



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

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Festival of Architecture announces 2019 Director and principal speakers

Auckland architect and educator Tony van Raat has been announced as Director of the 2019 Festival of Architecture.

Van Raat is an energetic advocate for New Zealand architecture and design. He headed the Unitec School of Architecture from 2000-2016 and served as commissioner of New Zealand's exhibitions at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014 and 2016. He is a founder of the New Zealand Architectural Publications Trust and former chair of the Institute of Architects' Auckland Branch.

Van Raat says the nationwide Festival of Architecture performs an important public role that is often missing from the discussions and debates about the evolution of our towns and cities.

"The Festival is one of the few opportunities for New Zealanders to connect with architecture and design in a way that is accessible, engaging and fun," van Raat says.

"Architecture is often seen elitist pursuit, but shouldn't be. Everyone is affected by the ways we design and build homes, and the wider urban environment, and through the Festival we want to broaden awareness of that."

Van Raat says the Festival is an opportunity to bring architecture and design out of the studio and into the public arena. It is also a means of demystifying the work of architects.

"A programme of Open Studios offers people a chance to visit architecture offices, look at models, drawings and photography, and get a sense of what architects do and how they contribute to society."

Festival activities include building and walking tours, talks, exhibitions and debates. Leading New Zealand heritage architect Jeremy Salmond, the 2018 recipient of the Institute's Gold Medal, the highest individual award in New Zealand architecture, will give presentations about his work and design philosophy in Auckland, Napier, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch during the Festival.

Van Raat says another keynote event he is eagerly anticipating is the annual lecture given in memory of the late Sir Ian Athfield, one of the outstanding New Zealand architects of the last five decades.

The 2019 Sir Ian Athfield Memorial Lecture will be given in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch by American architectural academic, critic and activist Billy Fleming.

Fleming is director of the University of Pennsylvania's McHarg Center, an interdisciplinary think tank that seeks to reconcile environmentalism and social science, and landscape and architecture. His research interests include the use of nature-based strategies in climate adaptation planning along the American coast.

The widely published author was a domestic policy adviser in the Obama Administration and is co-founder of [Data Refuge](#), an international consortium of scientists, librarians, and programmers working to preserve environmental data threatened with erasure by the policies of the current United States government.

"Billy Fleming talks passionately and authoritatively about the key challenges of our times – climate change, disaster and resilience, and their intersection with science, politics and design," van Raat says.

"These issues are of fundamental relevance everywhere, New Zealand of course included."

Festival of Architecture
20-29 September 2019
festivalofarchitecture.nz