

**A Colloquium on Ficto-Critical Approaches to a Writing Architecture**  
**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016**  
**Room 207, level 2, School of Architecture, Zelman Cowen Building (51)**  
**The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane**

<http://www.architecture.uq.edu.au/colloquium-ficto-critical-approaches-writing-architecture>

Both architects and fiction writers imagine new worlds into being, describing and documenting these worlds as they projectively inhabit and occupy them. They each produce settings - for lives and narratives. Every architectural proposition is a kind of fiction, before it ever becomes a built fact; likewise, every written fiction relies on a setting, the construction of a coherent milieu or a context in which a story can take place.

But what, then, of the role of fiction and writing in the criticism of architecture and other things? Ficto-criticism fuses the forms and genres of essay, critique, and story. It combines the techniques of fiction and critical theory with the aim of challenging assumptions about our contemporary social and political realities. Although fiction is never obliged to be faithful to reality, when combined with the emancipatory potential of criticism it holds the power to disrupt habitual ways of seeing and acting amidst our everyday lives.

This colloquium brings ficto-criticism together with experimental approaches to architecture as a world-making or constructive practice. Ficto-criticism is a method that innovatively combines the disciplines of architecture, philosophy and literature in order to enable both the critique of, as well as speculative explorations of world-making practices (Gibbs 2005; Muecke 2002).

The a-grammatical construction of 'a writing architecture' acknowledges a debt to architectural theorists such as Jane Rendell and Katja Grillner (Rendell 2005; 2010) who have explored how far experimental approaches to writing can be used to alter and expand architectural design thinking.

While fiction is a powerful means by which we can speculatively propel ourselves into other imagined worlds, criticism offers the situated capacity to ethically cope with what confronts us.

Ficto-criticism for architecture assumes the constructive, creative and critical situatedness of the thinking-designer in the midst of their problematic field, suggesting both means of speculating on near futures as well as the capacity to critique the present where it has become oppressive (Petrescu 2007). The power of conjoining fiction and criticism across the linking punctuation of the hyphen as a ficto-critical practice provides opportunities for writers both within and without the discipline to explore 'a writing architecture.'

# SCHEDULE

## DAY ONE Thursday 4 August

### 14.00 OPENING

14.20 Naomi Stead, *That's where we are right now*

15.00 AnnMarie Brennan and Shi Jie On, *Conspiracy Theory as Critical Design Method*

15.40 Sandra Kaji O'Grady, *Two kinds of fiction in, and of, the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory*

### 16.20-16.40 COFFEE

16.40 Rosemary Willink, *Wikipedia and the Met: A ficto-critical approach to encyclopaedic collections*

17.20 Katrina Schlunke (*invited guest*), *Just Outside My Window: The building site*

### 19.30 DINNER

## DAY TWO Friday 5 August

### 9.00-9.30 COFFEE

9.30 Katrina Simon, *The Bannister*

10.10 Hélène Frichot, *Environmentality, Factish, Social Fiction, and the Impossible Constructions of an Island Paradise*

### 10.50 COFFEE

11.20 Hugo Moline, *The rise of the Owner-Occupation: A fictional architectural project as critique of Sydney's housing system*

12.00 Andrew Steen (*invited guest*), *Nice House, Woodland Lakes*

### 12.50-13.50 LUNCH

13.50 Rebecca McLaughlan, Catherine Caudwell and Alan Pert, *Cockram was Mistaken: Reconsidering on the Role of Fiction in the Design Process*

14.30 Tom Morgan, *Story-Systems*

15.10 Natalie Collie, *A writing architecture: science fiction and the urban imaginary*

### 15.50-16.10 COFFEE

16.10 Kim Roberts, *Hiroshima: notes of the expanded-field*

16.50 Anna Gibbs (*invited guest*), *To Cut: Composition as Demonstration*

### 17.40 Closing Discussion and DRINKS

## INVITED SPEAKERS

### **Professor Anna Gibbs, *To Cut: Composition as Demonstration***

If the hyphen attempts to join the 'ficto' with the 'critical' it also inevitably severs them and holds them apart. In this tense and quivering gap between them arises the possibility of a writing *otherwise*: a writing in which the confident authority of argument gives way to hesitation and doubt, and the house of fiction begins to fall apart. Here place is displaced; setting becomes unstable; site gives way to constantly shifting situation. We are in the middle of something, immersed in the materiality of writing as doing and making, a thinking taking shape in action, and then shifting that shape again at the very moment it forms. It is in this process that writing *takes place*.

**Anna Gibbs** is a Professor in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University and writes across the fields of textual, media and cultural studies focussing on feminism, fictocriticism and affect theory. Co-editor of three collections of Australian experimental writing, she is currently completing a book on feminist theory and electronic literature (*Exscryptions: Memory, Movement, and the Unfolding of Space in Digital Writing*) with Maria Angel. Her experimental and cut up writing has been widely published and internationally performed. She is currently collaborating with Elizabeth Day, Julie Gough and Noelene Lucas on The Longford Project, which works with the colonial history of Longford in northern Tasmania to turn the coincidence of common ancestry into connection and reconciliation in the present through a collaborative practice in contemporary art.

### **Dr Katrina Schlunke, *Just Outside My Window: The building site***

This presentation attempts a description of the space between the 'architectural proposition' and 'the built fact'. Following Latour's idea of descriptions that 'they are actualistic, step by step and they do not look forward to find out what happened, but they also do not look backward to establish sufficient conditions', this writing wants to sit with the materializing effects of 'proposition' and 'fact'. Description is not an act of critique but something like a process of attunement. Katherine Stewart describes the work of herself as writer as '...she gazes, imagines, senses, takes on, performs, and asserts not a flat and finished truth but some possibilities (and threats) that have come into view in the effort to become attuned to what a particular scene might offer.' Through this 'attuned description' of materializing architecture within a building scene/site I hope a useful political speculation on what writing in architecture does or could do, will arise.

**Dr Katrina Schlunke** is an Associate Professor in Cultural Studies who is currently working on two connected projects. The first is concerned with the possibility of an 'experimental' history and the second is to do with possession, possessions and lost materialisms. She is an editor of Cultural Studies Review and her most recent publication was a chapter on cultural studies pedagogy titled; Lessons from the Site: Catastrophe and Cultural Studies. She is currently an Associate Researcher with Gender and Cultural Studies, Sydney University.

**Andrew P. Steen, *Nice House, Woodland Lakes***

This paper is a short work of fiction that indirectly critiques catalogue-homed, master-planned suburban estates. It satirizes the structures and conditions of such developments by telling a simple, day-in-the-life narrative.

The paper focuses on Arthur Jones, resident of a Nice House in Woodland Lakes. The Nice is a three-bedroom house, with two bathrooms, an ensuite, kitchen with European appliances, ducted air-conditioning, open-plan living, and a double garage. Mr Jones has established himself as a freelance Private Investigator in a Nice that he converted into a home-office. The paper's narrative traces existential effects of these actions.

The content and form of the paper probe meaning-making processes. Through banal, conventional patterns, and flat and absurd characterizations, the paper challenges its reader to reconsider housing and subjectivity.

**Andrew P. Steen** is a lecturer of history–theory and design at the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Tasmania. Steen researches the intellectual history of architecture and architectural theory since 1960. He is interested in the cultural construction of the personas and referents of architecture and design. Employing systems and frameworks developed by literary theory, literary criticism, and semiotics, Steen performs close readings of texts focused on written form and diagrams. His interrogations of the poetic function of architectural discourse produce academic and creative works.

## **SPEAKERS**

**AnnMarie Brennan, *Conspiracy Theory as Critical Design Method***

While the creation of conspiracy theories and the discipline of design may, at first, appear to be divergent categories of thought, the two fields have a lot in common. A conspiracy theory is defined as a “speculative hypothesis suggesting that two or more persons, or an organization, have conspired to cause or cover up, through secret planning and deliberate action, an event or situation typically regarded as illegal or harmful.” Two key terms found in this definition, “to speculate” and “to plan,” are common actions used in the design process. Moreover, similar to design thinking, conspiracy theories are believed to contain psychological and socio-political origins which include “projection;” containing both rational and true elements, combined with some paranoid delusions and falsehoods.

This paper will examine how the conspiracy theory can be implemented as a literary device which calls upon similar skills used in the process of design. Conspiracy theories are used as a means to critically investigate urban design and architecture and presented in two case studies of design fictions, “Chemotaxopolis,” by Lasse Kilvaer and AnnMarie Brennan, and its prequel, “Sand Mafia,” authored by Shi Jie On and AnnMarie Brennan. These stories implement conspiracy theory as a method of creating critical narratives that expose the dark side of biomimicry and question certain government actions in re-designing the natural landscape.

Lasse Kilvear and AnnMarie Brennan, 'Chemotaxopolis,' in *Candide*, No. 8, 09/2014. In a time where architects are offering the appearance of a naturalized built environment, Melbourne, Australia is faced with an uncontrollable organism that reorganizes and re-appropriates the concrete matter of the city. The organism, nicknamed Muronoma by locals, slowly eats its way through living rooms and cubicles, leaving webbed, coral-like tunnels in its wake – spaces which provide habitat for a new wilderness in the heart of the city. American journalist Gabriella Canui travels to Melbourne to write a feature article on the organism and its consequences on the daily lives of Melbournites, but goes missing and never delivers her piece. After his disappearance, the CIA and their local ally the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) suspects Gabriella of joining the Architecture and Urban Bio-Terrorist Underground Syndicate, a.k.a. AUBTUS. As UNESCO is conducting a larger investigation on the Muronoma phenomenon, they request the CIA dossier on Gabriella Canui, including printouts of her notes and a series of transcribed interviews. The origin of Chemotaxopolis is told through these documents.

Shi Jie On and AnnMarie Brennan, *Sand Mafia*

This dystopian tale is the prequel to the architectural fiction *Chemotaxopolis*. Taking place in 2017, it is a speculation on the effects of unchecked land reclamation in Singapore and a critique of land reclamation in general. The fiction is partly based on reality, particularly concerning the legal challenges under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the existence of 'sand mafias', the existence of a microorganism that converts sand to sandstone, and the ecological damage caused by sand dredging and land reclamation. The protagonist is Malaysian architect Jonathan Wong Lu Zhou who works for the Singapore Arenaceous Negotiations Division (SAND), a fictional organization dedicated to the distribution of acquired arenaceous imports and the designing of reclaimed land. Taking the form of journal entries and recorded conversations, the fiction expounds on the negative effects of unchecked land reclamation on the natural and urban environments of both Singapore and its neighboring countries. The neighboring countries suffer from severe land erosion caused by uncontrolled sand dredging, forcing people inland and displacing the urban poor to the eroded coastal areas. This results in the development of a guerilla architecture movement that extends into the sea to form slums for the poor. The fiction explores the idea of chemistry as architecture, as SAND uses a genetically engineered microorganism to convert sand to sandstone at an accelerated rate and thereby speed up the land reclamation process. Jonathan is eventually introduced to AUBTUS, the Architecture & Urbanism Bio-Terrorist Underground Syndicate. In order to absolve himself of his guilty conscience, Jonathan ultimately chooses to defect and joins the bioterrorist group AUBTUS, taking his knowledge of SAND with him and setting the stage for *Chemotaxopolis*.

**AnnMarie Brennan** teaches architecture and design history and theory subjects at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on 20th and 21st century architecture with a strong interest in machines, media, and the political economy of design. Publications include *Perspecta 32: Resurfacing Modernism* (MIT Press), and *Cold War Hot Houses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy* (Princeton Architectural Press). She received graduate degrees from Yale and Princeton and has currently completed a manuscript on machines manufactured by the Italian Company Olivetti.

**Shi Jie On** is a second year Master of Architecture student at the Melbourne School of Design. He graduated from Taylor's University in Malaysia in 2014 with a Bachelor degree in Architecture. He conceived the theme for the 2014 architecture graduate exhibition at Taylor's University and served as assistant curator. His research interests include methods of architectural representation, architectural theory and history in Southeast Asia, and the portrayal of architecture in cinema.

**Dr Natalie Collie, *A writing architecture: science fiction and the urban imaginary***

This paper presents aspects of a practice-led investigation into questions of identity and architecture in science fiction. I argue that the expansive narrative space offered by SF makes it particularly suited to ficto-critical approaches to such questions. SF is less constrained by realist conventions than other genres, giving it a unique capacity to extrapolate from the present and, in doing so, explore the deeper, often disavowed metaphors, myths and dreams through which we understand and experience our built environments, ourselves, and imagine the future of both. SF, by definition (Suvin, 1972), involves a process of 'cognitive estrangement' for the reader or viewer, who needs to negotiate the dissonance between the fictional world and their own empirical environment in order to interpret the text. In doing so, SF produces a space of critical engagement that is increasingly recognized for its potential for creative and transformative thinking by a variety of disciplines, including architecture and design.

As such, my approach to SF and cities resonates with Soja's (1996) notion of the 'urban imaginary' - "our mental or cognitive mappings of urban reality and the interpretive grids through which we think about, experience, evaluate and decide to act in the places, spaces and communities in which we live" – and Raban's (1974) contention that "the city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture". I explore a number of 'soft cities' produced by science fiction and how these relate to how we as a culture imagine the nature of urban life and identity, both now and in the future. I conclude the paper with an excerpt from my own work-in-progress, a combination of short stories and images exploring a far-future city.

**Natalie Collie** has a background in the study of literature, culture, writing and the media, with a research focus on questions of space, identity, and communication. She was awarded her PhD in 2012. The practice-led research examined the relationship between cities, subjectivity, and narrative in speculative fiction. Her current research includes a study of gothic images of the future of cities in science fiction and other forms of media and culture. She is also interested in the impact of digital technologies on contemporary culture, the public sphere, and the interaction between physical and virtual forms of space and identity.

**Hélène Frichot, *Environmentality, Factish, Social Fiction, and the Impossible Constructions of an Island Paradise***

Concurrent with a fleeting journey up the eastern seaboard of Queensland toward the holiday destination of Fraser Island - known by the indigenous Butchulla peoples as K'Gari or Paradise – I will venture a mosaic approach composed of conceptual and place-based vignettes. This ficto-critical composition will address the delicate lattice that brings together mentalities, socialities and environmentalities. The location of arrival and departure will be the Kingfisher Resort on Fraser Island/K'Gari, but on the way concepts including environmentality, factish, and also the ambivalent role of social fiction will be addressed. Where environmentality (Foucault) is a term that designates how modes of neoliberal governance exert control over a population by encouraging specific attitudes and practices in response to ecological sustainability, the factish (Latour and Stengers) is an epistemological object or practice that is a composite of fact and fiction, and finally social fiction (Gatens and Lloyd) operates upon a collective imaginary producing either cohesive or divisive effects, depending on how it plays out and what encounters and relations it procures. For a European and colonising imaginary the complex and contradictory social fiction that informs the contemporary occupation of Fraser Island emerged with the remarkable event of a ship-wreck and the survival of an English woman called Eliza Fraser, who, once 'rescued', went on to tell vivid yet inconsistent stories of her ordeal. So compelling were her tales of encounter with the Butchulla peoples that they have been depicted in a series of canvases by the well-known Australian artist Sidney Nolan, and written into a novel by the Nobel laureate Patrick White. She has since been vilified and vindicated in turn, and made the subject of art historical, post-colonial and feminist analysis. These multifarious renditions of the Eliza Fraser story produce impossible constructions that interlace processes of subjectification, social status, and place, still evident when visiting Fraser Island today. This 'island paradise' has become a carefully curated holiday resort that mimics a spatial logics of settlement, including a village square, fences and gateways to keep (non)human others at bay, spatially performing an involuted yet telling counter-image of contemporary environmentalities.

**Hélène Frichot** is an Associate Professor and Docent in Critical Studies in Architecture, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, KTH, Stockholm. She co-curated the Architecture+Philosophy public lecture series in Melbourne, Australia between 2005-2014 (<http://architecture.testpattern.com.au>). Hélène is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Architecture and Design RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, where between 2004-2011 she held a tenured academic position. Her research examines the transdisciplinary field between architecture and philosophy, while her first discipline is architecture, she holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Sydney (2004).

**Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, *Two kinds of fiction in, and of, the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory***

My first encounter with the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, New York was through Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot*. Set in 1982, Eugenides' captures both the research undertaken there at that time and the social aspects of its residential community. So successfully does he recreate the scene that Dr. Amar Klar, the geneticist whose real work on yeast was used as the basis for the research that engages the fictional character of Leonard, 'was flooded with 20-year-old memories' when he read the novel. Eugenides had

never visited the laboratory, but his artist wife had spent a winter in the neighbouring village and the rest he filled in with research and imagination. In parallel, Centerbrook Architects have, since the 1970s, designed new buildings for the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory based on the memories and fantasies of its elderly Director, Dr James Watson—memories that include his time in Cambridge in the 1950s and at Harvard in the 1960s. This architecture, too, aims to tell a story, but one in which scientific research, unlike in the novel, has no visibility. The Hillside additions of 1996, for example, have concealed subterranean laboratories and vaguely resemble a retro-Bavarian ski village. The life of the scientist on campus as depicted by Eugenides is claustrophobic, hard-working and competitive, but punctuated by rich wine and food supplied by pharma-corporates. The architecture, on the other hand, portrays the scientific community as virtuous, civil and democratic, untouched by the real world, but occasionally distracted by tennis, boating and lawn parties. This paper examines these two fictions and contrasts the narrative of community that each relate. Interviews with the scientists suggest that *The Marriage Plot* is more revealing of the experience on campus than the architecture. It concludes that the story told by Centerbrook's architecture is not a failure in accuracy, but an instrumental fable with tangible effects. It looks to the extraordinary toilets in Centerbrook's own premises in Essex, Connecticut to argue the grasp the practice has on architectures of scenography and artifice.

**Sandra Kaji-O'Grady** is Head and Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Queensland. Her current research, with Chris L. Smith, on the Architectural Expression of Science has been funded by the Australian Research Council and published in *Architecture Research Quarterly*, *Industries of Architecture* (Routledge) and *The Architecture of Industry* (Ashgate). Sandra has published over fifty critical reviews and opinion pieces in the design press and has a regular on-line opinion column in Architecture AU.

**Rebecca McLaughlan, Catherine Caudwell and Alan Pert, *Cockram was Mistaken: Reconsidering on the Role of Fiction in the Design Process***

A tutor once inferred that “writing through” a studio project, as compared to sketching it into fruition, indicated a deep unsuitability to architectural practice. This paper challenges that view. We will reflect on two recent thesis projects – the 'The Fable Hospital' by Imogen Siberry and 'Neverland' by Ding Yu – to reconsider the possibilities of the fictional narrative as a tool for generating architectural propositions within the design process. More specifically, within a studio that demanded a complete theoretical revision of hospital design practice; that required students to confront the limitations that constrain design thinking within a typology mired in rules and preconceptions. While Yu's project employed traditional techniques of architectural production and representation, subtly underpinned by the logic of a gaming narrative, Siberry's project employed fiction as precedent, as a driver of the design process and as a representational tool. These projects will be discussed in relation to the literature that influenced their production: the writings of Lewis Carroll, A.A. Milne, J.M Barrie, Roald Dahl, L. Frank Baum, C.J. Lim and Will Self. It will reassert literature's role in the design process and reconsider its implications for architectural practice.

**Dr Rebecca McLaughlan** is an Early Career Researcher at the University of Melbourne and a New Zealand registered architect. Her work takes place at the intersection of wellbeing, architecture and popular media. She has presented research papers at Queens University (Belfast), the University of Portland, Edinburgh University and the University of Oxford; and has been published in the *Architectural Theory Review*, *Health and History* and *Fabrications*.

**Dr Catherine Caudwell** is an Early Career Academic and lecturer in the Culture+Context Design programme at Victoria University, Wellington. Her research explores the value of storytelling in understanding the role of design in people's everyday lives, as well as how it functions as a research method. She has a particular focus on modes of online cultural production and community.

**Professor Alan Pert** is Director of the Melbourne School of Design and leads an award winning architectural practice, Northern Office for Research & Design (NORD), whose recent commissions in the healthcare sector include a new Maggie's [Cancer] Centre in Forth Valley and the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow.

This paper draws on work from the interdisciplinary design studio 'the [un]prescribed hospital' run by McLaughlan and Pert in early 2016. This studio was run as an extension of the ARC-linkage project 'Designing for Wellbeing: Realising Benefits for Patients through Best Practice Hospital Design' (ARC project team: Julie Willis, Philip Goad and Alan Pert alongside Lyons Architects).

**Hugo Moline, *The rise of the Owner-Occupation: A fictional architectural project as critique of Sydney's housing system***

This paper explores the potential of a fictional architectural design project to critique the social and political realities in which it is located. From Tafuri to Koolhaas, architectural writers have described the inability of the architectural project to be critical of the political, social and economic structures in which it is embedded. Architecture is commissioned and built for the powerful and, as such, is doomed to reproduce and reinforce the interests of power. In this context, could fictional projects, designed for the world as if it were otherwise, allow architects the room for criticality?

Giancarlo De Carlo, a key theorist of participation in architecture, noted the impossibility of real democracy in the making of architecture without substantial transformations in society first. He advocated however that architecture could play a role in prefiguring change by designing 'as if' the changes had already occurred. This selective fictionalisation could enable architects to produce visually powerful critiques to the status quo.

This approach is explored through a fictional architectural project: *Owner-Occupy: Terra Nullius Ad Infinitum*. Taking the fictional premise of a world which has rejected all forms of ownership beyond physical occupation, the project uses both built and narrative form to critically examine the contemporary housing system. The project draws on the history of 20th century radical architecture, the language of real estate and contemporary desires for consumable authenticity to create real artefacts of a fictional scenario. Through the ambiguous relationship of the real to the fictional the project calls into question the

legitimacy of our current regime of land ownership, based as it on its own legal fiction, that of Terra Nullius.

**Hugo Moline** is an designer, urbanist and researcher currently undertaking a Phd at the University of Sydney on critical-participatory forms of housing. Hugo has worked on community-led housing projects in Australia, Thailand, Fiji and The Philippines. Together with artist Heidi Axelsen, Hugo has made and exhibited work nationally and internationally, including: Silpakorn University (Bangkok, Thailand), Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF, Sydney) and the Echigo Tsumari Art Triennale (Niigata, Japan). Hugo is a director of Moline Axelsen: Public Art / Participatory Architecture (MAPA) and co-founder of urban collective The Lot.

### **Tom Morgan, *Story-Systems***

NARRATIVE >>>>

*Semyon, of Athens, late of Rio; where he had been either instrumental in seeding, or critical in curtailing, a runaway cascade in one of the city's autopoietic fabrication systems. The scans had been everywhere – and Cass had even printed off a few of the choicer sections; a variegated froth and foam with the faintest of suggestions of an underlying order. It had, she fancied, a kind of feral beauty – some trait that hinted at an interplay between chaos and control.*

*She'd ranged the prints across her windowsill – so they faced and framed her view of the old city. Dozing, she thought she could see fragments of church and cathedral and crypt and catacomb in their miniature expanse – and then, by extension, in the glass and steel of the city skyline. The fungal barrios of Rio – filtered out and down through filament and scale shifts and accrued translation and misapprehension – became a sort of seed for what the city, the real city, ought become. She saw these new landscapes in her dreams – localised, run out under an Australian sun and sky – and when she dove and swam through the system, she hunted for them ...*

SCRIPT >>>>

This paper considers an underrepresented facet of design fictions - that of the tools and systems underpinning and enveloping the design and development of urban/architectural spaces. It seeks to address the idea of the script and system in potential fictocritical creations and to examine the potentials engendered in employing these as a means for an understanding of the contemporary condition.

Considering the particular synthetic capacities of digital media, as well as the tension inherent in the idea of simulation, the paper offers a brief survey of the creative interpretation and integration of systems from the 1960s onward, as well as examples of the use of such model worlds in current practice and pedagogy where their capacity to act as site that explore ethical, personal, and social dimensions mark them as distinct from the traditional notion of simulation spaces as delivering quantifiable and reproducible outputs.

This paper contends that software systems and their artefacts offer a flawed but useful model for understanding the contemporary world, and suggests ways in which they could better participate in plural, fictocritical narratives.

**Tom Morgan** is a lecturer at Monash University. He is interested in the interface between systems and utopian production at heart, the capacity for current technologies to accelerate the production of 'tall tales' liberative narratives that model multiple and parallel other worlds.

**Kim Roberts, *Hiroshima: notes of the expanded-field***

This paper explores the recourse to creative non-fiction within in-situ and retrospective field notes written by the author, as scholar-tourist, within the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and its 'expanded-field.' It draws on this writing and the quasi-ethnographic data upon which it reflects, melding the poetic techniques of fiction with criticism. In doing so it discusses attempts to fabulate a voice or voices with which to map the physical and conceptual contours of this site, a site that extends a nervous system of affect far beyond its empirical borders. It discusses too the tremors and elliptical breakdown of language in such a space. Considering the dearth of a self-assured subject position from which to speak as outsider this work constitutes a search for new navigational tools within a post-memorial landscape of commemorative monuments, remnant objects and narrative threads: a search, that is, for a form of site-writing that critically reflects upon both an architectural site and the situated-ness of writing and writer – writing as site (Rendell, 2005 & 2007).

The paper deliberately evokes novelist Kenzaburo Oe's *Hiroshima Notes* (1965) and art critic, Rosalind Krauss', landmark essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979) in grappling with the ways in which writing may expanded the field of an architectural landscape (and visa versa). It references too Alain Resnais' documentary cum fictional feature film *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and the directors' collaborations with novelist Margurite Duras to develop an field of poetic and aesthetic affectivity as interface with the event-city of Hiroshima.

**Kim Roberts** is a PhD Candidate in the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University. For Kim Roberts architecture, literature and writing have been long time travelling companions. Alongside undergraduate studies in architecture she undertook a second Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in literature and gender studies. While working towards architectural registration she completed an honours thesis in literature. Returning to academic life after years working as an architect and heritage consultant her PhD research continues this pattern of interdisciplinary practice. It explores the physical and conceptual space of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and the experience of this site by international visitors. Kim is also somewhat reluctant poet, recently publishing some of this clandestine work in *Rabbit: a journal for nonfiction poetry* - a result of persistent goading from a friend.

**Katrina Simon, *The Bannister***

This paper embodies the techniques of ficto-critical writing in the form of a ghost story, for the purposes of reflecting on ideas of memory and affect in relation to architecture.

The building that initiated the story is one in which the author grew up – an imposing black creosoted timber house. During the author’s childhood, reference was frequently made by other children to the local belief that this strange black house was haunted. They insisted that there was blood running down the bannisters, and blood stains on the front door step that wouldn’t come off. These grisly features were apparently the result of the sea captain, who built the house, murdering his wife and burying her under the floor boards. While none of these occurrences were evident at the time to the inhabitants of the house itself, (and the record of the house in the national historic register makes no mention of them), it did possess some decidedly uncanny qualities. As well as its unusual appearance, there were many unsuspected connections between rooms, and some spaces could be unexpectedly rendered completely dark, even at midday. In addition, the numerous attic spaces were almost larger than the house itself, and some of them were either difficult or impossible to access, giving the house a sense of the inaccessible and the unknowable. The identity of the designer is uncertain, however, it is strongly reminiscent of the Ultimate Bungalows of Greene and Greene that are still to be found in Pasadena, California. On visiting the Gamble House Museum in Pasadena, the author was struck by some odd similarities, beyond stylistic echoes, in the layout and character of the house. What began as a simple historical architectural comparison began to evoke an elusive impression of recollection and familiarity, and a mysterious sense of dread...

**Dr Katrina Simon** is a designer and visual artist with a background in architecture, landscape architecture and fine art. Her research interests focus on the expression of memory and its loss in landscapes, explored through research projects, exhibitions and design competitions on cartography and landscape representation, design research methods the history and design of cemeteries, and the impacts of earthquakes and other disasters on cities. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, UNSW Australia.

### **Naomi Stead, *That’s where we are right now***

A *mise en abyme* (loosely translated as ‘placed in the abyss’) refers to instances where a representation of a thing is embedded in the thing itself: whether a painting within a painting (Velasquez), a play within a play (Shakespeare), a mirror reflected in another mirror, or a model or image or replica of a building shown within that same building – the container within the contained. Equally the realm of cheesy optical illusion, commercial advertising, and high-concept art practice and literary theory, the *mise en abyme* is useful in describing a particular mode of artistic self-reflexivity – provoking a meta-textual reading, where one cultural text is understood recursively, relative to another. So what might it mean to turn this (fictional, speculative, labyrinthine, critical) mode towards architecture?

This paper will reflect on the *mise en abyme* as a means of considering architecture from both the outside and inside at once: in just the way an architect does, in the process of a building’s conception, and just as a critic does, in its evaluation. Both within and without architecture, the paper considers also the melancholy of representation, the vagaries of scale, and the obliqueness of the critic’s gaze.

**Naomi Stead** is an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Queensland. She is editor of the book *Semi-detached: Writing, representation and criticism*

in architecture (Uro, 2012), was from 2011-2014 co-editor of *Architectural Theory Review* and from 2012-2015 co-editor of *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*. She is widely published as an architecture critic, and is currently a columnist for *The Conversation and Places Journal*.

**Rosemary Willink, *Wikipedia and the Met: A ficto-critical approach to encyclopaedic collections***

In recent times, the term 'storytelling' has become incredibly important to encyclopedic museums. The logic behind this trend is straight forward: museums have a lot of things and to justify stockpiling all these things museums must tell their publics about these things. And the more things they have the more ways museums can relate these things to other things, to retell those stories from new perspectives. This is neatly summed up by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in a recent press release: "With this new space, we can expand the story that the Met tells...stressing historical connections between objects and looking at our holdings with a fresh eye and new perspective." Wikipedia, another encyclopedic collection, expanding by over 20 000 articles each month (Wikipedia, 2016). Like most encyclopedic collections, it may strive for neutrality but its stories are written by editors, not all of whom are equal, nor driven by the same imperative.

"If you are looking for information about historical events or other things that happened in the real world, you are on the wrong page!" is an artwork by Janine DeFeo and Paul Zaba. It was devised to explore and problematize the processes of knowledge-making in Wikipedia through small, specific acts of vandalism. Sourced completely within Wikipedia, the artwork combines elements of fact and fiction and in doing so, draws an interesting parallel between the visual art practice of institutional critique and the writerly genre of ficto-criticism. This paper will explore the commonalities and distinctions between a writerly ficto-criticism, and an enacting of it through the work of DeFeo and Zaba, in the context of two encyclopedic institutions, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Wikipedia. In doing so, we will gain a better understanding of the potential for ficto-criticism as mode of critique in institutional settings where truth claims are regularly made and contested.

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