“Tropical Variety and Queensland Architecture (1850-1914)” was funded by a University of Queensland Postdoctoral Fellowship for Women from 2009-2011. The research has continued while Dr van der Plaat has been employed by ATCH as a Research Fellow (2012-2016) and Senior Research Fellow (2017-).

Western ideals of beauty have often been bound to an image of the natural world. Tropical climates and the physical environments they produced were also often seen to be degenerative to the creative impulse. In the mid-nineteenth century, in response to scientific exploration and the colonial experience, European ideals of beauty shifted their points of reference from temperate to tropical environments. Investigating architectural design in 19th century Queensland, the project seeks to understand how English theories on creative invention responded when transplanted into a tropical setting. The research will have significance in understanding Queensland’s history and the cultural corollaries of climate and environmental science. Documenting cultural products of climate change, the research will also complement emerging UQ research strengths in Climate Change and Architecture and Culture.

Outcomes and Related Publications:

Publications


Deborah van der Plaat, Formal Vocabularies. Cosmopolitanism, Analogy and Orientalism in Oscar Wilde’s writings on art and architecture, AVSA 2012, Victorian Vocabularies, Griffith University, Brisbane, 11-14th April.


Conference

Grants
Architectural eclecticism in the nineteenth-century writings of John Ruskin and Alexander von Humboldt, University of Queensland Early Career Researchers Grant, 2010-2011 ($25,000)