

# *Decorating Distance: Civic Dispositions in Non-Professional Environmental Education*

*Elke Couchez*  
*Hasselt University*

*In the 1970s, the Jewish émigré architect and writer Paul Ritter (1925-2010) initiated a series of experiments with modelled concrete in Western Australia. Paul Ritter taught at the Nottingham School of Architecture from 1952 to 1964 and became the first City Planner of Perth, WA, in 1965. After his very own Planned Environment and Educreation Research Institute (PEER) licensed a machine to model concrete by using polystyrene moulds, Ritter was asked to design a series of seven pedestrian underpasses in Rockingham Park in Perth. These walkways formed a footpath system in a pioneering Radburn-style housing scheme often used by children on their way to school. By decorating the distance between home and school with animals and inserting games on the concrete surface, Ritter wanted to make the “anxiety-ridden” walkway from home to school into an “attractive playspace” or a “clubroom for children.” This paper takes Ritter’s experimental so-called “sculp-crete” designs and his collaborations with school children as a starting point to reflect on the architect’s position in the civic realm and in non-professional education.*

*Keywords: Environmental education; Paul Ritter; childhood; urban planning; civics*

With architecture becoming a registered profession in the early twentieth century in most western countries, architecture and design communities started to question who should be enfranchised to talk about and make the built environment. One specific instance of this debate that has largely remained under the radar is the rise of “Environmental Education” in the 1960s and ’70s, often-short-lived programs dealing with people’s relationships and their natural and man-made surroundings. These studies were not only added to curricula in architecture schools, but also made their way into formal and informal education of children.<sup>1</sup>

Architectural journalist Ellen Perry Berkeley already observed these programmes in the US in the mid-1960s.<sup>2</sup> The “MATCH box project” initiated by the Children’s Museum in Boston in collaboration with the US Office of Education and architect Tunney Lee, for instance, introduced children to the concept of the city.<sup>3</sup> Kevin Lynch’s *Growing up in Cities*, to give another example, was the result of a 1977 UNESCO project designed to involve young people in the planning and creation of their urban environment, and focused on the cities of Cracow, Melbourne, Mexico City, Salta, Toluca and Warsaw.<sup>4</sup> One year later, the anarchist writer and educator Colin Ward (1924-2010) interpreted the city as an educational resource, not only for aspiring architects but also for children.<sup>5</sup>

According to Jeff Bishop, Eileen Adams and Joan Keen, who were at the base of the Environmental Education phenomenon in Britain, the movement was framed by several strands of theoretical inquiry and by different actors.<sup>6</sup> It was firstly rooted in the writings on community, citizenship and participation by, for instance, Paul Goodman and Jane Jacobs.<sup>7</sup> To a lesser extent, it also integrated sociological studies on people and their environment of, for instance, Kevin Lynch, Robert Sommer and Donald Appleyard.<sup>8</sup> And lastly, it took elements from early-twentieth-century childhood development theories and progressive educators, such as Friedrich Froebel and Jean Piaget.<sup>9</sup> The focus of these environmental education projects was on how children could gain active, urban agency and thus on how to decrease the distance between children and their day-to-day environments. Or, as Berkeley noted, their goal was not “a better professional, but a better citizen, an adult with a developed sensitivity toward his surroundings and a sense of interactions possible between himself and his environment.”<sup>10</sup> These ideas were echoed in the report on the 1972 UN *Human Environment* conference in Stockholm, made by the British Department of Environment:

1 On Environmental Education (EE) in architecture schools, see Elizabeth Kessler, “Fun and Games: The Suppression of Architectural Authority and the Rise of the Reader,” *Footprint* 17 (2015): 101–23. For a general description of EE, see Cathryn McCue, “Environmental Education,” in *Environmental Encyclopedia*, ed. Marci Bortman, Peter Brimblecombe, and Mary Ann Cunningham, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2003), 481–83.

2 Ellen Perry Berkeley, “Environmental Education from Kindergarten on Up,” *Architectural Forum* 130, no. 5 (1969): 46–53.

3 Tunney Lee and MA Children’s Museum Boston, *Teacher’s Guide to the City: The MATCH Box Project; Prototype Edition* (Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse, 1965). Other educational projects discussed by Perry Berkeley were workbooks (developed by Richard and Hatch Associates, or by the architectural firm Murphy Levy Wurman), mini-courses, electives, classroom toolkits, a model city project consisting of a set of lego blocks, urban walks and urban photography projects.

4 Kevin Lynch and Tridib Banerjee, *Growing up in Cities: Studies of the Spatial Environment of Adolescence in Cracow, Melbourne, Mexico City, Salta, Toluca, and Warszawa / Edited by Kevin Lynch, from the Reports of Tridib Banerjee* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977).

5 Colin Ward, *The Child in the City* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

6 Jeff Bishop, Eileen Adams and Joan Keen, “Children, Environment and Education: Personal Views of Urban Environmental Education in Britain,” *Children’s Environments* 9, no. 1 (1992), 82.

7 The authors refer to these studies: Paul Goodman, *Growing up Absurd* (New York: Random House, 1960); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1965).

8 The most influential books were: Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); Robert Sommer, *Personal Space* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969); and Donald Appleyard, *Planning a Pluralist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).

9 See Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man* (London: Hailman, 1907) and Jean Piaget, *The Child’s Conception of Space* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1929).

10 Berkeley, “Environmental Education,” 46.



*Environmental education and the exercise of citizenship go hand in hand: the opening-up of opportunities for public participation in decision-making is the most important of all means to environmental education, which should aim at developing a critical, moral and aesthetic awareness of our surroundings.*<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1. Paul Ritter (newspaper clipping, December 15, 1987). (Courtesy of Paul Ritter Files, State Library of Western Australia.)

This paper is the second part of a diptych study on the notions of architecture, childhood and civics in the work of the eccentric and provocative Jewish émigré architect Paul Ritter (1925-2010). Paul Ritter was born a Jew in Czechoslovakia and was 13 when he saw the Nazi tanks rumbling in.<sup>12</sup> As one of the oldest boys on the refugee children's train, the so-called *Kindertransport*, he escaped to the UK in 1939.<sup>13</sup> He started his studies in architecture at Liverpool University in 1942 and in 1946 he married a fellow-graduate Jean Patricia Finch, who was trained in botany, zoology and education. Ritter lectured at the Nottingham School of Architecture from 1952 to 1964. After being dismissed (but reinstated) in Nottingham, he was appointed Perth's first city planner in 1965.<sup>14</sup> His incapacity to deal with bureaucratic structures and his fierce and successful opposition to the plans for an eight-lane freeway stirred the emotions in the Perth City Council and, two years later, he was wrongfully dismissed following false allegations by the Town Clerk.<sup>15</sup> Many Australian architects who studied in the 1960s will also remember Ritter as a colourful guest at the 1966 AASA student conference *Education in Architecture* in Perth

11 Great Britain Department of the Environment, *How Do You Want to Live?: A Report on the Human Habitat; Presented in January 1972 to the Secretary of State for the Environment* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1972), 47. To read the original statements of the conference organisers, refer to: <http://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20150314024203/http%3A//www.unep.org/Documents/Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid%3D97%26articleid%3D1503>.

12 Leonora Ritter, "The Philosophy of Paul Ritter (1925-2010)," unpublished manuscript (2018), 2.

13 He was first fostered in Cleethorpes and later in Penzance. Correspondence with Leonora Ritter, August 23, 2019

14 Ritter was dismissed because he submitted a false medical certificate after the Education Sub-Committee had refused his application for leave of absence in order to undertake a lecture tour overseas. The doctor who wrote the Medical certificate backed Paul's successful appeal against the dismissal. He was reinstated, but when the School moved to the University and all lecturers had to reapply for their jobs, Ritter was not appointed. Letter from the Director of Education to the Members of the Governing Body of the College of Art and Crafts, March 23, 1964 (State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/26, 1964).

15 Again, he successfully appealed his dismissal. He received damages, but was not reinstated. Correspondence with Leonora Ritter, August 23, 2019.



Figure 2. Ritter at the 1966 AASA student conference “Education in Architecture” in Perth. From left to right: Paul Ritter, John Voelcker, Jacob Bakema, Aldo Van Eyck and Buckminster Fuller. (Reprinted from *Building Ideas* 3, no. 4 (1966), cover.)

where he circulated his ideas on creativity and self-regulation in architecture education.<sup>16</sup>

The first part of the diptych study focused on Ritter as an educator at the Nottingham School of Architecture and looked at how ideas of childhood creativity and the notion of innocence played out in the profession as a means to bolster the discipline when architecture was ostensibly losing ground to engineers and building specialists. This paper rather opens up the field of non-professional architecture education and zooms in on Ritter’s artistic educational projects for and with children in Western Australia in the 1960s and 1970s. Ritter not only developed a theoretical understanding of children’s creativity and the environment in his written oeuvre, but was also actively seeking opportunities to test out his ideas within and beyond school walls.

As Roy Kozlovsky argued in *The Architectures of Childhood*, the dominant approach of studying public art often is the design-centred perspective, “which raises questions of aesthetic value or themes autonomous to the architectural discourse such as style and authorship.”<sup>17</sup> This paper proposes another way of analysing these projects by reflecting on how children were constructed as active citizens through non-professional environmental education. I will position Paul Ritter in the environmental education movement by employing primary archival sources kept

<sup>16</sup> Ritter gave a copy of his book *Education: Education for Creation, Growth and Change* (1966) to every registered delegate in Perth. See Stuart King and Ceridwen Owen, “A Decade of Radical Pedagogy: Barry McNeill and Environmental Design in Tasmania, 1969–79,” *Fabrications* 28, no. 3 (2018), 309. Interview with Peter Bycroft and Paul Memmott, Brisbane, December 4, 2018. They make mention of Paul Ritter in Peter Bycroft and Paul Memmott, *Towards an Understanding of Architectural Education: A Student Report* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1971). Ritter also attended the 1968 conference in Hobart on Creativity, see Byron Kinnaird and Barnaby Bennett, “Congress. Architecture Student Congresses in Australia, New Zealand and PNG from 1963-2011” (unpublished manuscript, 2011), [https://repository.architecture.com.au/download/archive/documents\\_and\\_files/events-and-awards/congress\\_booklet\\_june2011.pdf](https://repository.architecture.com.au/download/archive/documents_and_files/events-and-awards/congress_booklet_june2011.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Roy Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood: Children, Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Postwar England* (London: Routledge, 2016), 4.

in the State Library of Western Australia alongside unpublished material and interviews with Paul Ritter's close relatives. Erica Ritter shared her memories, showed some of the remaining art projects and gave me access to the personal archives. Leonora Ritter let me read and use her extensive, unpublished biography of Paul Ritter. And David Nichols has kindly sent me an interview he did with Paul Ritter in 2007.

## From Designing for to Designing with Children

Paul Ritter established the *Planned Environment and Education Research Institute* (PEER) in 1953, together with Jean Ritter. The Institute aimed to integrate art and science in professional and non-professional education and to provide art teachers and school directors with "professional architectural advice."<sup>18</sup> In the 1970s, the institute promoted a technique called "Sculprete," obviously a merger between the words concrete and sculpture (fig. 3). By using heated carving tools on a polystyrene surface, a mould was created. After adding colour to the polystyrene

18 Paul Ritter and Jean Ritter, *A Fascinating Record. 25 Years 1953-1978. PEER Institute Perth* (Kelmscott, WA: PEER Institute Perth, 1978), 3. According to Leonora Ritter, the institute was only established in 1955 and was first called ITSPRO (International Traffic Separation Planning Research Office). After the Ritters arrived in Perth, it was transformed into PEER and registered as a business name in 1968. Correspondence with Leonora Ritter, August 23, 2019.

Figure 3. Early sculprete technique in Rockingham Park Kindergarten operated by Paul Ritter, Erica Ritter and Ralph Hibble. (Reprinted from Paul Ritter, *Concrete Fit for People*, 62.)



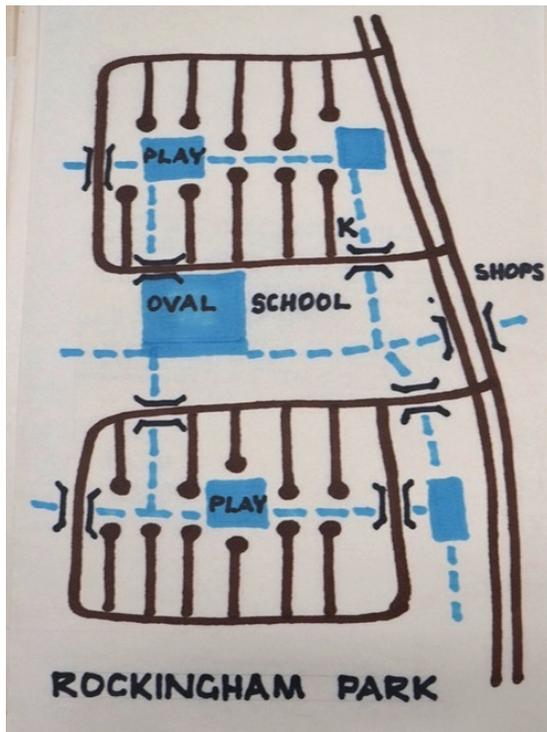


Figure 4. Rockingham Park, sketch by Paul Ritter. (Courtesy of State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/544.)

mould, concrete was poured into the bas relief pattern. Once the concrete was dry, the polystyrene mould was dissolved by using a chemical solution. Ritter went as far to assert that the revitalisation of an “open ended technique” such as sculpcrete would:

*[...] bring a new richness to architecture, longed for by people and seemingly forgotten by architects. The emasculating sameness of our city centres, our schools, the world [...] the most negative aspect of internationalism could now change into an enlightened network of local and appropriate styles.*<sup>19</sup>

Some traces of the Institute’s first sculpcrete application for children can still be found in Rockingham, a coastal city south of Perth. In 1969, Ritter was asked to design a “show-piece” kindergarten and seven underpasses that were part of a footpath system in a pioneering Radburn-style housing scheme indebted to Clarence Perry’s inter-war neighbourhood-unit concept and carried out by Clarke-Gazzard Partners and the city of Rockingham (fig. 4).<sup>20</sup>

In Rockingham Park, all access roads were moved to the outer margins of the neighbourhood. All houses—mostly white, middle class single-family houses—had a private yard and

19 Paul Ritter, *Student Participation in School Architecture with Sculp-crete*, undated manuscript (State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/237, 1979).

20 *An Educational Experiment. Rockingham Park Kindergarten*, brochure (PEER Institute; State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/519). Ritter, *Concrete Fit for People*, 62. The Kindergarten is also mentioned in Philip Goad, “Post-War And Polygonal,” *Architectural Theory Review* 15, no. 2 (2010), 177. Various newspaper clippings are kept at the State Library of Western Australia (9289A/8).



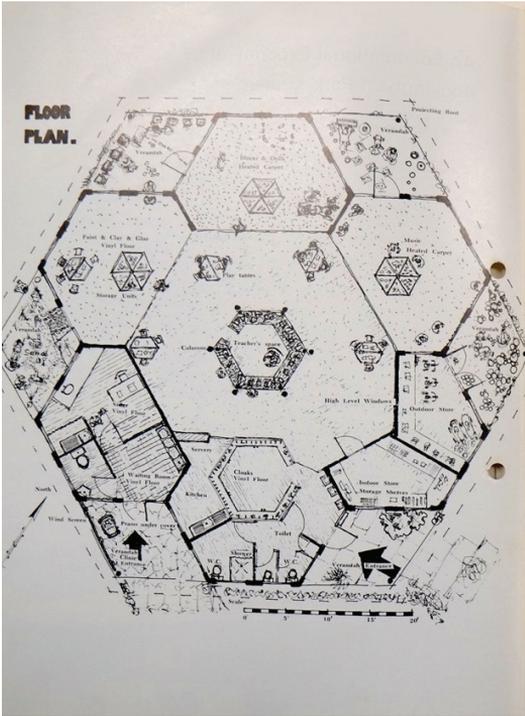


Figure 6. Top left. Rockingham Park, kindergarten ground plan. (Courtesy of State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/9.)

Figure 7. Top right. Newspaper article on the opening of Rockingham Park Kindergarten (Courtesy of State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/519.)



Figures 8a and b. Left top and bottom. Two of the seven underpasses in Rockingham Park. Ritter depicted underwater scenes, paradise birds, kangaroos and a series of iron windows in walls. (Photographs by author.)

of learning activities. Children could work in small groups, and teachers had a full overview from the central space.<sup>23</sup> The exterior was completed with a continuous sculpcrete frieze of smiling children's faces and, on the outside wall at the entrance, the words "Welcome, we love you" were added. Ritter's ideas were clearly in line with postwar progressive pedagogies which stimulated creative expression as a basis for academic skills at a later stage.<sup>24</sup>

For Ritter, however, creativity not only had to be stimulated in schools, but also beyond school walls (figs 8a&b). The seven decorated underpasses, which a journalist at that time called "participation sculptures," each held a sculpture panel, variously depicting kangaroos and typical Australian landscapes, underwater scenes, paradise birds and a series of iron windows in walls.<sup>25</sup> Children were invited to caress the sculptures, look for and excavate hidden treasures under thin layers of glaze and concrete and to use the images in their play. As Ritter wrote in his book *Planning for Man and Motor*, these separate path

23 Goad has made a survey of post-war polygonal plans in Australia. See Philip Goad, "Post-War And Polygonal," 166–86. See also "A new type of kindy" (newspaper clipping, source unknown, no date, State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/8).

24 See Amy F. Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Healy and Darian-Smith, "Educational Spaces," 275–87.

25 Paul Ritter, *Kids and Concrete* (Kelmscott, WA: Ritter Press, 1979), 4.



Figure 9. School kit promotional leaflet published by the PEER Institute, no date. (Courtesy of State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/243.)

systems were to make “meaningful and plentiful connection with the surrounding areas, satisfying ‘desire lines’ and giving opportunities for creative additions and citizen-participation.”<sup>26</sup>

After their work in Rockingham, the PEER Institute marketed a school kit with sculpcrete tools, which they tried to sell for \$250 dollars each in schools in West Australia and Victoria, relying on similar claims of childhood creativity. Paul Ritter actively sought the support of the Western Australian Education Department, which introduced the tool kit in many schools by means of a circular sent out by the Superintendent of Art R. S. Sampson, who believed the tool kit “linked very positively with art curricula.”<sup>27</sup> The many order forms in the archives show that the kits were ordered by principals and art teachers of both primary and secondary schools (fig. 9). An early example of a big-scale project with school children was the *Townscape Aborigine Serpent Project*, initiated by Paul Ritter, Ken Colbung and the Nyoongah Community in 1969. Another project was the “Perth Pageant,” a series of sculpcrete panels that were displayed all over the city to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Perth and which handily coincided with UNESCO’s International Year of the Child in 1979. Eighty students from different schools

26 Paul Ritter, *Planning for Man and Motor* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1964). Ritter also wrote about tactivity in Paul Ritter, *Educreation: Education for Creation, Growth and Change: The Concept, General Implications and Specific Applications to Schools of Architecture, Environmental Design or Ekistics* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966), 319.

27 These networks might well have been established by Jean Ritter, who was a member of many educational boards and advisory committees from the 1950s until the late 1970s. See Ritter and Ritter, *A Fascinating Record*, 6.



Figure 10. One of the panels for the “Perth Pageant”—pictured are Ralph Hibble (left), and (right) Paul Ritter and a student who worked on the panel. (Courtesy of State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/64.)

collaborated on these glass-reinforced concrete panels which depicted different aspects of the history of Western Australia such as the history of architecture, transport, railways, bridging, mining, water supply, wine-making and agricultural machinery (fig. 10).

With these later sculcrete projects, Ritter stimulated sketching with freehand tools invented by Ralph Hibble, thus allowing for material experimentation and creative expression on the polystyrene moulds. In retrospect, Ritter's experiments show a deep-rooted, almost naïve, belief in the transformational power of the arts and culture on the built environment. His claim that his sculcrete experiments enabled citizen-participation might be considered over-ambitious. Whereas Ritter's statements on the effects of his projects on the environment and on the creative development of children should be accessed critically, it is not my intention to merely focus on their operation effectiveness in this paper. Rather, in what follows I want to outline the intellectual context in which such claims could arise.

## Environmental Therapy

The hope that civic virtues could be invoked by tactile and aesthetic encounters in the built environment aligned well with the inter-war idea that visual arts could stimulate children's creativity and ultimately to make them more social citizens. In Australia, the notion of education through art was widely discussed in educational circles. According to Healy and Darian-Smith, the New Educational Fellowship (NEF) conferences in 1937, hosted in Australia and New Zealand, devoted a special session on "Education Through Art."<sup>28</sup> In 1958, Bernard Smith edited the book *Education Through Art in Australia* (1958), including essays presented at conferences organised by the NEF and UNESCO during the 1940s and '50s alongside international perspectives.<sup>29</sup> It must not surprise that Herbert Read (1893-1968), who tried to provide empirical evidence for the need of art in the public school system in his book *Education through Art* (1943), wrote the introduction of Smith's book. Read's book was widely picked up by art-education enthusiasts, and he was a welcome guest speaker at the 1963 UNESCO conference *The Fostering of Imaginative Thinking by Art Education*, held in Canberra from May 24 to 31.<sup>30</sup> For Read, who followed in Schiller's footsteps and relied on psychological theories, art could enable the healthy and cognitive development of the child and would ultimately create a stable and productive society.<sup>31</sup> No archival documents can prove that

28 Healy and Darian-Smith, "Educational Spaces," 280. See also Philip Goad, "Free Spirits, New Education and the New School: A Different Account of Modernism in Australian Architecture 1925- 1975," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 32, Architecture, Institutions and Change*, ed. Paul Hogben and Judith O'Callaghan (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015), 206–17.

29 Bernard Smith, ed., *Education through Art in Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1958); Goad, "Free Spirits," 212.

30 Joseph Burke, "Some Aspects of the Debate on Art Education in Australia," *Studies in Art Education* 5, no. 2 (1964): 5.

31 Dorit Barchana-Lorand, "Art Conquers All? Herbert Read's Education through Art (Report)," *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 34, no. 2 (2015): 169.

Ritter was aware of the Canberra conference and that he was active in circles of art educators. But in an undated manuscript on student participation in Australian school buildings, Ritter referred to Read as “my old friend,” who advocated the “therapeutic aspects” of art.<sup>32</sup> In the work of Read, Ritter most probably found justification for art in the urban environment as it arguably fostered civic dispositions, such as learning to take responsibility and govern the environment.

One could easily confuse these dispositions with a plea for sustainable design, as was the case in the work of for instance Victor Papanek in the 1960s.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the early Environmental Education movement as defined in the diagram of Jeff Bishop, Eileen Adams and Joan Kean was far from a fullgrown ecological movement. Whereas first steps were taken to understand the environment as being shaped, transformed and deteriorated by human actions such as pollution and overexploitation of natural resources, the notion was foremost used as a broad framework to theorise inter-connectedness and relationships.<sup>34</sup> In the case of Ritter, the spheres of civics, participation and childhood were engaged to respond to psychological challenges in society rather than ecological ones and sculpcrete was seen as a form of environmental therapy. The hope Ritter had invested in art in the built environment was underpinned by the rationale that society suffered from an “emotional illness” because it suppressed all forms of creativity. This thesis of a “sick society” already gained momentum in psychoanalytic circles in the late 1930s.<sup>35</sup> Paul and Jean Ritter were influenced by the Scottish educator A. S. Neill (1883-1973) who rejected all forms of institutional learning or disciplining and his mentor Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) who was an Austrian psychiatrist advocating the self-regulative potential of children. Reich and Ritter both were émigré intellectuals haunted by the spectre of the Holocaust who saw experimentation from a teleological perspective, striving to cure the ills of society through experimentation and design. In her book *Designing the Creative Child*, Amy Ogata even speaks of a postwar obsession with creating “healthy personalities.”<sup>36</sup> Ritter’s work should thus be situated in this broader field where creativity was seen “as an individual form of thought and action,” in essence “a humanist value and an epitome of a democratic personality.”<sup>37</sup>

32 Undated manuscript written by Paul Ritter, *Student Participation in School Architecture with Sculp-crete* (State Library of Western Australia, 9289A/237). Apparently, it was Read who proposed the title of Ritter’s book *The Free Family* (1959), which he wrote together with Jean Ritter. See Ritter and Ritter, *A Fascinating Record*, 28.

33 Victor J. Papanek, *Design for the Real World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).

34 Bishop, Adams, and Kean, “Children, Environment and Education,” 85.

35 In his later book *Educreation*, Ritter referred to the Kurt Lewin, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and A. Kardiner who all diagnosed an overall illness in society by looking at social and cultural patterns. Paul Ritter, *Educreation*, 77–78.

36 Amy F. Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*; Roy Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood*; and Tamar Zinguer, *Architecture in Play: Intimations of Modernism in Architectural Toys* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 135.

37 Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*, 135.

## Conclusion

Underlying Ritter's sculptcrete projects was the idea that environmental change could arise from "starting young" and that environmental literacy could raise a new and healthy generation. What we learn from looking at recent scholarship on childhood designs, is that these objects and sites were instrumental in the socio-cultural and material constructions of childhood.<sup>38</sup> Amy Ogata argued that childhood was one of the most intensely governed sectors of personal experience in postwar US.<sup>39</sup> She interpreted the carefully constructed image of children's authentic creativity in education and different media as a home-grown weapon of the Cold War. Children were these passive, helpless creatures who needed protection in the secluded domestic sphere, but were also increasingly seen as consumers and active participants to community life. In his book *The Architecture of Childhood*, Roy Kozlovsky argues that children were also an important trope in postwar planning discourses. Team X members Aldo van Eyck and the Smithsons for instance used images of playing children in their collages.<sup>40</sup> The child was a central asset in a conscious project of revitalizing postwar architecture and planning through social and participative processes.<sup>41</sup> Whereas the political context in Australia was different from the US and Europe, the notion of childhood creativity almost always indicated flexibility, or the agency to adapt or change the built environment.<sup>42</sup> In postwar architecture culture, children had become flag-bearers of optimism and their potential of creative intervention a cherished Romantic construct and antidote to rationalised planning methods.

Our account of the history of architecture education and the question of who is enfranchised to transform the built world might be broadened by also considering how architecture was learned and taught—formally and informally—in non-professional settings. Even today, tool kits for children based on Dewey's learning-by-doing principle are developed by professional bodies and independently run educational platforms and aim to stimulate environmental thinking from an early age.<sup>43</sup> This urges us to ask what kind of visual literacy is necessary to converse about design and the built environment. And, what roles can professionals play in such educational processes, apart from being "arbiters of aesthetic principles"?<sup>44</sup>

38 Marta Gutman and Ning De Coninck-Smith, *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe, *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2012); Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*. These objects were also displayed in large-scale exhibitions such as the *Century of the Child*. See Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor, *Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900-2000* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012).

39 Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*, x.

40 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood*, 219–49.

41 Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood*, 221.

42 Tamar Zinguer, "Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 75, no. 2 (2016), 231.

43 See, for instance, <https://architectureandeducation.org/2017/11/24/architecture-schools-for-children/>.

44 Perry Berkeley, "Environmental Education," 53.