

We invite you to join us for the

'This is Modernism' Symposium



Friday 16 February 2024, 9am–4.30pm

Pridham Hall, level 2, University of South Australia, City West, 213 Hindley St, Adelaide.

Free - All welcome - one-day public symposium - no need to register.

Co-presented by the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia, University of South Australia, and Unitec (Auckland, NZ). Convenors: Dr Christoph Schnoor and Dr Julie Collins.

This exciting 1-day public symposium will explore modernist architecture in Australia and New Zealand through case studies of buildings that demonstrate a specific relationship to place, looking at under-explored examples of modernism in our region.

Many recent publications both in Australia and in New Zealand have investigated, summarised, and re-evaluated modernist architecture in our part of the world. Despite these efforts, there remain gaps. Buildings that might have gone unnoticed a while ago, might create interest today.

In 1963, architect Ernst Plischke described the aim of modern architecture as achieving unity of space and sculptural quality, which needed to be based on a fulfilment of functional and structural needs. The main quality of such an architecture, he claimed, lay in the tension between these four cornerstones of architecture, and they needed to be carefully balanced. Plischke's fascinating and durable definition appears as an extension of the Vitruvian triad (*venustas, firmitas, utilitas*), achieved by splitting *venustas* into space and sculpture (inside and outside).

But despite Plischke's experiences of two entirely different architectural cultures in his life, what remained missing from his definition was the consideration of *place*. Local social, physical, material, and cultural factors influence architecture, and always have.

The symposium therefore has asked contributors to consider the relationship between modernist architectural ideas and the places in Australia and New Zealand where specific buildings were designed. We invited submissions of case studies of single buildings that demonstrate a specific relationship to place, whether they were well-kept buildings, buildings in danger or even lost or unbuilt buildings.

Of the abstracts that were submitted, we have chosen seventeen which show a broad range of functions, from residential to commercial to governmental and religious buildings. These presentations will form the starting point for larger research projects to record and discuss under-explored modernist buildings across New Zealand and Australia.

PROGRAMME

9.00-9.15 Welcome and Introductions

9.15-10.15 Edith Emery's Practice in Place: "A bridge into the life of others"
Dr Stuart King (University of Melbourne)

Exile or Eden? Contextualising Alexandra Mokwinski, Pioneering
Émigrée Architect in Adelaide, South Australia
Dr Catherine Howell (University of South Australia and Heritage SA)

OHU Collective: Cookhouse in Waipu, Northland
Kerry Francis (Unitec Auckland)

10.15-11.00 House at Toolern Vale, Victoria, by Paul Couch, 1972
Professor Philip Goad (University of Melbourne)

'A Spectacular Adobe House': John Chappel's Billam House (1964)
Dr James Curry (University of South Australia)

11.00-11.15 Morning Tea – tea and coffee provided.

11.15-12.15 City Edge by Jackson Walker Architects – Landscape, Architecture,
and Social Value
Elsie Telford and Dr Akari Nakai Kidd (Deakin University)

Modernist Medium Density: Urambi Village, Canberra – Michael
Dysart & Partners, 1974
Rachel Jackson, Amy Jarvis and Edwina Jans (Canberra Modern)

Modern Architecture as a Stage for Modern Art: The Lost History of
Bonython House, 1965
*Dr Amit Srivastava, Dr Aaron Humphrey, Steve Cook, Dr James
Curry, and Benjamin Nicholls (University of Adelaide and University of
South Australia)*

12.15-13.15 Lunch Break – try one of the many eateries in the City West area

13.15-14.15 Electric Modernity: Electricity House in St Georges, NSW, 1939
Professor Deborah Ascher Barnstone (University of Sydney)

Place and the Intangible in the making of Canberra: Enrico Taglietti's
Cinema Center (1964–66)
*Dr Silvia Micheli, Associate Professor Antony Moulis, and Virginia
Rigney (University of Queensland and Canberra Museum and
Gallery)*

Julius Elischer's El Caballo Blanco (1973–86)
Dr Isabel Rousset (University of Technology Sydney)

14.15- Townsville Law Courts: designed in Brisbane, conceived in Japan
15.15 *Dr Lisa Marie Daunt (Phillips Smith Conwell Architects)*

Churchill House, Canberra, Robin Boyd (1969-1971)
Ann Cleary (University of Canberra)

Conforming to the Future: The Australian Atomic Energy Commission
Research Establishment at Lucas Heights
Dr Daniel J. Ryan (University of Sydney)

15.15- Afternoon tea - tea and coffee provided.
15.30

15.30- Plan, form, structure and light: St Alphonsus' Catholic Church at
16.30 Millicent, South Australia
Chris Burns (Heritage SA)

'Inland Sanctuary': John Flynn Memorial Church, Mparntwe (Alice
Springs), NT, 1953-6
Dr Julie Collins (University of South Australia)

Paul Pascoe: Te Rangimārie, Christchurch, 1968
Dr Christoph Schnoor and Sinead McClay (Unitec Auckland)

16.30 Close

Programme at: <https://unisa.edu.au/connect/galleries-museums-and-centres/architecture-museum>

Event Enquiries: Architecture Museum +61 8 8302 9235 (Mon-Wed) or julie.collins@unisa.edu.au

City West campus map: <https://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/campus-facilities/maps/city-west-campus-and-access-map.pdf>

'This is Modernism' is being held at the University of South Australia on Kaurna Country, the traditional country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship with the land, and we acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. 'This is Modernism' is being held in the Pridham Hall function room and we acknowledge the generosity of alumnus Andrew Pridham, benefactor of Pridham Hall.

AASA 'This is Modernism' Symposium Steering Group: Prof Deborah Ascher Barnstone, Dr Christoph Schnoor, Dr Stuart King, Dr Isabel Rousset, Ann Cleary, Dr Julie Collins, with AASA Secretary Dr Martha Liew

Images: Churchill House, Canberra, Robin Boyd (1969-1971) Ann Cleary; Townsville Law Courts - Edmund Sheppard Building (1975). Photographer: Richard Stringer, Courtesy of Phillips Smith Conwel; Billam House, Brighton, John Chappel (1964) Courtesy of State Library of South Australia BRG346/29/17/8 Arnold Studio.