweep of Named Awards, The Stranges Building (as it is commonly called) was one of the first post-quake commercial buildings to rise in the rebuild. The building demonstrates a commitment to “creating a vibrant and rich inner-city development in a manner that goes beyond ordinary expectations,” the awards jury said. “Client and architect set out to make a cosmopolitan, industrious and joyful place on a prominent urban site, and they have succeeded admirably. With its interior courtyard offering sanctuary from traffic and street noise the building is a modern village with an urbane disposition.”



SIR IAN ATHFIELD AWARD FOR HOUSING

Project: Lyttelton Studio Retreat

Architect: Bull O’Sullivan Architecture

Location: Lyttelton

This building, said the 2015 awards jury, “is a labour of love and a testament to the design capacity, bloody-minded commitment and appetite for sheer hard work of its architect.” Hand-built by the architect, the studio sits on a precipitous site that offers panoramic harbour views. A less welcome intrusion is the threat of errant boulders, dislodged from the heights of the Port Hills behind the building as the aftershocks of the Canterbury Earthquakes continue. However, the studio is well reinforced with thick and heavy timber recycled from the deck of the demolished Lyttelton Wharf, which provides a ramp across the front of the building. With a nod to architect Michael O’Sullivan’s ancestry, the jury said that the building, “with its robust and straightforward shell and finely crafted interior, perfectly expresses the dichotomy of pugnacity and poetry of a Hibernian heritage.”



Photo by Patrick Reynolds

Designing women seek rightful place

Women have been part of the New Zealand architecture profession for 80 years – it's time for some real inclusiveness, says the campaigning organisation Architecture + Women · NZ.

By Lucy Treep and Lynda Simmons

What's the place, status and future of women in the architecture profession? Architecture+Women·NZ (A+W·NZ) brings together women trained in architecture and seeks to raise their profile through networking, events, publishing and the formation of policy. It's free to join and while the organisation has a serious intent, participation is intended to be enjoyable as well as purposeful.

Since its inception in 2011 A+W·NZ has gone from strength to strength, gaining respect in the industry, universities and from within the wider architecture community. Informed by the current global wave of interest in gender equity, A+W·NZ provides a forum based on inclusivity, aims to widen the scope of what it means to be an architect and seeks to find ways to sustain and promote the already active architectural community in New Zealand.

A+W·NZ acknowledges the lineage of groups and individuals who have, over the past century, constructed a strong platform for the strengthening of gender awareness in New Zealand. Groups such as The Women's Institute of Architecture in the 1970s and the Constructive Agenda committee of the 1990s had a significant influence on the profession, and individual pioneers such as Marilyn Reynolds (née Hart), Lillian Chrystall (née Laidlaw) and, latterly, Dr Sarah Treadwell of The University of Auckland have changed the landscape of gender and architecture.

A+W·NZ is building a research-based online archive of women in New Zealand's architectural history. One of the organisation's first initiatives was a national exhibition in 2013. This showcase provided a twenty-year update on the work of female architects and women associated with architecture since the staging in 1993 of *Constructed Agenda: 60 Years of Women in Architecture*, an exhibition that marked the centenary of women's suffrage in New Zealand. Focusing on the huge advancements women have made in many architectural fields in a relatively short period of time, A+W·NZ works with optimism for future change to workplace culture, and not only for women.

The inaugural A+W·NZ Awards, which were established in 2014, celebrates achievement in three

principal areas. The Chrystall Excellence Award "recognises the extraordinary talent of women who have led expanded and full careers in architecture over several decades." The Wirihana Emerging Leadership Award highlights "the extraordinary talent of women who remain in the field of architecture beyond the first decade after graduation" – historically a defining period of professional practice. Finally, the Munro Diversity Award salutes "an outstanding career which has continually supported and/or promoted diversity in architecture, and recognises the invisible work that goes into supporting the entire architectural community."

The winners in the inaugural A+W·NZ Awards programme were Cecile Bonnifait of Bonnifait + Giesen AtelierWorkshop (Wirihana Emerging Leadership Award), Justine Clark and Gill Mathewson of advocacy group Parlour (Munro Diversity Award), and Julie Stout of Mitchell & Stout Architects (Chrystall Excellence Award).

In the few years since it was set up A+W·NZ has created a structure that provides guidance, discussion, visibility and positive role-modelling for women and men alike through facilitating events and publications around a healthy reassessment of industry 'norms'.

The relevance of a gendered architectural community in the early twenty-first century could be questioned in a time when sexism is frequently considered to belong to another era, and any related problems have already been resolved. Yet, while they are often invisible to some in the architectural community, many barriers to inclusivity and equality in the workplace still exist.

The two core aims behind A+W·NZ are to promote visibility in the field of architectural practice, and to aim for the inclusive architectural practice culture. This means enabling those typically less visible to have access to, and become part of, their architectural communities. One example of reducing barriers is the inclusion of Māori tikanga (protocol) in all A+W·NZ events to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi). Younger A+W·NZ members say they welcome opportunities to meet women with more advanced architectural careers. Involvement in A+W·NZ has, in turn, opened the door to leadership possibilities elsewhere.

There are three criteria for membership of A+W·NZ. Would-be members must identify as



Above A spread from the 2014 A+W·NZ Awards catalogue. Held every three years, the awards provide an alternative structure that can celebrate careers, which contribute to the built environment in many and diverse ways, rather than to a single object or a building. Photo by Catherine Griffiths.

female, have the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in architecture, spatial design, or similar, and must either have trained in or reside in New Zealand. Membership is open to those in practice or not, and A+W·NZ's events are for the entire architecture community (and, yes, men are always welcome).

A+W·NZ's activities fall into four categories: networks – online database, social media, and online newsletters; events – exhibitions, awards, symposia, lectures, breakfast talks, waiata mornings and site visits; research – books (*Architecture in an Expanded Field*, 2015; *A+W·NZ Awards 2014*; *Snapshot 500 and Gentle Foundations*, 2013), journal and magazine articles, oral histories, and the A+W·NZ timeline; and policy – guidelines for institutes, practices and government submissions.

It is hoped that discussions around gender, workplace culture and policy can have a wider effect on the visibility of many other diverse groups. The intention is for visibility and inclusiveness to apply to all who make their lives in architecture.

Right For the 2013 A+W·NZ Exhibition held in Auckland, 'Between Silos', a timeline was prepared by architecture graduate Marianne Calvelo, assisted by Joy Roxas (design) and Lynda Simmons (curation, research). The timeline acknowledged the role of women in architecture across a long period. This selection of photography was drawn from the original documentation.



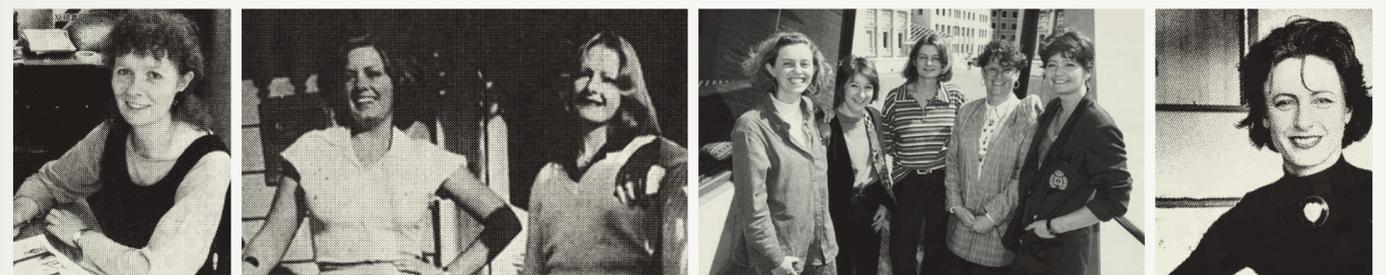
Esther James, active from 1923. Alison Shepherd (née Sleigh), active from 1927. Margaret Munro (née Hamilton), active from 1931. Merle Victoria Greenwood, active from 1933; first architectural degree graduate. Mary Edwards, active from 1938; third architectural degree graduate. Nancy Northcroft, active from 1940.



Lillian Chrystall (née Laidlaw), active from 1947. Helen Tippet, active from 1950. Muriel Lamb (née Sanders), active from 1952. Stephanie Bonny, active from 1976; prolific architecture writer. Marilyn Reynolds, active from 1976; prolific architecture writer. Fiona Christeller (centre), active from 1977.



Amanda Reynolds, active from 1977. Ellen Brinkman, active from 1978. Claire Chambers (second from right), active from 1978. Min Hall, active from 1978.



Sarah Treadwell, active since 1977; first woman to join permanent teaching staff at The University of Auckland. Jane Aimer and Lindley Naismith, active since 1980; from 2002 in practice together as Scarlet Architects. Victoria University of Wellington, class of '88, women graduates. From left: Pauline Ching, Jane Kelly, Julia Gatley, Claire Deacon and Tania Redl. Julie Stout, principal of Mitchell & Stout Architects. Winner of A+W·NZ's Chrystall Excellence Award in 2014.



Women in Architecture, Wellington, 1991. From left: Emma Alcock, Shannon Jeory, Anna Kemble Welsh, Anna Dykes, Katherine Gebbie, Joanne Kelly, Deb Cranko. Left to right: Ellen Brinkmann, Carolyn Smith, Mary Walsh (seated), Rachel Beecroft, Jane Matthews, not unidentified, Amanda Reynolds (seated), Debra Penn, not unidentified. A+W·NZ becomes an Incorporated Society, 2014. Back: Nicola Zimmerman, Elispetta Heta, Megan Rule, Linda Tyler, Lindley Naismith, Julie Wilson, Jane Aimer, Wendy Shacklock. Front: Lynda Simmons.

Adopt, adapt, adept

In a small country in a globalised economy, New Zealand product designers must draw on a legacy of innovation and originality to create sustainable businesses.

By Michael Smythe

New Zealand is a nation of immigrants discovered by Polynesians, named by the Dutch and colonised by the British. Its inhabitants voluntarily travelled a long distance equipped for survival. Their choice of imported equipment was informed by practicality and cultural reassurance. Who they were and how they functioned was embedded in their baggage.

The first settlers, from East Polynesia around 1250 AD, brought tools for hunting, gathering, crafting, building, making more tools and connecting to ancestors and gods. Possibly the oldest found artefact made from a local material is a basalt toki (adze) designed to be lashed to a carved haft. Its elegantly authoritative simplicity exemplifies the desire to honour its user, purpose and maker.

The lack of metal or ceramic vessels did not deprive Polynesian cultures of hot water. Immersion elements in the form of heated stones were placed in water-filled wooden bowls, called kumete in this country, with small spouts and tipping handles.

Captain James Cook's 1769 voyage of discovery was a British Enlightenment project driven by The Royal Society's desire to find the hypothetical southern continent. When these visitors appeared over the horizon the tangata whenua (people of the land) named themselves Māori (normal) and the others Pākehā (from 'Pākepākehā', a mythical fair-skinned human-like being).

The second wave of settlers, preceded by Anglican missionaries (circa 1814), equipped themselves in much the same way as the first. Shiploads of settlers arriving from 1840 set about creating (agri)cultural comfort. Lush native bush was converted into rolling fields of imported grass to feed imported sheep. Some of the timber was converted into familiar furniture by tradesmen armed with design manuals handed down through apprenticeships.

New Zealand's colonial cultural confusion was shown to the world at the 1862 London Exhibition in the form of a Louis XV-style escritoire made by Bohemian immigrant Anton Seuffert and featuring exquisitely inlaid native timbers. It was later presented to Queen Victoria.



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Altered states

Around five hundred years of isolation led to Māori evolving a culturally confident design language. Adapting to available materials and a colder climate led to the design of the 'thatched' pihepihe (rain cape) described in the 'Journal of the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks', in 1769, as "well adapted for their convenience".

Carved, tattooed and painted patterns told meaningful stories. In *The Grammar of Ornament*, 1856, design theorist Owen Jones extolled a Māori paddle as rivalling the works of the highest civilisation. He wrote: "There is not a line upon its surface misapplied."

When iron founder Henry Eli Shacklock was asked to imitate an imported stove in 1873 he not only modified it to work with the local lignite coal, but also made it easier to install and use. Its success required Shacklock to set up New Zealand's first dedicated manufacturing plant. Many tinsmiths made the copper conical kettle which applied the maximum surface area to the hot surface for a speedy result.

From 1939, import restrictions, requiring at least fifty per cent local content, introduced an era of protectionism. Complacency led to much 'me-too' mediocrity with clever design largely focused on adapting overseas ideas to small-scale production.

Harry Urlwin's Speedee electric jugs, produced around 1940, adapted efficiently to the electric safety elements made under licence to Swan. With imported enamelled Judgware jug bodies, they were easier to pour while keeping hands away from steam. Meanwhile, in the UK and USA, consumers opted for electrified kettles; it took half a century for the rest of the world to catch on to the logic of upstanding electric jugs.

01. Wooden bowl, called kumete; Auckland War Memorial Museum, photo by Krzysztof Pfeiffer. 02. Basalt toki (adze); Te Papa Tongarewa, Otago Museum collection, photo by Athol McCredie. 03. Copper conical kettle; The Kauri Museum collection, photo by Andrea Hemmins. 04. Shacklock stove; John H Angus. 'The Ironmasters', scanned 1973. 05. Thatched pihepihe (rain cape); Auckland War Memorial Museum, photo by Krzysztof Pfeiffer. 06. Speedee electric jug; Smythe collection, photo by Michael Smythe. 07. Cordless electric jug; photo by IDEA Developments. 08. Turkish tea maker; photo by IDEA Developments. 09. Methven show-ware. 10. Fisher & Paykel DishDrawer. 11. Medical humidifier by Fisher & Paykel Healthcare. 12. Life Chair by Formway Design. 13. Gallagher Electric Fence unit. 14. David Trubridge lights, Coral and Kōura.

Originals 'in'

Exporters always faced exposure to global competition. When New Zealand-manufactured products could not compete on price, other approaches to survival drove viability. With rapid deregulation of the domestic market from the mid-1980s, some companies became importers while others opted for innovation.

When Ralta was bought by Sunbeam Australia, the New Zealand plant became the 'centre of excellence' for electric jug manufacture. A 1991 plastic cordless jug was designed with sophisticated tooling and automation, utilised to compete with cheap labour overseas. By 1994 a cheaper model was being produced in China. New Zealand production ceased in 2004.

Designer Kim Scott left Sunbeam/Ralta in 1998 to set up IDEA Developments. In 2013 he developed an electronically innovative Turkish tea maker with a form influenced by the traditional tea glass. Its success was compromised when the Chinese partner increased the manufacturing price.

Many New Zealand product innovators have mastered the art of designing in New Zealand for global markets and manufacturing in low-cost and/or close-to-market countries. For example, 130 years on from its founding, Methven has survived by shifting focus from making plumbing products to creating user-friendly tapware and soothing shower experiences.

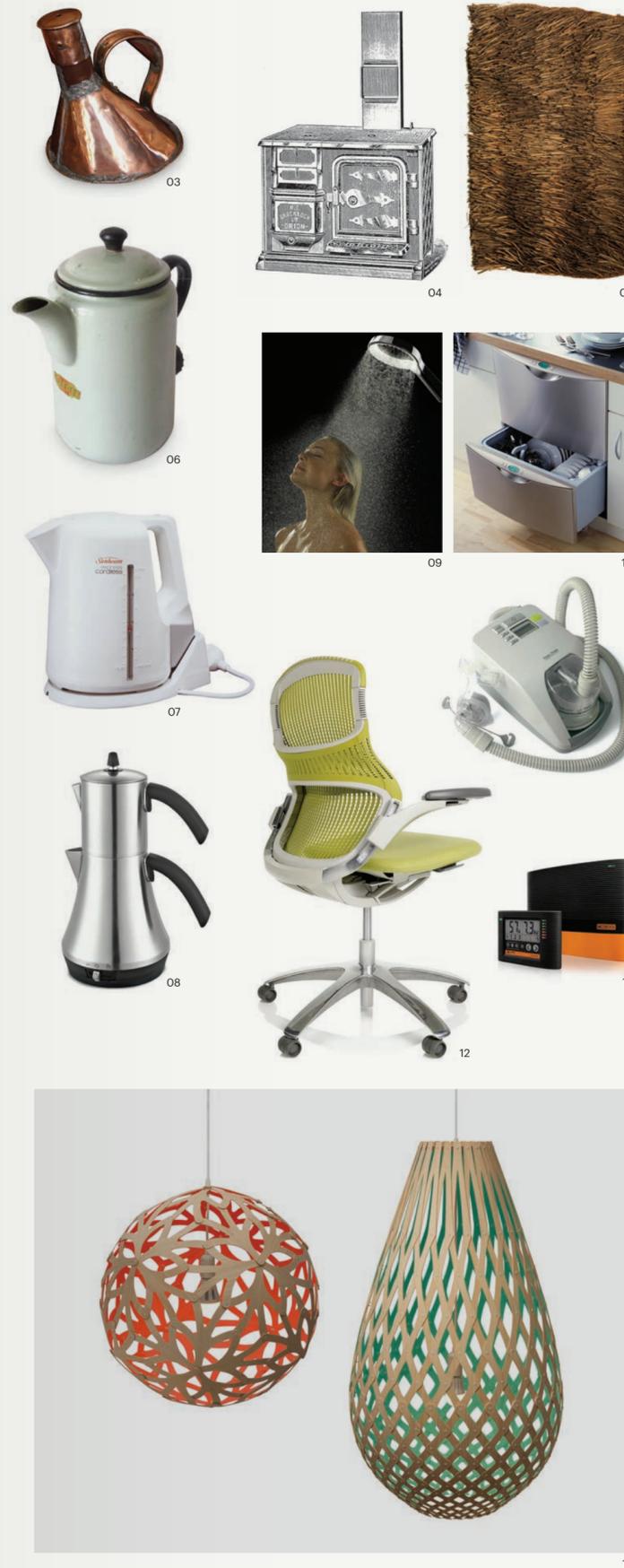
Ergonomic value transformed Formway Furniture from a small manufacturer in 1982 to a globally competitive 21st-Century design studio licensing global suppliers. The Life and Generation work chair projects built a relationship with international furniture company Knoll. Andrew Cogan, Knoll CEO, in conversation with Formway's David Thomson, said he valued the way Formway's isolation generates a "clear, visionary and creative perspective".

Fisher & Paykel Appliance's DishDrawer, launched in 1997, was its first ground-up product development driven by creating the end-user experience. This cultural shift to cross-disciplinary, user-centric design thinking then delivered the CookSurface and CoolDrawer as components of the 'Social Kitchen'. From 2012, Fisher & Paykel Appliance's New Zealand operation became the design and R&D centre for its new Chinese owner Haier.

The development of a world-leading medical humidifier led to Fisher & Paykel Healthcare becoming a separate company in 2001. The innovative company consistently rates as a top business performer. Back on the farm, Gallagher electric fence systems have evolved to dominate global markets through design leadership. Both companies still manufacture in New Zealand.

At the designer-maker end of the spectrum, David Trubridge has reached international 'rock-star' status from his Hawke's Bay studio, factory and tourist attraction base. His Pacific-inspired kitset lighting products [see sidebar] add the joy of making to the customer experience.

In an increasingly globalised market, New Zealand designers are creating a sustainable position as original, cross-disciplinary, fresh thinkers.



WELL-CRAFTED STORIES

By Michael Barrett

It's apt that David Trubridge arrived in New Zealand by way of sea, in the manner of his great pioneering predecessors. Those who brave the oceans require a sense of adventure, a can-do mind-set and a talent for invention. Since coming to New Zealand in 1985, Trubridge has demonstrated all these qualities, developing a design career that has overcome the tyranny of distance which plagues many local export industries.

Trubridge and the sea have had a long relationship and to this day oceanic motifs permeate his work. His design career began in the early 1970s with the study of naval architecture in the English city of Newcastle. Instead of taking a shipyard job, however, he bought a ruined house, renovated it, teaching himself joinery on the way, and from there began making furniture. Before long, reasonable quantities of "good stuff" was being produced, some of which was collected by London's V&A Museum.

Despite this early success, adventure called. Yacht bought and family packed, he embarked on an open-ended journey that took him through the Pacific Islands to New Zealand. After accepting an artist's residency in Hawke's Bay, he oscillated between art, architecture and furniture, looking for a viable creative focus.

Trubridge describes his place in the creative spectrum as "further away from hardcore engineering, designing totally functional things" and closer to fine art, where "it's all about ideas or aesthetics, and the practicalities are very limited."

Trubridge's early New Zealand work ranges from late-1980s' furniture with clear Pacific Island influences and references – "tying chair frames together with string lashings as Pacific canoes and houses are" – to sculptural early-1990s' pieces, which he says were "almost as far away from functional that I've got – although there is still vestigial function there. That was good fun."

His first real break was 'Body Raft', a sculptural, curved lattice

of steam-bent timber. In creating it, Trubridge drew on an "obvious resource" – his naval architecture training – and a new one – computer design software. Body Raft, picked up by Italian furniture company Cappellini, was a success, but it illustrated the difficulty of making furniture in New Zealand for European export markets. "The distance is so great, and so hard to overcome," Trubridge says.

However, the export riddle would soon be solved with light weight, sustainably manufactured luminaires. 'Coral', the first design, is constructed from a single component: a geometric polyhedron, repeated sixty times to create a sphere. The design was devised while Trubridge was teaching in Perth. With some time on his hands he made the structure for fun. "It taught me about the way of using the computer to unroll and create thin-skinned structures that through compound curvature are really strong, very light weight and use minimal material. The obvious application for it was lighting."

'Coral', like later lighting products, is easily transportable. Made in New Zealand, the small boxes are flat-pack shipped to market for assembly by the buyer. Trubridge calls it a "seed system". "Why put one tree in a truck to transport it when you can fill a truck with thousands of seeds and have fun watching them grow? That's the key to it."

Trubridge's latest lighting collection is inspired by diatoms, "stunningly beautiful" organisms, such as plankton, which are the basis of the oceanic food chain.

"The opportunity to tell their story through design makes them a worthwhile subject," he explains. "I can't design something just for the sake of it. I can't just design a new table or a chair. It doesn't feel right. But, if there's a story to tell and a reason to do it – in this case the stories of diatoms and why oceans are so important to life – then it starts to become much more interesting."

Object lessons

Jewellery leads the way in contemporary New Zealand object design, writes a leading curator, but furniture makers, glass-makers and ceramicists aren't far behind.

By Philip Clarke

Contemporary jewellery currently dominates the New Zealand object design scene in terms of international and local reputation. Paris-based editor of the global *Art Jewelry Forum* Benjamin Lignel has described New Zealand's jewellery sector as "small but powerful" and "turbo charged". The premier global prize for contemporary jewellery, the Françoise van den Bosch Award, has been awarded to seventeen recipients, and three of them are New Zealand residents. These Kiwis – Warwick Freeman, Karl Fritsch and Lisa Walker – are the Award's only recipients living outside Europe.

The global profile of contemporary New Zealand jewellery is remarkable for a population of just 4.65 million. Contributory factors include the local well-networked jewellery scene working hard to look outward, and the career of respected jeweller Warwick Freeman, whose international profile has opened many doors, locally and abroad. Freeman is currently the New Zealand artist, working in any media, most represented in museum collections internationally. While his work eschews a traditional notion of preciousness, its employment of sophisticated Modernism, antipodean materials and commentary on local culture creates a new and palpable sense of jewellery's value.

Given the small domestic audience for contemporary object design, studio-scaled production predominates in terms of applied arts makers and designers. Within such a landscape the location of the greatest vitality has often been found around practitioners, like Freeman, who maintain a high level of international awareness and connectivity, and those whose practices are singular, often to the point of being idiosyncratic.

The current practices of two, formerly Auckland based, New Zealand furniture designers, Katy Wallace and Phil Cuttance, demonstrate the wide range of possibilities available to twenty-first-century designers. Both have moved from New Zealand's biggest city: Auckland – Cuttance to London and Wallace to the provincial city of Gisborne. Cuttance's geographic transition matches a change in his design practice from furniture to objects. He says he "shifted to making smaller objects after showing furniture in 2009 at the Milan furniture fair. It was a relatively quiet year post-recession, and I received a lot of feedback where people said they loved my weld furniture but were interested in smaller pieces. I therefore made the weld vases and discovered I could sell them all over! I still do furniture on commission, but since then I've concentrated on objects as they are easier to get to a wider audience."

Wallace, whose practice is still furniture focused, says she is stimulated by "what is just in front of me". Her current work transforms objects that have been discarded, deemed obsolete and consigned to thrift shops. Through processes of subtraction, addition, multiplication and the division of her 'raw material', new works are created. These new works often possess the characteristics of the generic, in terms of their familiarity, and the idiosyncratic in terms of form, and have an embedded sense of human and object connectedness because of their up-cycled nature. Wallace finds her new home city a rich resource for her required raw material, which in itself is a powerful source of stimulation.

Both of these designers aim to imbue their productions with uniqueness and a sense of emotional connection. Cuttance says he likes the idea of "adding value to each piece by making it in a way [so that] each piece is unique in also telling the story of how it was made". While Cuttance's works continue to be

Images courtesy of artist except where indicated.
01. 'Wavy Bowl' (2008), a ceramic work by Hana Rakana. Image courtesy of Masterworks Gallery.
02. 'Insignia' collection (1997) by Warwick Freeman.



01

stocked in stores all over the world, more and more of his sales are online and he uses Instagram and Twitter to generate traffic to his online store and the workshops that he teaches at his studio. His practice is finely calibrated so that he is able to make "things in small batches locally and sell them globally".

Studio glass-making became established in New Zealand from the 1970s, largely inspired by the post-Second World War American studio glass movement, with vessels and sculptural forms being the predominant output. The leading 'voice' in a newer generation of glass practitioners is the Crystal Chain Gang, the collaborative practice of Leanne Williams and Jim Dennison. Their practice looks to the opulence and history of glass in terms of their preference for working with lead crystal and the chandelier and decanter forms for which they are noted.

The Crystal Chain Gang's work also addresses New Zealand's colonial and post-colonial experience. The hunting and collecting enthusiasms of colonists led to the decimation of some indigenous species and the introduction of exotic species. The 'crystals' of their chandeliers have the form of either bird wings or dead birds, which both critique the excesses of the hunting and collecting of Empire and celebrate the chandelier excess and monumentality of Empire. This paradox renders the artists' chandeliers elegant at first glance and menacing upon close inspection.

Jim Cooper's pop culture-inspired figures and figurative ceramic installations, such as 'Sgt P', defy the ordinances of Anglo-Oriental ceramics in that they screech, rather than being 'tasteful'. They set out to provoke mirth, and puncture – rather than promote – notions of worth. Cooper's well-made loose and lively figures (he's a former university ceramics teacher) celebrate contemporary life as did nineteenth-century Staffordshire figures which chronicled events and personalities of the day. Ceramics was previously the dominant New Zealand applied arts practice in terms of economic clout and practitioner numbers; however, the slow demise of tertiary training is presently limiting the sector.

A new generation of Māori ceramics practitioners is engaged in a fresh and free way with ceramics and seem less concerned with prior prescriptive making ideologies. One of the sources of vitality within contemporary jewellery, and New Zealand making and designing in general, is its participation in wider and national cultural conversations. Contemporary Māori art-making and object design have for the most part been very separate domains and pursuits. This new generation of Māori ceramists seems to collapse this historical breach and draw on ceramics and Māori cultural understandings in a way that signals a new era for object design in New Zealand.



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03. 'Someone Else's Chair' by Katy Wallace. **04.** 'Faceture' vases (2012) and object-making machine by Phil Cuttance. The handmade, faceted vessels are produced individually by casting resin into a handmade mould, which is then manually manipulated to create each object's unique form, before casting. **05.** 'Angelshare Chandelier' (2015) by Crystal Chain Gang. **06.** 'Hooks' (1993-2013), in silver, gold, greenstone, whalebone and bone, by Warwick Freeman.

More information

www.objectspace.org.nz

www.katywallace.co.nz

www.philcuttance.com

www.crystalchaingang.co.nz



ART OF THE LANDSCAPE

By Michael Barrett

Over the past 150 years, the varied landscapes of Aotearoa New Zealand have inspired plenty of artists; however, while the land has inspired many to pick up pencil and brush, fewer have been inspired to reach down to the earth, take it in hand, and use it as muse and medium.

For artist Miriam van Wezel, the land – or more precisely the varied clays of Orua Bay, on Auckland's Manukau Harbour – serves as both inspiration and raw material. Throughout her career, van Wezel has been fascinated by the colours and textures of the ground plane. Born in the Netherlands, and educated at London's Royal Academy, van Wezel moved to New Zealand in the 1980s. The daughter of an iron foundry director, she recalls being surprised when she first encountered the iron-rich sands of Auckland's West Coast beaches.

"I thought I'd ended up in a foundry again," she laughs. "It was very familiar, and I started wondering how I could bring that into my work. As an immigrant you lose your identity, so you start again and have to make connections with new places."

Over the following years, van Wezel would explore notions of place through colour. In 'Colours of Our History' (2012), one of her largest works, fifty-two coloured discs were painted onto the concrete columns supporting a motorway viaduct across an Auckland park.

Broadly speaking, the discs define periods of historical colour use in New Zealand, and their progression – they rotate around the columns, rise and fall, and change colour in a sequence – enlivens a difficult environment. At the other end of the scale, van Wezel's brooch designs for two Venice Architecture Biennale exhibitions show an adroit ability to shift scale.

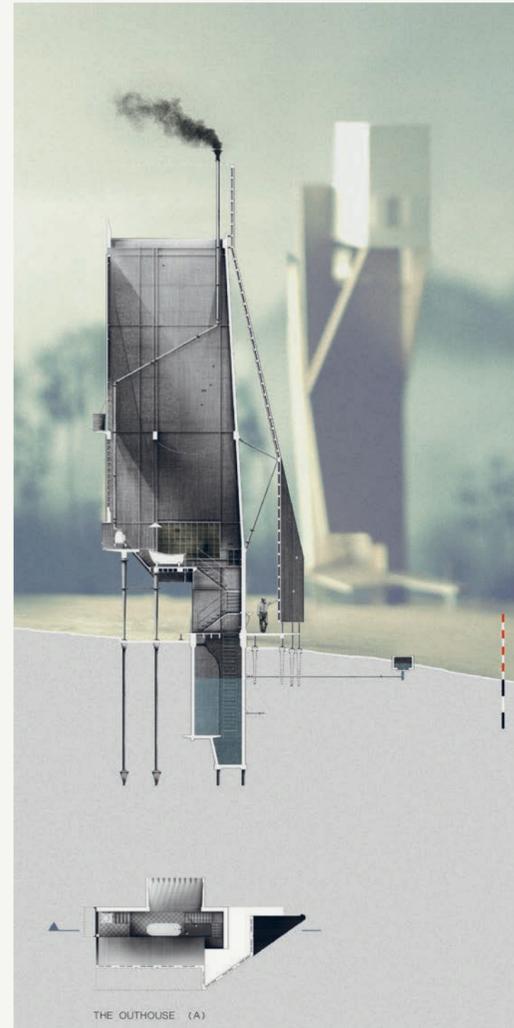
The body of van Wezel's work, however, investigates connections to the landscape by employing materials that are part of the landscape. The works that comprise her forthcoming exhibition, 'Beyond

the World: Beyond the Surface', begin on the beach. The artist scours the foreshore and eroding scarps for small rocks and pieces of clay with interesting properties, colours and textures. A process of refinement follows, impurities and sediment are removed, and the clays become pigments. In an earlier collection, these pigments were applied to Belgian linen, with the colours of the land interlaced with subtly-stitched lines that recall imagined shorelines. In van Wezel's forthcoming exhibition, the colours are layered upon hard substrates with each layer of paint polished before the application of another to create depth.

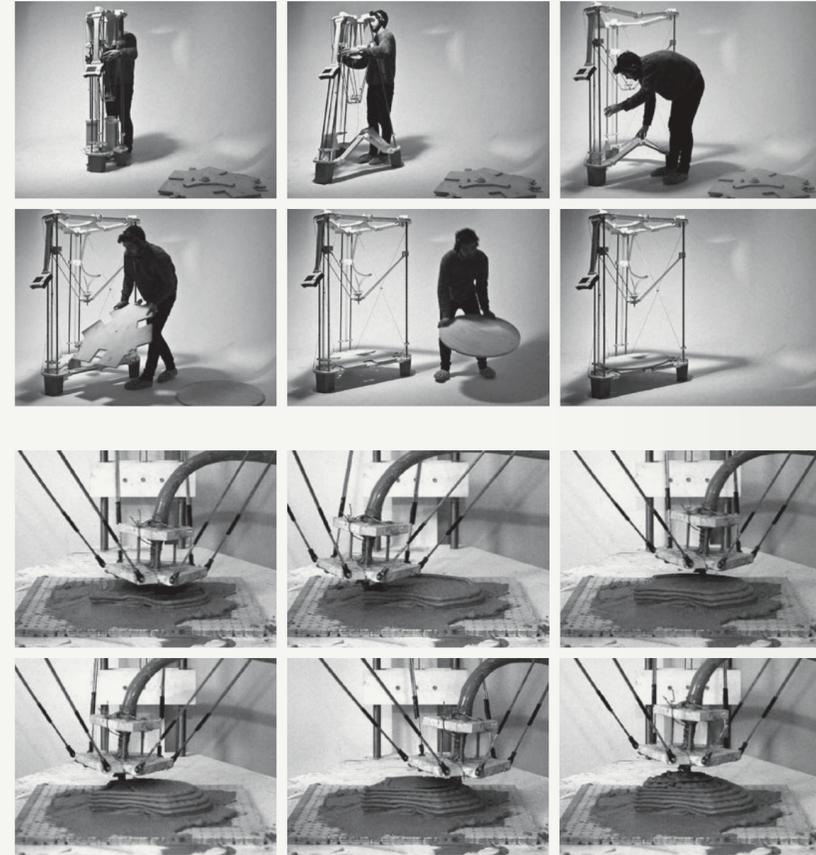
Orua Bay's rocks and clays yield a surprising spectrum of colour. In her studio, small squares of rich red, yellow and burnt orange are bookended by a surprisingly deep metallic black and a pure white.

The materials, says van Wezel, "all behave slightly differently". Ceding control is part and parcel of the process, as is being open to unexpected outcomes. "I find staying with one material fascinating," she says. "You keep discovering that you can dig deeper into your understanding of the material. I see it as a very similar thing to establishing a relationship with anything or anyone. It takes time to get to know a person; it takes time to get to know a material."

Upon one large, finished yellow-coloured work, framed in fine black steel, a minutely detailed line has been etched. It follows a barely visible contour line on the face of the plywood substrate to which pigment has been applied. Perhaps it's an imagined boundary in the shifting sea of yellow ochre, the profile of the soft sandstone cliff from which the clay was released, or a reference to the elemental power of time upon land, always eroding, shifting and changing shape. As with many artists, van Wezel is unwilling to impose thematic significance onto her work. In her case, you could safely say that the message is in the medium.



01. An illustration by Tom Dobinson, winner of the 2014 Student Design Awards. 'Wharf Dwellers - an Expose of Lyttelton', Tom's project, is an investigation of the character of the port town of Lyttelton where he grew up and a proposal for overcoming the physical separation that now exists between town and port. The tri-partite work establishes a 'design language', imagines a house that would suit the 'persona' of artist Bill Hammond - a local 'fringe-dwelling maverick' artist - and proposes a design for a public wharf that would surmount a strip of port land and so allow citizens to reach the coast.



02

02. In 2015, Student Design Awards winner James Durcan's project, 'Indigenous Digital Craft: Expressing Indigenous Māori Culture', combined contemporary digital fabrication techniques with traditional Māori craft methods and design approaches. His proposed structure, conceived in collaboration with Poverty Bay's Ngāi Tamanuhiri iwi, is intended for an off-grid coastal site near Gisborne. This sequence of images shows James assembling and operating a self-made additive printing machine, which would use clay from the proposed site to construct modular elements for an amenity building canopy.

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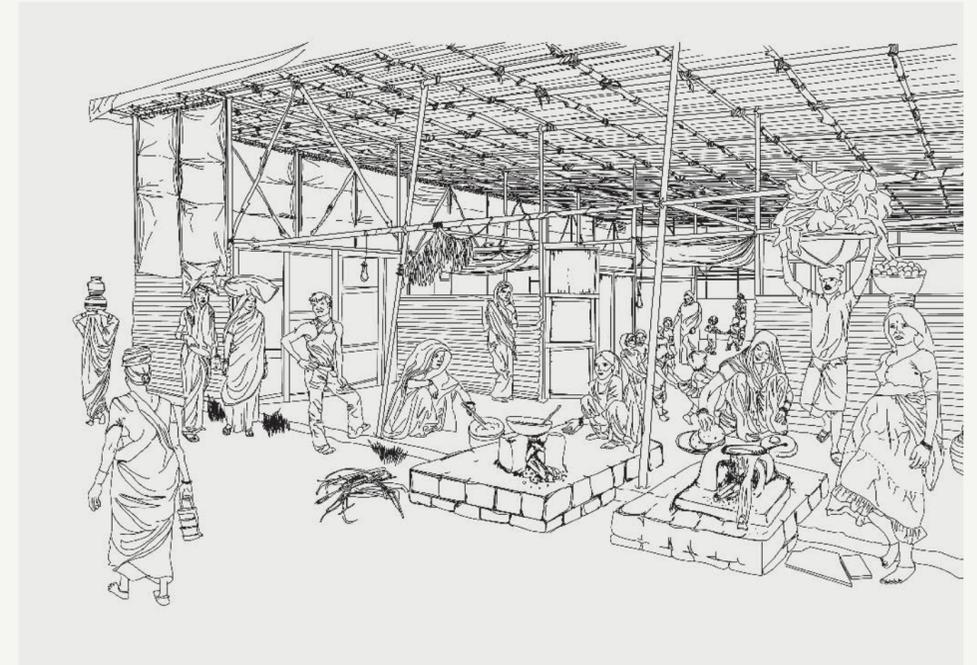
Bright futures

Imaginations with few boundaries, keen social awareness and deft digital and physical modelling skills have become bywords of the annual student design awards.

What better way to gauge the health of the architectural profession in Aotearoa New Zealand than by testing the ideas, ambitions and capabilities of the country's best and brightest students? The NZIA Cadimage Group Student Design Awards is an annual awards programme run by the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Through its

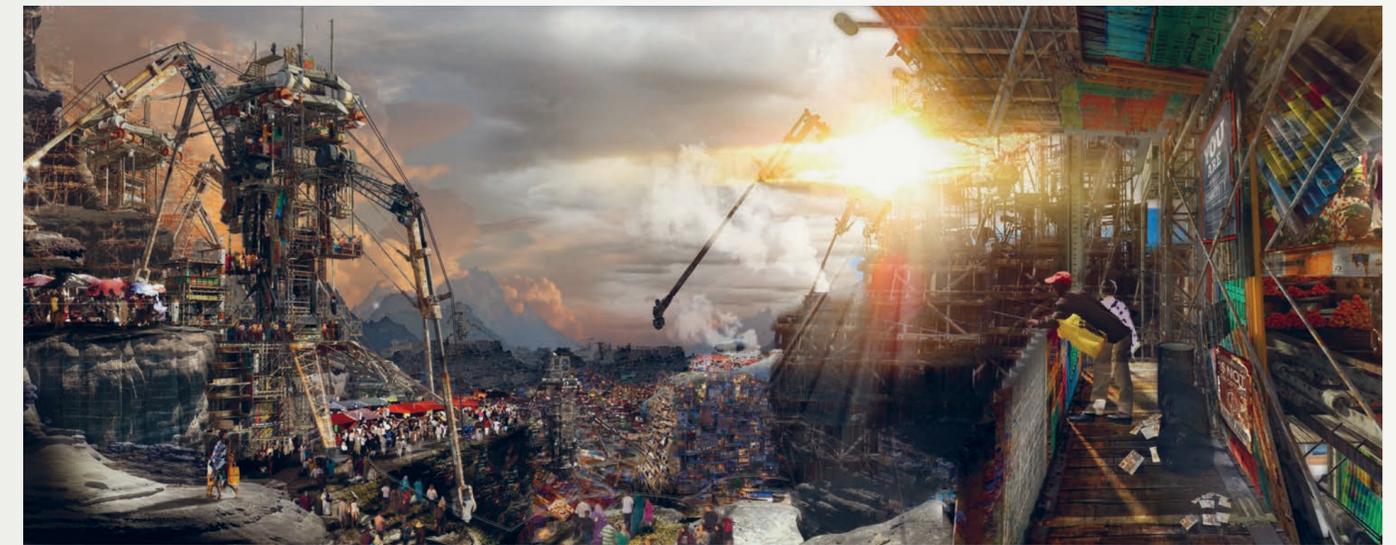
presentation format, four final-year students from each of New Zealand's three schools of architecture (at the University of Auckland, Unitec and Victoria University of Wellington) are exposed to appraisal and critique by judges with strong professional or academic credentials. From the 12 finalists, a winner is chosen and two highly commended awards are conferred. Without fail, as the images on these pages illustrate, the students make no small plans. In recent years, their final-year projects presented have traversed subjects as varied as a post-earthquake alternative parliament in a ground-scraping fortress, humanitarian architecture, super brothels, urban acupuncture, vertical farming, wetland conservation and additive construction. The images on these pages are just a taste of recent student works, visit nzia.co.nz to see more.

03. An illustration by Hannah Broatch, highly commended in the 2015 student design awards. Hannah's project, 'Housing for Construction Workers in Ahmedabad, India', was based on research into such labour colonies in the city of Ahmedabad. Her work aims to ameliorate the living conditions of labourers and their families by improving the quality of housing and providing basic infrastructure and social spaces.



03

04. In 2014, with 'Topology of a Phantom City', Student Design Awards finalist Hamish Beattie drew upon his experience working in a United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Nairobi, where the digital building game Minecraft was used as a participatory design tool. Hamish's scheme, presented via spectacular models and renderings, including this impressive robotic structure, explored the use of such readily available tools as a generator of designs for facilities in 'informal' communities, introducing self-design to communities which are already self-built.



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05. Frances Cooper, a Student Design Awards finalist in 2012, winner of the *Architectural Review's* Global Architecture Graduate Award in 2013 and, in 2014, member of the creative team for New Zealand's first national exhibition at the Biennale Architettura, proposed through 'Architecture of the Synthetic, the Spectacular and the Belligerent' a public re-appropriation of a prime waterfront site in downtown Auckland. The Seafaring Building, pictured, was a component of her radical, low-impact redevelopment.

Inside the New Zealand Room

The New Zealand Room, a hosting and event space at Palazzo Bollani, New Zealand's venue at the Biennale Architettura 2016, was established with the assistance of the people and companies on these pages.



01

THINKING SPACE

Rufus Knight, designer of the New Zealand Room and other ancillary spaces at Palazzo Bollani, home of New Zealand's exhibition at the 2016 Architettura Biennale, discusses recent work and design philosophy.

Rufus, what led you to interiors, specifically?

There are certain moments or influences I can point to that make me sure this is 'why' I decided to focus on interiors but it is mostly just intuition. Specifically, I remember Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À Rebours*, Andrei Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time*, and Claire Bishop's *Installation Art* as definite signposts. I'm really interested in film and theatre and, to some extent, I think that the temporality and parameters within set design were – and still are – a large influence on my interior focus. Also, interiors have always seemed to have an inherent multidisciplinary, which crosses so freely into music, art, sculpture. That has always been hugely appealing. Also, it comes down to where I feel I can be most engaged and I find it very hard to engage with the exteriors of buildings.

Before you designed the New Zealand rooms you were working in Belgium, at Vincent Van Duysen's studio. How did that come about?

A diversity of work is something I'm quite adamant about. I'd been working with Fearon Hay [in Auckland, New Zealand], however I wanted to find ways to vary and strengthen the contributions I was making to projects. At the end of 2014 I was on sabbatical in Europe when I was offered a job in Antwerp with Vincent Van Duysen. Vincent is an expert at re-interpreting traditional and classic tropes through a modernist lens, and this was an approach that had shaped my ideas about what constituted strong interior design. Belgium was also appealing in another way: it had the ability to provide an experience of interior architecture and design in a more established context and industry than New Zealand. The 12 months I spent with the Van Duysen team offered insights into how potent and considered the profession can be. The studio approach was based around reinterpreting very classic, very Belgian forms and crafts through reductive aesthetic principals, which made me question what New Zealand interiors could offer with a similar approach and, indeed, what in fact constituted a New Zealand interior.

What are some qualities that you think might distinguish a New Zealand approach to the interior form?

This is a complex question. I don't think the right way to answer it is to try and define how a New Zealand interior 'looks' but more, as you said, what kind of approach would make it a New Zealand interior. I think materiality is a key criterion as it's one of the most fundamental aspects of interior design and, if well considered, can add significant depth and validation to any space. I think working with local suppliers and trades is also an important aspect to building that framework around a New Zealand interior – it says a lot about what we produce, how we produce it, and why our work looks the way it does. And, as with architecture, context is equally important as a response to the environment in which you're working.

Any observations on the difference in interior practice between home and abroad?

Certainly in Europe, it seems, that part of establishing yourself in larger cities is based around renovation, refurbishment, and how you reinterpret heritage-building fabric. A large part of these projects are concerned specifically with the interior so you have incredibly well-studied architects in fast-paced international design-capitals working for the early parts of their careers on, more often, high-end interior jobs, which is a very different model to New Zealand. The abundance of space and relative privacy in New Zealand is an incredible asset. It sort of goes without saying that as a young architect in New Zealand your first project may well be a greenfield build on some remote part of coastline – and that shouldn't be taken for granted. Given New Zealand's growing requirement for more diverse housing types it will be interesting to see if this trend continues or whether people will focus more on refurbishing existing properties or demand responses to more urban, densely-populated, sites.

What about the rooms at Palazzo Bollani, what have you done there?

The rooms that I have curated in the Palazzo Bollani sit alongside the New Zealand exhibition *Future Islands*. Over the six months of the Biennale, we expect the New Zealand Room and Reading Room to be utilised by patrons, sponsors, and members of the international diplomatic community for entertainment and hosting. The New Zealand Room is a base for cultural events, symposia on architecture and design innovation and a place for New Zealand companies that are active in the European market to showcase their businesses to a broad international audience. The Reading Room is an informal space, adjacent to the exhibition entry, where visitors can take pause and engage with a number of publications related to architecture and design in New Zealand. The design approach for the rooms was very straightforward. The aim was to showcase New Zealand design in an understated, welcoming way. I have worked with a palette that I feel is reminiscent of the tones found in the New Zealand landscape but also contemporary. My hope is that the rooms will sit quietly while servicing the main event of the pavilions.

Landscape – often uninhabited, and raw – is one of the main themes of your photography. Does the exterior world have a profound effect on what you do?

New Zealand's landscape is unique and deeply profound and I think New Zealander's are very connected to the elements and their landscape, whether they acknowledge it or not. My photos are just a visual record of things I see when I travel but the landscape images from New Zealand are really just a means to better understand my country which, I think, stems from my interest in New Zealand nationalist painters, such as Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston and Rita Angus. I don't mean for the images to be uninhabited but the remote parts of New Zealand – usually the most photogenic – are more often than not empty. Maybe it's got something to do with growing up in the provinces, or having an interest in cartography, but place names, landmarks, natural phenomena all have incredible histories which inevitably influences the way you think about the context of both interior and exterior spaces when you come to design.

02

DESIGNER WOOD

Visitors to the New Zealand Room at the Palazzo Bollani will be among the first people to come into contact with a new product that is the result of collaboration between New Zealand-based designer David Trubridge and Abodo, a company innovating in sustainable timber use throughout Australia and New Zealand, Asia, Africa and Europe.

David Trubridge is a designer well known for his ethical and sustainable approach to product design. In 2015, Daniel Gudsell, marketing director of Abodo, heard Trubridge speaking at a Living Building Futures Institute conference, and they found a shared philosophy towards design and sustainability. He approached the designer in 2015, with a proposal to come up with a range of natural timber facades with multiple uses that could fit into Abodo's 'Elements' range.

"Abodo's wood products are locally grown, FSC-certified and free from common wood preservatives – and thus are in line with David's own design ethos," says Gudsell. "From a market perspective we felt there was a niche for decorative screening and facades with a point of difference – in this case a combination of Abodo's unique materials and David Trubridge's nature-inspired design flair."

After a design workshop with David Trubridge, a range of four panels incised with abstracted forms derived from New Zealand native plants and flax weaving were devised. The characteristics of pōhūehue, a sprawling coastal groundcover, led to a geometric panel which can be mirrored or rotated to create several effects. The long, flat leaves of maukoro, a native broom, are reflected in a panel with strong simple and symmetrical outlines. The distinctive gourd of the nikau, a palm found in the coastal and lowland forests of New Zealand, has been extended into a tear-shaped motif (see below), and Abodo's Hex Weave panel has a design abstracted from the form and patterning of traditional Māori flax-weaving.

"These façades and screens can be used to add warmth and beauty to a range of exterior and interior applications," says Gudsell. "Like the rest of the products we supply, they fit our healthy, durable and renewable ethos. They are lasting natural products, free of toxins that meet the needs of the present without disadvantaging future generations. Many exterior wood products used today are harvested from unsustainable old-growth forests, or from chemically preserved softwoods. Both ultimately cause personal or environmental harm. At Abodo we aim to change that. Our vision is for a world where wood products are beautiful, durable, low toxicity and have a planned end of life."

abodo.co.nz



03

PRECISION ENGINEERING

Core Builders Composites is a company whose name is inextricably linked with the precise fabrication required for a new generation of Americas Cup yachts. However, the seemingly specific skill of composite manufacturing is, increasingly, applicable to other industries.

Susan Lake, Core Composite Structural Engineer, says the potential for digital manufacturing techniques integrated with Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machine milling is potentially endless. Core can cover "everything from yachts to milking platforms and all sorts of things in between", Lake says. Evidence of the "in between" comes in the form of milling tools created for for campervan and superyacht manufacturing industries; a full-size replica of a MIG29 jet, which is used as a flight simulator; and a solar car for Sunswift, which took part in last year's Global Solar Challenge across Australia. Today, Core is working for Google on the Makani M600 wind-energy generator, and is undertaking tooling work for the marine and composites industry. It has also been contracted to help build a railway overbridge, huge water-pipe junctions and a two-metre-tall teddy bear for the movie industry.

Core has also moved into the architecture sphere. Its first significant project was the roof structure for the Marsden Cross Interpretive Centre, designed by Cheshire Architects – a project that features in *Future Islands*, New Zealand's exhibition at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale. Core has an even closer understanding of *Future Islands*: it worked closely with the exhibition's creative team to mill and manufacture twenty, brilliant-white 'floating' islands that form the platform for the 55 projects portrayed in the exhibition.

Core's story begins back in 2001, in Ventura, California, when it was the build team for Oracle Racing. In 2010, after the 33rd Americas Cup campaign, Core founders Tim Smyth and Mark Turner were able to establish a permanent commercial operation in an old print warehouse in Warkworth, New Zealand.

corebuilderscomposites.com

At the Palazzo Bollani, in the New Zealand Room, the natural jute rugs on display are from Nodi's 'Staples' range. They 'all about the woven texture, which quietly adds depth and character to a space', says the designer



04

HANDMADE IMPERFECTION

Textile designer and Nodi co-founder Olivia Smith is on a mission to bring 'handmade imperfection' to the world through rugs.

Born and raised in Wellington, Smith began her studies in textile design in New Zealand and completed them in Milan. Nodi, she says, means knots in Italian.

"While I was a completing my studies in Milan, I was making hand-knotted necklaces from fabric," Smith says. "I became fascinated with the form of the knot and this word, 'nodi'. I decided that if I was to start a business that's what it would be called. Its meaning fits perfectly with handmade rugs."

Nodi sat in Smith's mind for few years, becoming a reality only after she spent six months in India. "The fascination with India began while I was in Milan as an intern with an American woman who was using block-printed textiles out of India. It opened my eyes to the traditional methods being practiced there to create unique textiles, fabrics and woven goods."

In India, Smith spent time establishing relationships with Good Weave and Care & Fair compliant factories and weavers. Smith says the research process encouraged and fed into her fascination with traditional Indian weaving techniques.

"When I moved to India, I didn't go to start a business – I went to upskill and learn all there was to know about rugs. The craftspeople there are practicing some of the oldest weaving techniques in the world. I became engrossed with developing various weaves and trying all sorts of blends of fibres. Once I found what I was happy with, I decided to have some full rugs made and sent back to New Zealand."

Nodi evolved from there. Today, Smith, as designer, draws on travel and landscape experiences for inspiration. "I usually start by getting the paint brushes out; that's where the creative process begins," she says. Textures and final products are developed in India, predominantly from natural yarns: Indian jute, cotton and New Zealand and Indian wool. Depending on size, a rug can take anywhere from two to six weeks to make. "It's all done completely by hand, and because of the hand making, each piece is slightly different and has these 'perfect imperfections'."

nodirugs.com

Inside the New Zealand Room



05

UNDER A CLOUD

Aotearoa New Zealand is a long and narrow island nation with skirts of coastline hemmed by vast bodies of water. The weather changes fast and often – especially in Wellington, where prevailing westerlies called the ‘roaring forties’ whip through the Cook Strait to hit the city on the nose.

For Wellingtonians Nick and Nevada Leckie, living at the edge of the city’s waterfront and getting around solely on foot, this weather was a necessary driver for design. Frustrated with a lack of options for protective urban rainwear, the duo channelled their frustrations into the design studio. Inspired by ex-New Zealand soccer player Tim Brown, who successfully used Kickstarter to take his merino wool footwear concept All Birds to the world, Nick and Nevada harnessed crowd power for their Okewa (large grey raincoat in Māori) rainwear initiative. When their Kickstarter closed in late 2014 they had 200 per cent funding and pre-orders from 23 countries. Windy, wet, Wellington was about to become the best raincoat testing ground imaginable.

Okewa’s innovation, says Nick Leckie, is in the fusion of adventure-wear protection and urban styling. Each coat is cut from very lightweight, technical two-layer Japanese fabric, and is made in New Zealand by a family-run manufacturer. Okewa is deepening its work in design and textile development, aiming to accentuate the use of high-quality waterproof textiles with merino wool, for warmer northern hemisphere winter coats, and investigating opportunities for textile-grade harakeke (New Zealand flax) fibre for rainwear use.

At a broader level, Nevada Leckie says Okewa is driven by a desire to explore beyond the edges of the typical New Zealand story. “Eight-six per cent of New Zealanders live in urban areas. It’s one of the most urbanised countries in the world, however the prevailing narrative tends to suggest otherwise. A more urban chapter of our story is in draft. Our position in the South Pacific might inspire dreams of a tropical paradise in the minds of northern Europeans battling a heavy winter. The reality awaiting travellers on Wellington Airport’s tarmac often comes as a surprise.”

okewarainwear.com



Photo by Michael Craig

06

PLAYING WITH COLOUR

Resene is a New Zealand-owned company that began in a garage 69 years ago. From humble beginnings it evolved into a large company that offers generous support to New Zealand architecture. For 25 years the paint maker has been the sponsor of the New Zealand Architecture Awards, and it is also a supporter of New Zealand architecture abroad, at the Venice Architecture Biennale. The company also runs its own awards programme, the Resene Total Colour Awards, to encourage the creative use of colour in the built environment.

In 2015, the overall winner of the Resene Total Colour Awards was Myers Park Playspace, designed by Helen Kerr and Haylea Muir of Isthmus. The Auckland playspace, which also won the Resene Total Colour Landscape Award, was described by the judges as “Alice in Wonderland meets Dr Seuss – a collection of colourful play pieces brought to life through bold energising colour.”

At the playspace, children exercise mind and body under an abstract canopy of tall, slender, disc-shaped flowers that dapple the ground with intricate shadows. There is a network of sprawling kamo kamo vines (a pumpkin-like plant) for swinging and clambering on; large perforated leaves for climbing; and vibrant super-scaled garden birds and insects with which to engage physically and musically.

The design is also rooted in the practical. A playable ‘folded’ timber deck provides parents with a platform for observation and conversation. It is also a reference to the idea of providing burgeoning numbers of city dwellers with a common ‘backyard’ with some of the amenity traditionally found in the city’s lush suburbs. To encourage social play between children, there are low, concrete stepping walls riddled with colourful cut-outs and playable brick edges surrounding a raised ‘garden plot’. There are also traditional play items: swings and slides, a giant nest-basket swing and other more physically challenging pieces of equipment to entertain and challenge regular users from a nearby school. Through the site, a sinuous path provides a course for scooters and bikes.

Even on the dullest day, these oversized characters flitting in the park in bright paint colours bring a sense of joy and playfulness, irresistible to children and their parents.

resene.co.nz

07

RENDERS FROM THE EARTH



Natural renders are often thought of as a traditional building material, but Rockcote, a New Zealand-owned company that manufactures earthen renders from clay and lime, has rethought the application for contemporary use.

Natural renders impart texture, honesty and authenticity to a space says Mike Olds, general manager of Resene Construction Systems. They also contain no cement and are free of dangerous chemicals. Other environmental benefits include low embodied energy – energy necessary for the entire product life-cycle – and full recyclability, which means the products can be returned to the earth after use. Naturally porous, earthen renders also allow a building to breathe, regulating humidity and playing an active role in improving internal air quality, thus enhancing the health of living and working environments.

The product is also long lasting. “By combining modern technology with ancient methods we produce natural, durable renders,” Olds says. The natural colour of an earthen render is an earthy loam but they can be tinted easily with oxides, coloured sands, quartz, marble chips, dry straw, crushed glass and other decorative elements.

reseneconstruction.co.nz

08

STRENGTH OF IDEAS

Resident has been described as the “first editor of New Zealand design”, perhaps because the company, which is committed to the design, manufacture and distribution of high quality lighting and furniture for commercial and domestic environments, has a number of well-respected New Zealand designers in its stable. However, New Zealand citizenship is not a prerequisite for Resident membership. “Ideas are more important,” says Scott Bridgens, the company’s co-founder alongside designer Simon James. “Every product needs its own piece of magic.” A case in point is Australian lighting designer Flynn Talbot, the latest addition to the Resident lineup. Talbot’s Mesh Space Pendant recently won one of New Zealand’s highest design honours, a Gold Pin at the 2015 Best Awards, and was featured by *Wallpaper* magazine in its latest ‘W House’.

“We approach designers whose work we admire,” says Bridgens. “Nat Cheshire, for instance, a director of Cheshire Architects, a practice that does special projects at incredibly varied scales, from urban design right down to bespoke door handles. Jamie McLellan splits his time between New York and New Zealand, designing not just furniture but windsurfing equipment, shoes, kayaks and bicycles. Simon James has produced some great pieces, including the Tangerine family, Felix Chair and Pick Up Sticks Chair. Some of our most successful

products – the Geometric family of Hex, Cross and Tri Pendants – are designed by our in-house team, Resident Studio.”

A small but quickly growing company, Resident is finding a wide international fanbase for its designs, including celebrated British designer Tom Dixon, who last year invited the studio to participate in a futuristic concept department store at the Old Selfridges Hotel on Oxford Street, London.

“Tom just picked up the phone and asked us if we would like to be involved,” says Bridgens. “We had started a sales office in London, so got together and created ‘Multiplex’ at very short notice. The brief was for ‘a department store of the future’, which 20 leading design, fashion, art and film companies collaborated on. It was a place for working, playing and entertaining, for inspiration and for business. It was very successful and a lot of fun.”

Resident is a regular exhibitor at the Milan Furniture Fair, London Design Festival and New York Design Week. Its products are sold in 15 countries, including China, at Design Warehouse; in the USA, through Design Within Reach, Matter in New York, A+R East in Los Angeles, as well as at other retailers; and throughout Britain and Europe.

resident.co.nz



Lonely, Pensonby, Auckland. Photo by Simon Wilson.



Resident Scholar Table and Parison Pendant

09

BUILDING THE BEST

Auckland, positioned on a narrow isthmus between two remarkable harbours, is often referred to as ‘The City of Sails’, thanks to the large number of yachts that ply and plot courses across its sparkling blue waters. As might be expected of a city with a long fascination with all things nautical, Auckland is also home to a number of companies at the forefront of the maritime industries. Some are fueled by New Zealand’s participation (and sometimes success) in the Americas Cup. Others cater to service an industry built

around the design, construction, maintenance and refurbishment the world’s most advanced yachts – ‘superyachts’.

One such company, Robinson Interiors, has also contributed its expertise in design and fabrication to the construction of custom-made furniture for New Zealand’s ancillary rooms at the Palazzo Bollani. Robinson Interiors is a New Zealand firm that works around the world, undertaking interior and refurbishment projects for luxury yacht owners as well as special projects, such as store fit outs for fashion retailer, Lonely. Stuart Robinson, managing director of the company, and a third generation, “time served” furniture maker is passionate about creating high quality interiors. Since the company’s formation, Robinson says the it has upheld the values established through three generations of furniture craftsmanship, “tradition, quality workmanship, value, and service.”

“Each and every project we are involved with is fully customised in every way,” says Robinson. “The process by which we design and manufacture our interiors enables owners to continually push design boundaries both with materials and style. The complete interior is 3D-modelled using the latest CAD software, allowing an owner to easily review and make changes before construction commences. This enables changes to be made easily without the cost associated with changing any parts of an interior that may already be constructed.”

Robinson Interiors has two Auckland offices with manufacturing facilities. More information and a gallery of projects can be viewed on the company’s website.

robinsoninteriors.co

Inside the New Zealand Room

10

HAUTE WOOL CELEBRATING INNOVATION

Few materials say 'New Zealand' like wool. But can one of the oldest and most traditional of materials be re-imagined as a break-out fibre in the built environment? At a recent workshop in New Zealand, 14 leading international architects explored the boundaries of wool – and pushed the material to the edge of innovation.

Wool has been described as being, “As modern as moon flight, and as ancient as the hills.” And it’s true. Sheep were first domesticated 10,000 years ago, their fleece used for clothing and shelter. Yet today, wool is a fibre of choice for astronauts because of the comfort it affords in the confines of a spacecraft. Its protective properties also see it used by mountaineers, polar scientists and sailors who navigate the oceans of the world.

Through high-tech reinvention, wool has transcended traditional uses. However, its application in the built environment is yet to be discovered. In 2010, the IWTO Architects Project challenged 14 international architects to visit New Zealand, immerse themselves in New Zealand’s rural landscape and look for ‘blue sky’ opportunities with wool. They visited the places where it is grown, investigated its lesser known properties and then participated in a workshop to conceive new architectural applications. In their workshop, the architects developed concepts for a hotel that would incorporate wool as the key interior, and in some cases exterior, textile.

The architects were encouraged to realise the unique properties of the fibre: its natural place as an insulator, fire retardant and sound absorber; its ability to lock-in and neutralise VOCs (eg formaldehyde); its humidity regulation and thermodynamic qualities, as well as its ‘green’ properties – wool is renewable, natural, sustainable and biodegradable.

A woollen luminaire, a furniture system using high-density wool and statically loadable stairs made from wool were just some of the inventive solutions envisioned by the workshop.

Spanish architect Manuel Bailo Esteve’s proposed ‘Aladdin’s Magic Carpet’, a “ceiling made of stars”, as the architect likened it, and a “lamp that flies along the ceiling and a new façade that soars around a building”. Louis Becker, from Henning Larsen Architects in Denmark, inspired from visiting New Zealand

farms and experiencing first-hand the smell and oily feel of freshly shorn wool, was interested in how “wool could be integrated in buildings as a product you can see and touch”. His concept, a flexible soft wall, illustrates his interest “in the double function of the wool as insulation and sound-controlling material, but also as physical room dividers.”

Giorgio Borruso, from Marina Del Ray in the United States, found inspiration in the observation of sheep behaviour in the field, or ‘flock dynamics’. “When on an open pasture, sheep scatter across the entire area, but in reaction to an external threat, such as rapidly changing weather conditions, they quickly and efficiently congregate into a single unit.” Taking a cue from this, Borruso created a seating system composed of a number of single elements, i.e. sheep, with highly customisable exterior layers. They can be used individually or, when combined with other elements, take on a new shape and use.

Gerhard Pfeiler’s woollen stairs resulted from his search for an independent application of wool – not a surface covering. By incorporating felt stings, which are smooth and soft, but also strong, and 100 per cent wool ultra-high-density felt board, he created a stair system that is light, fire resistant and able to “profit from all the excellent material properties of wool”, that is, sound and odour absorption, regulation of humidity, sustainability and recyclability.

In March 2016, Campaign for Wool New Zealand repeated the workshop format with some of New Zealand’s up-and-coming architectural, product and interior designers. Stephen McDougall, CFW Wool in Architecture Ambassador and Director of Studio Pacific Architecture, says “Reimagining wool was the challenge for Weekend in a Woolshed, a follow on from the International 14, and we are thrilled with the concepts created by the New Zealand Nine.

“Their ideas, each unique, pushed the edge of thinking yet captured multiple qualities of this natural and sustainable fibre, perfect for the built environment. They range from ‘art forms’ – stunning in their simplicity yet smart in their solutions to everyday life – to explorations into wider health and social housing solutions. All are exciting for the wool industry and the built environment.”

Wool in Architecture and Interior Design, a book compiling the concepts of the participants in the 2014 IWTO Architects Project is available to view in the Reading Room at Palazzo Bollani, New Zealand’s venue at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale.

campaignforwool.co.nz

Six of the best

It’s a tough question to put to an architect: what’s your favourite building? Any architect could name dozens of candidates. So we narrowed the scope of enquiry: What’s your favourite *Aotearoa New Zealand* building? Six New Zealand architects respond:



Rau Hoskins (Design Tribe)

Te Ngākau Māhaki (2009)
by Dr Lyonel Grant

My favourite Aotearoa building is Te Ngākau Mahaki, the whareniui or meeting house at Te Noho Kotahitanga / Unitec Marae in Auckland. It was opened in 2009 and is the culmination of six years full time carving and weaving and

the work of Tohunga Whakairo Lyonel Grant and his team of carvers and weavers.

It’s a building which embodies artistic excellence with deep Māori cultural symbolism with the carved, woven, laser cut and painted works acting as a chronology of mana whenua and urban Māori history in Tāmaki makaurau / Auckland. It’s a must-visit experience for New Zealand architects, although to earn the privilege you need to be part of a group that is formally welcomed onto the marae.



Gary Lawson (Stevens Lawson Architects)

Timaru District Library (1980)
by Warren and Mahoney Architects

My choice is the Timaru District Library by Warren and Mahoney. As a young kid growing up in Timaru, my grandfather – who was a master builder (in the true

sense of the word) – would, during school holidays, take me to see the building under construction. When it opened, I remember being captivated by its curved and ribbed concrete forms, sunken reading areas, interesting sky-lit roof and roof structure, and carefully placed windows. All-in-all, it was an engaging, interesting and comfortable place to go with mum after school, as we regularly did back then.



Photo by Patrick Reynolds.

Shannon Joe (Warren and Mahoney)

*Auckland Art Gallery
Toi o Tāmaki extension (2011)*
by JFMT and Archmedia

The Auckland Art Gallery extension by JFMT / Archmedia is a contemporary expression of how New Zealand’s natural landscape has had to confront the progress of the modern urban world. The building carefully carves a cultural language of stone, glass and our country’s much-loved timber, playfully integrating these materials into a beautiful object set within a park.



Jasper van der Lingen (Sheppard & Rout Architects)

The Stone Chamber (1865), part of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, by Benjamin Mountfort

Like most architects I have many favourite buildings. Probably the one that keeps coming back to my mind is the Provincial Chambers in Christchurch, and particularly the Stone Chamber, by the architect Benjamin Mountfort from around 1865. Sadly, the Stone Chamber, especially, was very badly damaged in the 2011 earthquake, but there is talk of restoring it. The Provincial Chamber’s magnificent interior was considered one of the finest examples of high Victorian Gothic

revival in the southern hemisphere. I found it a place full of beautiful crafted details and ornament which is integrated into the structure; the proportions and form of the space enhanced the architecture rather than masking it. The Provincial Chambers was an elaborate and exuberant building, but somehow calm and balanced at the same time. It was a vision of great optimism and hope for a bright future, right at the starting point of New Zealand’s colonial history.



Photo by Duncan Winder.

Richard Naish (RTA Studio)

Futuna Chapel (1961) by John Scott

John Scott’s Futuna Chapel in Wellington is my current favourite. (I have many more buildings to visit.) The chapel’s references to Māori, Pacific and European traditions, and the creation of a unique

and modern new ecclesiastical typology, make it an outstanding building.

An enriching visitor experience is produced by the architect’s control of light, space and mass in a refined and sophisticated manner – and all this in a very small building crafted and constructed by monks with no power tools other than an electric drill. The chapel represents a pioneering tradition of modern New Zealand architecture that reminds us of the very few distillates that are actually required to make a truly outstanding building, if handled masterfully.



Photo by Patrick Reynolds.

Christina van Bohemen (Sills van Bohemen Architects)

Ironbank (2009) by RTA Studio

To pick a best or most favourite building is too hard but Ironbank in Auckland, designed by RTA Studio, is a favourite contemporary building because it demonstrates the transformative power of good architecture in the city. I like the way the north elevation bends gently with the street, and the overtly modern façade and materials sit well with its nineteenth century neighbours – not self-effacing or deferential, but strong and complementary.

The south elevation at street level cleverly mimics the gritty and quirky character of the brothels, coffee shops, backpacker hotels and business startups that currently populate Cross Street. Up high, the building boldly marks the ridge line connecting the city, north and south.

Our office has been in Ironbank for five years in two different “boxes”. We enjoy the light and the views out – the connection with the city beyond. There’s a sense of community among the many small businesses in the building, as well as within the surrounding diverse K’ Rd neighbourhood. I enjoy the confidence of the design and the detail of its parts, and admire the commitment by its owner to commission good architecture for the city.

A perfect getaway

A holiday house in the bush on the West Coast of the South Island is still treasured by family of the clients who commissioned its design 40 years ago from the celebrated and singular New Zealand architect John Scott.

Craig Martin and daughter Estelle in the kitchen and dining room of the 'bush bach'. The house was designed by architect John Scott for Craig's parents. Photo by Paul McCredie.



Words by Craig Martin

In summer the neighbour's pigs drove my parents crazy and they dreamed of an escape from the flies and the stink. They had fallen in love with the West Coast on a South Island tour a few years before and acquired a madly cheap ten acres of cut-over bush south of Hokitika. They commissioned architect John Scott, who had designed their home and pottery/workshop in Hawkes Bay, to design a small cottage they could build themselves as a getaway.

My mother Estelle had boundless ideas and my father Bruce's usual role was to moderate and then implement them. They were a good team and achieved remarkable things through this combination. The Hokitika house is one of them.

I had been on the first South Island trip, my last holiday with my parents, when I was fourteen or fifteen. We visited some wonderful places: Punakiaki, Okarito, Gillespies Beach, the glaciers further south. When I returned a year or so later to prepare a building site in the newly acquired section I thought they were mad. The large trees had been milled forty-odd years earlier and the bush was slowly regenerating, but it was also riddled with gorse, as were the paddocks for miles around. Anywhere you cleared or scratched the surface new gorse would sprout. To my adolescent eye it looked like a mess and hard, thankless work.

John Scott designed a simple, two-story cottage, with extra detailing for inexperienced builders. Bruce made a balsa wood model of the studs, joists, beams and rafters to get an idea of how it all fitted together. He also bought an old Bedford truck to cart our gear from Ngatarawa, near Hastings in the North Island, to the section by Mirror Creek near Lake Mahinapua in the South. We drove in convoy in the family car and the truck, with a new coil required for the Bedford in Levin. The further south we drove the less traffic there was and the friendlier the waves from the locals.

Great architects should design small buildings because there they can show best why architecture matters, why design matters, why ideas matter. The bush house is shaped like many barns or farm sheds up and down the West Coast with a pitched roof and no real eaves and added windows, but it is full of great design, of beautiful spaces, of textures and contrasts, light and colour – full of the essence of good architecture.

Most of the materials were sourced locally, the timber from a small mill at Ruatapu a few kilometres around the road. The cladding is corrugated iron which remained shiny and unpainted for almost a decade. The windows, stairs and kitchen joinery were made by a joiner in Hokitika.

I was seventeen and between school and teachers' college. The 1974 Commonwealth Games were about to start in Christchurch. The weather on the West Coast was exceptional that summer with rain only once or twice in six weeks. We lived in a tent and had a long-drop in the bush and an outdoor shower. Power was connected to a builder's pole on the driveway but we had limited power tools: a Skilsaw with a cross-cut attachment, a drill and an electric jug.

We laid out the foundations before Christmas, finding the levels with an ancient dumpy level and poured the concrete slab on Christmas Eve.

A surprising number of people called by for a look and to lend a hand. Fellow potter Peter Stichbury came while we were nailing in dwangs and re-named them noggins. More qualified friends helped sort the plumbing and wiring. School friends of mine came past in a hippie van and Estelle put a pottery-for-sale sign out on the road and sold the odd pot to passing motorists.

Bruce did most of the building with support from Estelle and me, and later my brothers. Estelle also cooked, painted and provided safety advice while we climbed ladders or pushed up walls. I fetched and

carried and held and nailed. I enjoyed working with my father; we are good problem solvers together.

After six weeks of living in a tent with my parents I had had enough. The roof was on, building paper wrapped the framing and the windows were about to go in. I flew out through Christchurch the day the Games started and back to my friends in Hawkes Bay. My older brothers helped get the house water tight and the interior was completed over the next year or so.

We notice our mistakes more than our successes in things we make. Some regrets take years to get over, like the lack of an electric plane to even up the house's floor joists before the floor was laid. But the quality of the build is much better than amateur and the building has warmed and softened over time. There are no architraves or scotias; the plywood lining fitting almost up to the window edge or the end-rafters with a small gap of timber showing. This is a regular John Scott detail and gives the interior a simple but elegant finish. It also requires a degree of care and craftsmanship by the person cutting and fitting the ply because you have nothing to cover over the gaps.

John Scott's detailing and joinery add quality to the bach. By today's standards John was extravagant with native timber and much of the joinery is rimu and generously proportioned. Downstairs the floor is brick tiles with electric powered underfloor heating and upstairs matai tongue 'n' groove.

Upstairs is a simple rectangular space with a living area at one end and a bedroom at the other with a kitchen bench in the middle. Over the bench are open shelves and a glimpse of the stairs and the tall window below. The roof is gabled with exposed rafters and the ceiling is matai sarking. I remember nailing it on six metres above the ground using a chisel banged in the rafter to lever it tight.

The stairwell is behind the bench and the bathroom is on the landing halfway between the floors. Dividing the living area and the bedroom is a wall that extends from the landing to the roof. This wall is perfectly proportioned and is the work of an architect paying attention.

In my teens I built models of John Scott houses: my parents' house in Hawkes Bay, this house, the Brown house in Napier. I found it difficult to imagine the buildings in three dimensions until I made the model. I found it remarkable that Scott was able to imagine the spaces he was designing, the volume, the proportions. This is what makes an architect, of course, and it is what John Scott gets right in his buildings: space, proportion and size.

The bush house is compact and clever. The stairs at the lower level provide volume to the bedroom above, and the tall window at the bottom of the stairs is a delight, a favourite. The windows out to the bush are almost square and generous. At tree height the birds come and visit, bellbirds and tui and a kereru that does acrobatics to strip the last of the kowhai flowers before starting on the new leaves.

John Scott suggested the colours of beech leaves in a stream for the cottage and so the bedroom curtains are red and primary yellow in the lounge. Yellow, orange and green trim is also used on the outside sills and flashings. There are other touches of colour with hand-decorated tiles by Charles Holmes in the bathroom and an orange vinyl sink bench downstairs.

The house is a perfect getaway: it has everything you need for a holiday with added pleasure from the aesthetics. It is a place to read and write, to eat and drink, to listen to the rain or the distant sea polishing the rocks on the beach at Ross. After forty years the architecture is still fresh, the ideas and solutions still delightful; the wood has mellowed and the house settled in the bush.

This essay was one of the entries into the 2015 Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing, an annual competition organised the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Book end.

After decades when the publication of two New Zealand architecture books in the same year seemed miraculous, piles of new works now test the tolerance of coffee tables and designer shelving. Many of the books are about houses and some are monographs. But there are other books, too, the sort of smaller publications – collections of essays or reflections – which every self-respecting profession should generate. Here's a sample of the recent crop of books about New Zealand architecture (many of them are on display in Venice, at the Reading Room in Palazzo Bollani – the *Future Islands* exhibition venue):



01 **Modern: New Zealand Homes from the 1940s to the 1970s** by Jeremy Hansen (Random House, 2013) looks at the mid-century houses designed by New Zealand's Regional Modernists.

03 **Shigeru Ban: Cardboard Cathedral** by Andrew Barrie (Auckland University Press, 2014) tells the story of Ban's temporary structure designed for post-earthquake Christchurch.

05 **Beyond the State: New Zealand State Houses from Modest to Modern** by Bill McKay and Andrea Stevens (Penguin, 2014) traces the gentrification of the well-built suburban rental houses built by the government half a century ago.

07 Just to show that architects can laugh at themselves: **Did You Mean to Do That? Malcolm Walker Architectural Cartoons**, John Walsh [Ed.], (New Zealand Architectural Publications Trust, 2012), is a sample of 25 years of funny drawings by New Zealand's only architectural cartoonist.

08 **Marae – Te Tatau Pounamu: A Journey Around New Zealand** by Muru Walters, Robin Walters and Sam Walters (Random House, 2014) records a three-year journey around the country's Māori meeting houses.

02 **Portrait of a House** by Simon Devitt (Balasoglou Books, 2012) is a pictorial chronicle of 'Ath's house', the singular dwelling designed by and constantly added to by the late, great Ian Athfield.

04 **Big House, Small House** by John Walsh and Patrick Reynolds (Random House, 2012) presents 60 contemporary residential projects by New Zealand architects.

06 **10 Stories: Writing about Architecture**, John Walsh [Ed.], (New Zealand Institute of Architects, 2015) is a collection of essays from the inaugural Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing competition (see page 32 for one of the essays).

09 **Architecture in an Expanded Field**, Sarah Treadwell and Lucy Treep [Eds] (Architecture+Women-NZ and Aalto Books, 2015) comprises papers from a conference on women in architecture.



10 **4 Architects: William Allington; James Beard; William Toomath; Derek Wilson**, Stephen Stratford [Ed.], (New Zealand Architectural Publications Trust, 2010), covers the Wellington's eminent Modernists.

12 **Architectus: Between Order and Opportunity** by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper (ORO Editions, 2009) updates the story of a multi-award-winning Australasian practice.

14 **Athfield Architects** by Julia Gately (Auckland University Press, 2012) is a history of the practice that Ath built.

16 **Jasmax**, Stephen Stratford [Ed.], (New Zealand Architectural Publications Trust, 2007), is a history of the practice that grew into the country's biggest architectural firm.

18 **Pete Bossley Architects**, Stephen Stratford [Ed.], (NZ Architectural Publications Trust, 2005), introduces the lively career of a free-spirited Auckland architect.

11 **RTA Studio**, Andrea Hotere [Ed.], (RTA Studio 2014), marks the 15th anniversary of an ambitious Auckland practice.

13 **Coast, Country, Neighbourhood, City**, Isthmus, Michael Barrett [Ed.], (Six Point Press, 2015), records the progress of a leading multi-disciplinary practice.

15 **New Territory: Warren and Mahoney - 50 Years of New Zealand Architecture** (Balasoglou Books, 2005) celebrates the golden jubilee of the successful firm established by Sir Miles Warren and Maurice Mahoney.

17 **Stuart Gardyne: NZIA Gold Medal 2015**, John Walsh and Michael Barrett [Eds], (New Zealand Institute of Architects, 2015), profiles the latest winner of the NZIA's Gold Medal award.

Every book has an author.
Every film has a director.
Every painting has an artist.
Every dance has a choreographer.
Every play has a playwright.
Every symphony has a composer.
Every building has an architect.
Every exhibition has a curator.
Every poem has a poet.
Every sculpture has a sculptor.

Pai mutunga te mahi hoahoa whare
Architektur ist wichtig
けんちくはじゅうよう
Arquitectura es importante
建筑学很重要
L'architettura conta
L'architecture, c'est important
वास्तुकला महत्वपूर्ण है।
...Architecture matters



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The facade of Spark Central in Wellington, New Zealand, designed by architecture+. In 2015, architecture+ director Stuart Gardyne received the NZIA Gold Medal, the highest individual honour in New Zealand for architecture. Photo by Paul McCredie.



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