QUOTATION: What does history have in store for architecture today?

Proceedings of the 34th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand
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Edited by Gevork Hartoonian and John Ting
University of Canberra
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All papers accepted for publication were blind reviewed by two referees; papers not accepted by one of the referees were blind reviewed by a third referee whose decision was final. Papers were matched, where possible, to referees in a related field and with similar interests to the authors. A full list of referees is published at the back of these proceedings.

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OVERWORD

Recalling Goethe’s theory of ur-phenomenon and considering the Eiffel Tower as a montage of various elements, Walter Benjamin presented quotation as the Geist of a theoretical break with the vulgar historical naturalism, and as a means to grasp the construction of history as such: as meaning in the structure of commentary. Benjamin was not alone in using quotation as a strategy to deconstruct historicism. We are also reminded of Karl Kraus, who used quotation not to preserve, but to purify, to tear from context, to destroy the established totality. Considered as a fragment, quotation can play a critical role in putting together the large construction (historiography) made out of smallest architectonic elements, the detail.

In general we are asking, what do you quote and to what purpose?

Recent historiographies present anachronism as a theoretical paradigm to dispense with the historicist certainties, which most often try to cement the historian’s tendency for period style, solidifying the linear progression of history. Even though quotation seems to be natural to historiography, it’s hard to find a text or manuscript that does not use quotation to re-activate the past, either to confirm a claim, or to expand the scope of the historiographical implications of another claim. In both cases quotation introduces interruption, a pause in the presumed linearity and natural extension of the narrative. But what is it that makes a sentence or an idea quotable? And why is it that throughout history both architects and historians have used citations, if only to save a place in the linear progression of history? The historian’s interest in quotation might be that it says something about an event and/or serves as a reminder of the accuracy of a fact, a recollection. Or else, citation forces the sentence to depart from its subject matter, historical facts and events in order to enter into the realm of what might be called insight, which can also mean in-cite, or in-site. Insightful observations, nevertheless, can become facts in their own right after being quoted and referred to repeatedly. Interestingly enough, Manfredo Tafuri makes a distinction between those who use quotations “to build a new reality” and those who use the same quotations “in order to cover up the disappointments of reality.” In addition to the Benjaminian concept of historiographic montage, what quotation means for architectural historiography is this: that the text, an assembly of facts, processes, events, and insightful observations offers quotable fragments when it inaugurates or establishes a different historical knowledge.

The conference convenors would like to thank all the authors, referees, organisers, keynote speakers, sponsors and volunteers for their generosity in contributing to the 34th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand

Gevork Hartoonian and John Ting
Conference Convenors and Editors of the Conference Proceedings
CONTENTS

FOREWORD v

KEYNOTE: Figures Of The Architext viii
Jean-Louis Cohen

KEYNOTE: ‘The Rational and The Robust’: Jennifer Taylor and the historiography of ix
Australian Architecture
Julie Willis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS x

Quoting the Familiar: Critical Image Making in the Age of Digital Reproduction 1
Jacqui Alexander and Thomas Morgan

An Analogical Quotation 13
Rahmatollah Amirjani

Interpretation/Translation/Quotation? Contemporary Architects’ Interventions into Multicultural Australia 25
David Beynon and Ian Woodcock

Assembled: John Ruskin’s Architectural Ideal 35
Anuradha Chatterjee

Australia’s Big Dilemma: Regional/National Identities, Heritage Listing and Big Things 45
Amy Clarke

Ideal Urban Space in Gainsborough’s Charity Relieving Distress, 1784 57
Georgina Cole

Quotation in Wittkower’s Neo-Palladianism 67
Scott Colman

Rudolph Schindler’s Church School Lecture on Decoration: A Preliminary Reading 77
James Curry and Stanislaus Fung

From Outside Into Inside Out: The Domestic Interior as a Foundational Site in Twentieth-Century Architecture, Psychoanalysis and Art 91
Anna Daly

Quoting Ian Ferrier (1928-2000): Contributing to Queensland’s Post-War Modern Church Architecture 101
Lisa Marie Daunt
“Fitted for Sacred Use”: Vatican II and Modernism in the Physical, Social and Ritual Space of Three Australian Churches
Ursula de Jong and Flavia Marcello

Revisiting Quotations: Regionalism in Historiography
Macarena de la Vega de Leon

Out of Context
Penelope Dean

The Verbal and Visual Languages of Kenneth Frampton in Architectural Design, 1962-1964
Sally Farrah

Architectural Footnotes: The Chicago Tribune Tower
Cristina Garduno Freeman and Vicki Leibowitz

Campus, Context and Community: Residential Colleges and Halls of Residence at Australia’s Post-war Universities, 1945-1975
Philip Goad

Janina Gosseye

Image Building: A Study of Australia’s Domestic and Foreign Policy in Relation to Embassy Architecture
Rowan Gower

Form and Design for India: Achyut Kanvinde’s Reflection on Louis Kahn
Maryam Gusheh and Prajakta Sane

From the Acropolis to Kingaroy: Creating Civic Culture in Queensland
Alice Hampson and Fiona Gardiner

Jorn Utzon’s Graphic Quotation: Le Corbusier and the Sydney Opera House, 1957-1966
Glenn Harper

Kenneth Frampton: The Violence of Quotation
Gevork Hartoonian

How a Statue Can Shape a City: Sydney’s First Monument, Governor Sir Richard Bourke
Michael Hill

“To be With Architecture is All We Ask”: A Critical Genealogy of the Serpentine Pavilions
Susan Holden

Quoting Palladio
Renata Jadresin Milic and Graeme McConchie
An Architectural-Urban Strategy: Re-reading Rowe and Koetter’s Collage City
Michael Jasper

Avant-Quotation: Imitation, Conventionalization and Postmodern Practices of Reference
Elizabeth M. Keslacy

Poetic Structure and Popular Taste: Yamasaki, Emerson, and the Delicate Balance of Form and Tectonics
Joss Kiely

Columns of Light: Louis Kahn’s Design for Sanctuary of the Mikveh Israel Synagogue (Philadelphia, 1961-72)
Peter Kohane

In Search of Invention: Buhrich’s Modern Architectural ‘Quotations’
Catherine Lassen

Quotation, Architecture and Chinese Ancestor Worship
Mengbi Li

Bracketing: The Immediate Historicity of Asia
Francis Chia-Hui Lin

Semblance of Use: History, Function and Aesthetics in the Serpentine Pavilions
John Macarthur

Sleeping Beauty: Aesthetics of Ruin, Corruption and Rome
Lina Malfona

Duelling Quotes: James Marston Fitch’s ‘Murder at the Modern’
Harry Margalit

The Hidden Territories of the Digital Line
Linda Matthews and Gavin Perin

Sincerest Form of Flattery: Imitation and Early Prison Design in New Zealand
Christine McCarthy

Mothercraft and Model Cities: Ethno-Symbolism and Emblems of Nationalism during the 1927 Royal Visit to Wellington
Christopher McDonald

Alvar Aalto: The Organicity of Quotation
Andrew Metcalf

Who has Written What on the University of Auckland’s Clocktower Building (1920-26)?
Bree Meyers and Julia Gatley
Encoding and Transferring Transience in Housing: Linking the Architectural Heritages of Migrant Hostels and Public Housing in Victoria in the 1960s
Renee Miller-Yeaman

Comparative (Post)Colonialisms: Residential School Architectures in Canada, USA, Australia, and New Zealand
Magdalena Milosz

After Pratolino: Costantino de’ Servi and the Italian Renaissance Garden in England
Luke Morgan

Death Mask: Fetishizing Tradition Through Citations
Ali Mozaffari and Nigel Westbrook

Difference and Repetition: Reactivating Traditional Tokyo Architectural Elements in Nezu
Milica Muminovic

The Mediterranean on the West Coast: R.J. Ferguson and Rottnest Island
Andrew Murray

“The Pleasures Functions of Architecture”: Postmodern Architecture and the “Culture of Flimsiness” in Queensland
Elizabeth Musgrave

Tradition in Mid-Century Houses of Shinohara and Kikutake
Marika Neustupny

The Goorawin Shelter: Ed Oribin’s Contribution to the Aboriginal Housing Panel
Timothy O’Rourke

Rethinking Replicas: Temporality and the Reconstructed Pavilion
Ashley Paine

‘Ernest Fooks - The House Talks Back’: Between the Savage and the Scientific Mind
Alan Pert and Philip Goad

Internment “Homes” as Material Texts: The Architecture of Canada’s New Denver Internment Camp
Anoma Pieris

To The Editor of the Australian: Francis Greenway’s Letter of Quotations
Jennifer Preston

Digital Fragments and Historiographies: Data Mining the William J Mitchell Archive
Peter Raisbeck and Peter Neish
**Quotation: What does history have in store for architecture today?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robin Boyd and the Quotation: Translating Public Words to Public Building</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Raisbeck and Christine Phillips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating Modernism: Renewing Image and Relevance Through Church</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Within an Increasingly Secular Post War Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Richardson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Module Interpreted: De-quotations of Re-quotations on Katsura Villa</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marja Sarvimaki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Compromised Slab: Koolhaas and Kollhoff Interpreting Colin Rowe</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christoph Schnoor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Designed Incompleteness: Quotation and Transfer in the Later Australian Work of Romaldo Giurgola</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Schrapel and Peter Scriver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioning Pluralism in “New Waves” of Post-Modern Japanese Architecture</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ari Seligmann and Sean McMahon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Drawings to Drawls: Coy Howard’s Artefacts of Architectural Production</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Johnson’s Crystal Cathedral: Citing the Loss of Citation</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Smithey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baroque Form Generation Practices: A Historical Study</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia M. Soo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Architect Says: Myth, Misquotation, and ‘the Mating of a Building’</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi Stead and Katrina Simon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit of Adhocism and Brilliant Selective Editing</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew P. Steen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narrative of the Bungalow: Literary Depictions of the Colonial Bungalows of Colombo, Sri Lanka</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamudu Tennakoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allusions and Illusions in Spanish Architecture, 1898-1953</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Tippey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd and the Brut: Quoting Robin Boyd’s Words on Brutalism</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nugroho F. Utomo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following the Folly: Quoting, Constructing and Historicising Paper Architecture</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annalise Varghese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quotation in the Architects’ Sketchbook: Analysing Nell McCredie’s Sketchbooks
Kirsty Volz

Paul Walker and Antony Moulis

The Met Breuer: From Sculpture to Art Museum and Back Again
Rosemary Willink

New Canaan in New Zealand: Alington House as Honest Architecture?
Peter Wood
KEYNOTE:
Figures Of The Architext

Jean-Louis Cohen
New York University

Literary theorist Gérard Genette, whose book Palimpsestes: Literature in the Second Degree is
devoted to the many dimensions of quotation, has defined the “architext” as “This relationship of
inclusion that relates each text to the different types of discourses in which it is inscribed.” Far from
remaining valid only in territories remote from architectural concerns, the analyses of the “second
hand,” as proposed by Antoine Compagnon, or the concept of intertextuality proposed by Julia
Kristeva and developed by Genette with the architext, are relevant for the study of architectural and
urban forms. Rather than being limited to quotation – understood as the transfer of a phrase from one
design, or one building to another one, intertextual relationships correspond to a wide spectrum of
figures, from literal inclusion to paraphrase, or from condensation to homology. Architectural
intertextuality operates in many realms of theory and practice, and its consideration allows for better
understanding of processes at work within the oeuvre of a given architect, or of the reverberation of
designs from different authors on those of contemporaries, and followers. The paradigm of the
intertext provides a frame within which different types of relationships can be detected, that deal in
some cases with the syntactic dimension of architecture, and in others with its lexical spectrum.
Among these, three distinct systems could be observed: intericonicity – that is the circulation of
images from a particular design to another one; intertectonicity – that is the transfer of tectonic
features from a structure to another one; and also, observing the creation and the development of
cities since the Renaissance, interurbanity – that is the translation of street layouts, open space
patterns, or monumental schemes from city to city. Operating at different scales, these processes
complicate the reflection on quotation, or on such a dubious construct as “influence.” They will be
discussed on the base of an eclectic selection of cases.

Jean-Louis Cohen holds the Sheldon H. Solow chair in the History of Architecture at New York
University’s Institute of Fine Arts. He is the author of numerous books and articles about nearly every
aspects of how modernization has affected the built environment. A specialist in the Russian avant-
garde and the work of Le Corbusier, Cohen’s work has also focused on the multiple patterns of
internationalization, from the colonial situations of Morocco and Algeria to the worldwide circulation of
ideas and forms.
KEYNOTE:
‘The Rational and The Robust’:
Jennifer Taylor and the historiography of Australian architecture

Julie Willis
The University of Melbourne

The study of Australian architecture has been circumscribed by its chief authors, the most influential of which have been historians whose wider interests in the contemporary and context of Australia as place have underscored their work. These authors are also distinguished by their primary training as architects, giving them a deep interest and understanding of architecture as a process. Robin Boyd defined not only early Australian architectural historiography, but also the popular imagination of an Australian architecture. But Boyd took a fundamentally modernist approach, echoed by Max Freeland in his *Architecture in Australia*, and their privileging of tectonic purity and belittling of ornament characterizes the first generation of Australian architectural historians. The first generation of architectural historians was intent on demonstrating an Australian architecture that was connected to international trends that proved its pedigree. The second generation was interested in understanding what might be a particularly *Australian* architecture, one that was for and of its place, including historians such as David Saunders, Miles Lewis, George Tibbits and Jennifer Taylor. Of all of these, Taylor came closest to inheriting Boyd’s mantle, with her enduring interest in contemporary and architecture of the recent past. Taylor was deeply interested in the late modern and post-modern, helping to demonstrate the brutalist and regional influences inherent in Australian architecture in the 1970s and 1980s. Her work was fundamental in showing that Australian architecture was not just a reflection of ideas from elsewhere, but where place, materials and form were defining new regional approaches. This presentation examines Taylor’s legacy in documenting the rational and robust architecture of the post-WWII period that underpins understanding.

*Julie Willis is an architectural historian, Professor of Architecture and Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning at the University of Melbourne. With Professor Philip Goad, she is Editor of the acclaimed *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), which won an AIA Bates Smart Special Award for Architecture in the Media in 2012. Her research projects focus on Australian architecture, undertaking significant work on historic and contemporary hospitals; architecture in community, education and civic identity; architecture of wartime and its impact; nationalism and identity in public buildings; and equity and diversity in the Australian architectural profession.*
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The convenors of SAHANZ 2017: QUOTATION received 127 abstracts from which were 79 papers accepted. In the end, 73 papers were prepared for presentation at the conference and publication in its proceedings. All papers accepted for the conference were blind reviewed by two referees; papers not accepted by one of the referees were blind reviewed by a third referee, whose decision was final. Papers were matched, where possible, to referees in a related field and with similar interests to the authors. The convenors would like to thank the academics and others who gave their time and expertise to the refereeing of these papers.

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