Our archipelago has been discovered by a succession of voyagers and explorers over the centuries but was one of the last significant land masses to be peopled. Around 800 years ago, in the last thrust of human expansion throughout the Pacific Ocean, expert navigators sailing sophisticated doubled-hulled vessels landed in the southern reach of Polynesia ('many islands') and adapted their way of life to a colder, more temperate land.

These people, Māori, built quite different structures from those in the Pacific. Low-roofed, single-roomed dwellings (whare) woven from plants were dug partially into the ground to insulate them from strong winds and cold. However, one feature that remained common throughout the Pacific was the marae ātea, a large, open space of communal, cultural and spiritual importance around which dwellings were clustered.

As the Māori population increased and society became more tribalised, strategic hillsides were secured during periods of warfare by large-scale earthworks and palisades known as pā. The history of New Zealand architecture is not just one of arrival and the adaptation and evolution of building forms but also of transforming the landscape to meet the needs of people.

Throughout Oceania there is a strong relationship between the technologies required to construct ocean-going craft and those used to create buildings. What were once seen as simple dug-out canoes and grass huts are now recognised as skilfully built
New Zealand's participation in the 2016 Architettura Biennale in Venice is an opportunity to consider the wider achievements of New Zealand's architecture and design practitioners, the increasing diversity of their practice and production, and their contribution to the life of the country. Future Islands, the official New Zealand exhibition created by Charles Walker and Kathy Waghorn and commissioned for the New Zealand Institute of Architects by Tony van Raat, puts some of these concerns on the international architectural radar. But, of course, there's a lot going on beneath the surface of the show: island environments have long been regarded as nesting grounds for evolutionary development.

This publication tells some more of our island's design stories. It takes its name from a Māori word for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity. We want to learn from the Biennale, for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity. We want to learn from the Biennale, for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity. We want to learn from the Biennale, for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity. We want to learn from the Biennale, for a gift or contribution, an offering made in a spirit of reciprocity.

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Contributors

Pip Cheshire is a director of Creative Architecture, President (2014–16) of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, and a writer on architecture.

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KoHAI / An offering of New Zealand Architecture and Design.
In the 1930s and ‘40s New Zealand’s suburbs were expanded through mass social housing, namely the state house, which was derived from Britain’s Garden City Movement. But this was the last time New Zealand looked to ‘its mother country’ for architectural inspiration. New Zealand was occupied during the Second World War, not by enemy forces but by American troops on route to the Pacific theatre. Before the war, New Zealanders referred to Britain as ‘home’, after the war, the country looked to the United States. The suburban house in the late 1950s and ‘60s swiftly acquired the elements of the Californian Ranch-style house. With its open plan and flow between the interior and the great outdoors – the personal national possessio quinta – this housing type remains popular today.

One other icon of New Zealand architecture deserves mention. The bach, small, shack-like holiday home near a beach or lake that many New Zealanders visit in summer. Some of the most interesting contemporary house designs try to, react against, or invoke the spirit of our various types: vernacular farm buildings, villas, bungalows, state houses and baches.

The house has always been and remains a central concern of New Zealand architecture. It is central to the practice of most architects, surprising as that is to those in countries that look to other building types to satisfy architectural ambition and express identity. In its first one-hundred-and-fifty years, New Zealand’s government, institutional and commercial buildings were largely similar to those in many other countries during the same period. This isn’t unusual as New Zealand was once the last transplants of the British Empire, and was expected to develop as a branch of imperial growth. Many of the country’s institutional and commercial buildings were constructed of brick and stone, but in scale they are small scale they reflect the same concerns of Victorian Britain and its Battle-axe style, although with marginally more Gothic. Instead of Classical, especially in church architecture.

The destruction of the city of Napier in 1931 had a happy side-effect when the city was rapidly rebuilt in the Art Deco style, becoming for a brief period ‘the most modern city on the globe’. Schools, however, were more innovative in form, especially during the twentieth century, when a wave of primary education schools that incorporated architectural expression. Classrooms became large and semi-open spaces, with large windows in a grid pattern, similar to the ones used in office buildings. This was a significant collection of new commercial buildings and, perhaps, could be seen as a modernist contribution. Though it is ‘early days’ and many constructs

The state of play

Is it possible that we architects in New Zealand are dominated by an overriding emotional attachment to the ‘natural landscape’ that the works of human endeavour are so dwarfed by them. Well, not really. Hills throughout the country are covered with patchwork farmland,整齐地, their hipped roofs for yet wider views. Above them are foothills nestling with terraces, remnants of defensible enclosures built by Māori, the coun-

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THE STATE OF PLAY

By Pip Cheshire

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THE STORY UP TO NOW

By Bill McKay

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structures that responded to local climatic and mate-

erial conditions and that evolved in response to chang-
ing circumstances. The large double-bailed wooden houses became simple-bailed houses, stripped of decoration and with circles gradually added as motifs allowed. These early houses were nearly all constructed of wooden framing and clad-

ing as a result of the extensive milling of timber to clear farmland, in the south of the South Island, in particular, was used made of cob and other earth consolidation techniques.

Corrugated iron – actually steel, but known collo-
quially as ‘tin’ – was used abundantly for roofing and even walls as it could be efficiently stacked up and shipped to New Zealand from the factories of Britain. This was the same Industrial Revolution Britain from which nearly urban working and middle-class cele-

brations were born for them, land in New Zealand was the answer to their aspirations for an agrarian lifestyle and improvement in social class.

Corrugated iron remains an iconic material in New
 Zealand and the first choice for roofing domestic houses and constructing farm buildings. Although today brick is produced in reasonable quantities from the country’s abundant clay, it performs poorly in the land equally abrasive environment, and is generally used only as a cladding over more resilient timber framing. New immigration and housing projects were not surprised to see sprawling suburbs of typical timber and tin houses that seem not that much more technologically advanced than the dwellings of a century and a half ago.

Conflict between Māori and the rapidly growing population of British settlers saw warfare from the 1840s until the 1880s. One striking building type across from this conflict, the meeting house. Known in Māori as the Whare runi (large house) or where whatiki (carved house), the meeting house adapted European materials and techniques to compete with churches in scale, and provide a place for Māori to come together and discuss issues. The meeting house became highly carved and decorated and supplanted pātaka and war canoes (waka tua) to become the centres of society and repositories of identity in a time of cultural division. Today meeting houses – with their large frontcourts open areas and ancillary buildings, known as marae – are perhaps the most significant architectural forms characteristic of New Zealand and Māori architecture and culture.

The late nineteenth century saw the creation of suburbs and the evolution of the cottage into the larger but still free-standing, single-storied and timber-constructed villa. In the early twentieth century the ‘bungalow’ arrived from the West Coast of the United States. The verandah had been a feature...
that imitated timber post and beam construction. Brutalism was particularly important in New Zealand's buildings built in the concrete and glass International style. The first tentative arrival of Modernism in the post-war years coincided with a period of progressive industrialisation. Some new architectural ideas were exposed in factors and commercial buildings, which is a limited extent due to the effects of the Great Depression and the generally conservative taste of most of the population.

The first tentative arrival of Modernism between the wars coincided with a period of progressive thinking, an egalitarian social climate and a burst of industrialisation. Modernism took off during the post-war economic boom. In the 1940s and 1950s there was a proliferation of new government, institutional and commercial buildings built in the concrete and glass International style. Braced walls was particularly important in New Zealand, and often featured concrete and blockwork that mimicked timber post and beam construction. At a time when New Zealand was still a comparatively uninvolved in the international architectural scene, Post-Medieval was not the style for the British-ruled island.

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The critical case for regionalism

New York architectural writer Alexandra Lange visited New Zealand early in 2016. She talked to John Walsh about some of the surprising discoveries she made on her journey.

John Walsh: I’m guessing that before you visited New Zealand you didn’t know that much about the country, let alone its architecture.

Alexandra Lange: I know nothing. Absolutely nothing. Growing up, my best friend’s dad married someone from New Zealand so as I was an extrovert who never moved to outer space – they saw the family at best every five years. So my sense of it was fairly generic, green, sheep and (I’m sorry) The Lord of the Rings.

Yes, we’ve deigned to live in Middle Earth for as long as the marketers can eke out that branding. A nation of hobbits – not the most aspirational of goals. Given that you had few expectations, did you encounter any surprises?

It wasn’t until my fourth stop, in Wellington, that the branding kicked in. Because my idea of New Zealand was at least twenty years out of date, I wasn’t expecting the architecture I saw to be as sophisticated and as mainstream, vis-à-vis the United States, as it was. There seemed to me to be a more general acceptance of Modernism there than here, as well as in some cases a higher quality of construction. The Britomart pop-up commercial area in Auckland, for example, is very elegant and combines landscape and feature in an interesting way.

It is also always fun to see other countries’ versions of architectural movements. I was impressed by the concrete architecture of Warren and Mahoney in Christchurch – some would call it Brutalism – that was so sensitive to climate and site. A friend runs the website Truck ‘N’ Brutalism and he found none of it. Why is so much contemporary New Zealand architecture using unshaded glass when you can read what’s on their computer screens as they try to adjust the air-conditioning on steamy summer afternoons. Perhaps it’s do with compulsion to offer, and market, a view – as much of a view as possible. Isn’t this a universal condition?

It is, but, since everyone kept reminding me about the strong winds and the rain in New Zealand, I was initially for some time extremely unimpressed with the landscape projects that I saw. Many of them were just big and bright and didn’t seem to be connected to the landscape at all.

A good question. There are all these highly glazed office buildings in Auckland that must have looked good in a render, and they’re festooned with interior blinds or just sheets of paper that the occupants have stuck to the glass so they can read what’s on their computer screens as they try to adjust the air-conditioning on steamy summer afternoons. Perhaps it’s do with compulsion to offer, and market, a view – as much of a view as possible. Isn’t this a universal condition?

It is, but, since everyone kept reminding me about the strength of the sun, it seems like New Zealand cities might be an extreme case for solar heat gain. Why not make something beautiful and characteristic of that climate? Or, at least, design solutions that answer the questions of local architects that, as someone from abroad, I’d never see, and that showcase the special topography and climate of Auckland or Wellington or elsewhere. Colour, for example. I saw beautiful colour at the house [in Corner Bay, Auckland] of Peter Boyle and Miriam van Weel, but not in the cityscapes. I have to say that I thought the Auckland Art Gallery (by Australian) did a good job of combining a handsome contemporary vocabulary with a striking wool-woven canopy that was made for New Zealand. The prominent coffee bar seemed appropriately local and approachable too.

Let’s talk about some of the other things you saw on your visit. What else did you enjoy?

I loved the coastline near kerikeri and in the Bay of Islands - that was where I got my first sense of the scale and complexity of the New Zealand landscape. The Miranda Cross Interpreative Centre had a great combination of simplicity and design, giving arrival at that spot a sense of ceremony.

In Christchurch I did feel not encouraged by the current state of the central business district or the cathedral, but there were fascinating developments around the edges. My favourite was the Margaret Mahy Family Park, which is big and bright and was filled with families, even though there seemed to be little housing around it.

And in Wellington I was blown away by Fernanite House by the late last Affolter (see cover), which is really not nothing else it was seen as. A truly astonishing place. I wish someone would make a dramatic miniseries about how it came to be.

The also saw some landscape projects, or proj-ects in the landscape, of some scale. Human intervention in the landscape is something New Zealand, of course – our economy was built on it. But the continued fearing of the land is quite new, and sometimes it seemed to me to be the despair of the communities. You also saw some urban landscaping work too, for example at Auckland’s Viaduct Harbour. Did you get any sense of the landscape/architecture relationship there?

A return to native planting, and landscape architec-ture that heals as well as beautifies the environment, is not new, but was recognised by a couple of New Zealand-specific examples. Megan Wright’s waterfront project in Wellington – a garden which artfully combines recreation and some beautiful wild moments, and acts as a filter for the harbour – is one. And Thomas Woltz’s Orongo Station, near Gisborne. This is a huge private project of reclamation and rereodenation, combined with more responsible farming practice, that seems like a whole new model of how to live in the landscape. It requires some mental rearrangement to see all those sheep as interpreters who are destroying the hills – via ero-dion and grazing – that they look so pretty on.

One last question, and this relates to Rem Koolhaas’s 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, which examined a century of modernity and its homogenising effects: how much space do different countries – or regions – need to have to meaningfully express their difference, or their characteristics, in their architecture? That is, beyond the application of motif or pursuit of purity? Or should we not get hung up on that? It builds work and do that job and are enjoyable to occupy and look at, and are environmentally responsible – is that enough?

This is actually the theme of the essay I’m work-ing on about the rise – place in New Zealand, that exemplify what used to be called Critical Regionalism, which I personally would like to see more of. A world of practically the same buildings in provincial new-look like a good thing when ninety-nine per cent of the built world is out of architects’ hands – but then, why would we worry? It’s the differences of climate or political or social dynamics or even individual personality that push ideas in architecture along. I feel that no matter how many digital images we consume, I always hope the vision – of bloomed wool clothing – or ethereal white steel, or swoopy roofs – turn out differently.
New Zealand’s inaugural exhibition at the Biennale Architettura was about the country’s architectural origins; that ground having been covered, the second exhibition looks to the architectural future.

By John Walsh

The inaugural New Zealand pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale was curated by a team led by Auckland architect David Mitchell, a director of Future Islands in 2014. The New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) assumed responsibility for the Architecture Biennale, the New Zealand Institute and the Government committed $750,000 to create an official New Zealand pavilion into the Venice Architecture Biennale.

One of the first people Charles Walker called when he learned he had been selected as the Creative Director of New Zealand’s 2016 exhibition was Minka Waghorn of The University of Auckland, presenting multiple perspectives of the country’s history — nearly fifty projects, many of them unseen, designed by big firms, small practice and students, are modelled in the exhibition. It’s quite a different narrative, yet told in response to a similar question.

When they contemplated entering the competition to create the 2014 New Zealand exhibition, which was prior to Chinese architect Alejandro Aravena being chosen as Biennale director, and before he announced his theme. Reporting from the Front, Walker and his team were “thinking about what we could say about our heritage in New Zealand, and here and why we might say it, in a meaningful way, in an international context.” Basicall, “what, if anything, constitutes ‘New Zealand’ architecture?”

The answer, according to Future Islands, is diversity, which might surprise not only outsiders who perceive New Zealand as relatively straight-forward but also many New Zealanders who haven’t quite caught up with the extent of the country’s heterogeneity. New Zealand is actually one of the most diverse societies in the world in terms of population demographics, political concept and culture,” Walker wrote. “And also, as academics interacting with people in the early stages of their architectural careers, we are always surprised by the diversity but also the potential of these students to introduce a fresh, organic quality to the exhibition venue.

We decided that Palazzo Bollani would be a key site — a door and get to New Zealand, eventually, with a bit of navigation.”

The answer for some, and we’re all aware that the Biennale is an event experienced by an audience, and not all of the audience are academics or architects or planners.

We wanted the exhibition to be atmospheric, to be beautiful — which perhaps is an important thing to say these days — and we wanted it to be intriguing.” Walker says. “Future Islands is designed as an exhibition through which people wonder, much as they might find their way around Calvino’s Invisible Cities. People can navigate the exhibition — they’ll have a map — but not necessarily in any one order. Things are left hanging, you might say.

“We wanted to make the host building — Palazzo Bollani in Castello — part of the exhibition. ‘islands’ would float within the building. They could be real islands, like Chechelski Sound, overlooked lands, or as bodhi trees — we wanted them to introduce a fluid, organic quality to the exhibition venue. We decided that Palazzo Bollani was a treasure, within yet another treasure — the Palazzo Madama of the sixteenth century, is telling the Kublai Khan stories about the wondrous cities he’s seen on his travels.

“The last property boom everyone wanted computer generating, and there’s room for this approach in New Zealand.”

In Hong Kong, to say, you found the scale of model-making too big. “I like making things with my hands. Technology helps to speed up the process, but I like the craft element of model-making, and there’s room for the approach in New Zealand.”

Future Islands is attracting a wider range of people, and there is some New Zealand and other international content that is a reflection of his theme — Bruce Chatwin’s photograph of the Medieval Torcello and Carlo Scarpa’s Palazzo Bollani — part of the exhibition. Our Multi-flora medium, Walker says. “I was struck by an image Alejandro used to illustrate his theme — Bruce Chatwin’s photograper of the Medieval Torcello and Carlo Scarpa’s Palazzo Bollani.”

We were also inspired byержі the recent appointment to the New Zealand pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale in April 2016. “This anniversary is attracting a wider range of people, and there is some New Zealand and other international content that is a reflection of his theme — Bruce Chatwin’s photograph of the Medieval Torcello and Carlo Scarpa’s Palazzo Bollani. “I was struck by an image Alejandro used to illustrate his theme — Bruce Chatwin’s photograper of the Medieval Torcello and Carlo Scarpa’s Palazzo Bollani.”

“Invisible Cities is a treasure, within yet another treasure — the Palazzo Madama of the sixteenth century, is telling the Kublai Khan stories about the wondrous cities he’s seen on his travels. The book might take a rather pessimistic view of the future, but it’s like the book about how there was to be be the beautiful — which perhaps is an important thing to say these days — and we wanted it to be intriguing.” Walker says. “Future Islands is designed as an exhibition through which people wonder, much as they might find their way around Calvino’s Invisible Cities. People can navigate the exhibition — they’ll have a map — but not necessarily in any one order. Things are left hanging, you might say.

“These are the archetypes of the exhibition, the metaphors for the ways in which architects work, sites of possibility for alternative ways of living, or as bodies in space — we wanted them to introduce a fluid, organic quality to the exhibition venue. We decided that Palazzo Bollani was a treasure, within yet another treasure — the Palazzo Madama of the sixteenth century, is telling the Kublai Khan stories about the wondrous cities he’s seen on his travels. “I was struck by an image Alejandro used to illustrate his theme — Bruce Chatwin’s photograper of the Medieval Torcello and Carlo Scarpa’s Palazzo Bollani.”

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Weaving many strands

Putting ‘our faces in our places’ is the aim of a new design framework that will allow Māori design culture to be woven into strong cultural landscapes.

Beaune Whanga-Schoellum

Māori are committed to working towards restorative development and a physical and metaphorical understanding of cultural landscapes within contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. In January 2007 a set of guiding principles – the Te Aranga Principles – was developed by Māori professionals and supported each other to become Māori cultural landscapes.

The Te Aranga Principles articulate a mātauranga (custom, lore, method), ngā wānanga tikanga, waiata [song, chant], tikanga [a formal speech], karakia [saying], tauparapara [incantation to begin a process], whakakōrero [a formal speech], whakatū [a customary agreement] and whakapapa.

It includes past, present and future. It includes both physical and spiritual dimensions. It is how we express ourselves in our environment. It consists of knowledge, values, beliefs, stories, and values, through whakapapa. It does not occur in real time, nor does it transcend. It transcends the boundaries of ‘landscape’ into other spaces – rivers, lakes, ocean and sky. It is a symbol in our whakapapa, a pākeha (Western) term.

A few months after the promulgation of the Te Aranga Principles in 2007, a gathering could not be avoided among Māori and Pākehā to form a Te Aranga Partnership. The outcome of that partnership was the formation of Ngā Aho in 2009. Ngā Aho can be described as a multi-disciplinary professional platform to progress complex cultural issues and aspirations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā Aho sits alongside other mainstream design professional associations such as the New Zealand Institute of Architects, Designers Institute of New Zealand and the Designers Institute of New Zealand. In 2012 Ngā Aho partnered with the Designers Institute of New Zealand and introduced a new Ngā Aho Award to the annual Best Design Awards. In 2012 Ngā Aho partnered with the Designers Institute of New Zealand and introduced a new Ngā Aho Award to the annual Best Design Awards. Designers submitting work for the Ngā Aho Award have commented on their growth of understanding in projects which have pursued solid cultural connections.

It is important to understand that agreements are regarded as guidelines frameworks rather than prescriptions. All our ways are different, as are all projects. Knowledge is built from collecting and communicating learning from successful projects, rather than a set of ‘traditional’ approaches. Cultural approaches, if even in this light, can be given the room to be dynamic and globally connected.

This approach to tikanga Māori is recognised in the Treaty. The principle of ‘development’, the New Zealand Law Commission stated in 2010, “recognises that culture is not static. The integrity of tikanga Māori is not threatened, rather, it is enhanced by its ability to adapt and evolve as society changes.”

Committing time to defining collectively agreed upon principles at the outset of each project is an essential step towards ensuring cultural outcomes with integrity. The agreement to a dynamic discussion and place-making approaches between those who are more mobile in their occupation patterns and indigenous communities support the programing of a built environment without the eradication of distinctive place traits. The collaboration of this two understandings of place brings exciting new opportunities for design growth, both in processes and outcomes.

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This is particularly relevant when forming contemporary agreements such as a memorandum of understanding, strategic partnerships, and resource co-management agreements, and is reflected in the contemporary application of Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi).

In January 2007 a set of standing principles – the Te Aranga Principles – was promulgated. The agreement to a dynamic discussion and place-making approaches between those who are more mobile in their occupation patterns and indigenous communities support the programming of a built environment without the eradication of distinctive place traits. The collaboration of this two understandings of place brings exciting new opportunities for design growth, both in processes and outcomes.
Although four of the past six New Zealand Architecture Medals have gone to buildings in Auckland (an acknowledgement of the more complex projects and bigger budgets available in New Zealand’s largest city), 2015 proved that there can be exceptions to the rule. You’ll find the Blythe Performing Arts Centre at a secondary school in the small North Island town of Havelock North. Designed by Stevens Lawson Architects, the graceful form perhaps alludes to the landscape of nearby Te Mata Peak, or the sinuous shape of musical instruments played within. It is a welcoming design that glows warmly against the dark. “On this project, client and architects reached for the sublime—and they got there,” the awards jury said.

Project: The Blythe Performing Arts Centre
Architect: Stevens Lawson Architects
Location: Havelock North

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Project: Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre
Architect: Patterson Associates
Location: Christchurch

Christchurch is known in New Zealand as ‘The Garden City’, although a good part of its profusion of parks and gardens was ruined by earthquake-generated liquefaction. However, it was to garden history that the architects looked when modelling the elegant form of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre. A botanic theme cuts through the building, illustrated most literally through a dappled leaf shadow that was replicated on pre-cast concrete panels and in a flooring pattern comprised of blown-up images of plant microbes. The structure is thoroughly contemporary but it strongly connects with the typology of traditional garden greenhouse buildings. The awards jury described it as “an exhilarating contemporary take on the traditional garden greenhouse and an adept and sympathetic piece of place-making” and it is an inspiring contribution to the public realm.
As the name suggests, this structure replaces another that once stood on site. Completing the Christchurch clean sweep of Named Awards, The Stranges Building (as it is commonly called) was one of the first post-quake commercial buildings to rise in the rebuild. The building demonstrates a commitment to “creating a vibrant and rich inner-city development in a manner that goes beyond ordinary expectations,” the awards jury said. “Client and architect set out to make a cosmopolitan, industrious and joyful place on a prominent urban site, and they have succeeded admirably. With its interior courtyard offering sanctuary from traffic and street noise the building is a modern village with an urbane disposition.”

**Project:** The Stranges & Glendenning Hill Building Replacement  
**Architect:** Sheppard & Rout  
**Location:** Christchurch

This building, said the 2015 awards jury, “is a labour of love and a testament to the design capacity, bloody-minded commitment and appetite for sheer hard work of its architect.” Hand-built by the architect, the studio sits on a precipitous site that offers panoramic harbour views. A less welcome intrusion is the threat of errant boulders, dislodged from the heights of the Port Hills behind the building as the aftershocks of the Canterbury Earthquakes continue. However, the studio is well reinforced with thick and heavy timber recycled from the deck of the demolished Lyttelton Wharf, which provides a ramp across the front of the building. With a nod to architect Michael O’Sullivan’s ancestry, the jury said that the building, “with its robust and straightforward shell and finely crafted interior, perfectly expresses the dichotomy of pugnacity and poetry of a Hibernian heritage.”

**Project:** Lyttelton Studio Retreat  
**Architect:** Bull O’Sullivan Architecture  
**Location:** Lyttelton

**Sir Miles Warren Award for Commercial Architecture**

**Project:** The Stranges & Glendenning Hill Building Replacement  
**Architect:** Sheppard & Rout  
**Location:** Christchurch

**Sir Ian Athfield Award for Housing**

**Project:** Lyttelton Studio Retreat  
**Architect:** Bull O’Sullivan Architecture  
**Location:** Lyttelton
Women have been part of the New Zealand architecture profession for 80 years – it’s time for some real inclusiveness, says the campaigning organisation Architecture + Women NZ.

By Lucy Treep and Lynda Simmons

What’s the place, status and future of women in the architecture professions? Architecture+WomenNZ (A+W•NZ) brings together women trained in architecture and seeks to raise their profile through networking, events, publishing and the formation of policy. It’s free to join and while the organisation has a serious intent, participation is intended to be enjoyable as well as purposeful.

Since its inception in 2011 A+W•NZ has grown from strength to strength, gaining respect in the industry, universities and from within the wider architecture community. Informed by the current global wave of interest in gender equity, A+W•NZ provides a forum based on inclusivity, since it defines the scope of what it means to be an architect and seeks to find ways to sustain and promote the already active architectural community in New Zealand.

A+W•NZ acknowledges the lineage of groups and individuals who have, over the past century, constructed a strong platform for the strengthening of gender awareness in New Zealand. Groups such as The Women’s Institute of Architecture in the 1970s and the Constructive Agenda committees of the 1990s had a significant influence on the profession, and individual pioneers such as Marilyn Reynolds (née Hart), Lilian Chrysalis (née Lawler) and, latterly, Dr Sarah Treadwell of The University of Auckland have changed the landscape of gender and architecture.

With the aim of promoting equality and providing visible role models for women, the A+W•NZ-led initiative Viral Visions: Women in Architecture is an online archive of women architects in New Zealand. The A+W•NZ Awards programme features the A+W•NZ (Architecture plus Women) Awards. Among its key objectives is to provide a platform to celebrate and recognize the achievement of women in architecture. The winners in the inaugural A+W•NZ Awards programme were Cassie Budd of Budd and Hatton, and Glenn Ashton Workshop (Waitangi Emerging Leadership Award), A+W•NZ President Joanne Kelly and Gill Mathewson of advocacy group Parlour (Munro Diversity Award), and Julia Head of Mitchell & Stout Architects (Chrysalis Excellence Award).

In the few years since it was set up A+W•NZ has created structures that provide guidance, discussion, visibility and positive role-modelling for women and men alike through facilitating events and publications around a shared reassessment of identity ‘normal’. The reference of gender as an architectural community in the early twenty-first century could be questioned in a world whose sexism is frequently considered to belong to another era, and any related problems have already been resolved. Yet, while they are often invisible to some in the architectural community, many barriers to inclusivity and equality in the workplace still exist.

The two core aims behind A+W•NZ are to promote visibility in the field of architectural practice, and to aim for an inclusive architectural practice culture. This means enabling those typically less visible to have access to, and become part of, their architectural community. One example of reducing barriers is in the inclusion of Māori tikanga (protocol) in all A+W•NZ events to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi). Younger A+W•NZ members say they welcome opportunities to meet women with more advanced architectural careers. Meanwhile in A+W•NZ 2016, opened the door to leadership possibilities elsewhere.

There are three criteria for membership of A+W•NZ: Would-be members must identify as female, have the equivalent of a Bachelor’s degree in architecture, spatial design, or similar, and must either have trained in New Zealand. Membership is open to those in practice or not, and A+W•NZ events are for the entire architectural community (and, yes, men are always welcome).

A+W•NZ’s activities fall into four categories: networks – online database, social media, and online newsletter; events – exhibitions, awards, symposia, lectures, breakfast talks, wine receptions and site visits; research – books (Architecture in an Expanded Field, 2015; A+W•NZ Awards 2014: Dragulj 2000 and Gentile Foundation Trust, 2015); journal and magazine articles, oral histories, and the A+W•NZ timeline, mission and policy – guidelines for institutions, practices and government submissions.

It is hoped that discussions around gender, workplace culture and policy can have a wider effect on the visibility of many other diverse groups. The intention is to build inclusiveness to apply to all who make their lives in architecture.
Adopt, adapt, adept

In a small country in a globalised economy, New Zealand product designers must draw on a legacy of innovation and originality to create sustainable businesses.

By Michael Smythe

New Zealand is a nation of immigrants discovered by Pohnpeians, named by the Dutch and colonised by the British. Its inhabitants voluntarily or involuntarily made a long-distance trip for survival. Their choice of imported equipment was informed by practicality and cultural reassurance. Who they were and how their functionality was embedded in their baggage.

The first settlers, from East Polynesia around 1250 AD, brought tools for hunting, gathering, crafting, building, making more tools and connecting to ancestors and gods. Possibly the oldest found artefact made from a local material is a hand-built (adze) designed to be lashed to a carved staff. Its elegantate simplicity exemplifies the desire to honour the user, purpose and maker.

The lack of metal or ceramic vessels did not deprive Polynesians culture after water. Innovation elements in the form of heated stones was to warm water and dried water in water-filled wooden hoes, called lanes in this country, with small spouts and tipping handles.

Captain James Cook’s 1769 voyage of discovery was a British Enlightenment production meant to find, assert and timber the tangata whenua (people of the land) named themselves Māori (normal) and the country, with small spouts and tipping handles.

The Royal Society’s desire to find the hypothetical southern continent, with small spouts and tipping handles.

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Jewellery leads the way in contemporary New Zealand object design, writes a long time collector, but furniture makers, glass-makers and ceramists aren’t far behind.

The current practice of two, formerly Auckland based, New Zealand furniture designers, Katy Wallace and Phil Cuttance demonstrates the wide range of possibilities available to twenty-first century designers. Both have moved from New Zealand’s biggest city, Auckland – Cuttance to London and Wallace to the provincial city of Geraldine. Cuttance’s geographic transition matches a change in his design practice from furniture to objects. He began “lifting” smaller objects after showing furniture in 2009 at the Milson gallery in Auckland. It was a relatively quiet year for product launches, and I received a list of feedback where people said they loved my wild furniture but were interested in smaller pieces. I therefore made the wild vases and discovered I could sell them all over! I still sell furniture on commission, but sooner then I’ve concentrated on objects as they are easier to get a handle on.”

Wallace’s practice is still furniture focused, and she is stimulated by “what is just in front of me”. “I thought I’d ended up in a factory, but I was very hesitant, and I realized wondering how I could shrink down from this into my work. An immigrant was developing your identity, so you start again and have to make connections with new people.”

Over the following years, van Wezel would explore notions of place through clothing. In ‘Colours of Our History’ (2012), one of the largest works, Mel van Wezel took a blowtorch and ‘cooked’ clothing, which were painted onto the concrete columns supporting a temporary viaduct across an Auckland park.

Broadly speaking, the disc is now more pressing for working with lead crystal and the chandelier and decorative forms for which they are noted. The Crystal Chain Gang’s work also addresses this.

Christchurch born artist Miriam van Wezel, whose practice is still furniture focused, however, is fascinated by the colours of the land. Throughout her career, van Wezel has been interested in the colours and textures of the ground. Born in the Netherlands, and educated at London’s Royal Academy, van Wezel moved to New Zealand in the 1980s. The daughter of an ironfoundry director, she was not being surprised when she first encountered the intense saffron golds of Auckland’s West Coast beaches. “I thought I’d ended up in a factory again,” she laugh. “It was very hesitant, and I realized wondering how I could shrink down from this into my work. An immigrant was developing your identity, so you start again and have to make connections with new people.”

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Imaginations with few boundaries, keen social awareness and deft digital and physical modelling skills have become bywords of the annual student design awards.

What better way to gauge the health of the architectural profession in Aotearoa New Zealand than by testing the ideas, ambitions and capabilities of the country’s best and brightest students? The NZIA Cadimage Group Student Design Awards is an annual awards programme run by the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Through its presentation format, four final-year students from each of New Zealand’s three schools of architecture (at the University of Auckland, Unitec and Victoria University of Wellington) are exposed to appraisal and critique by judges with strong professional or academic credentials. From the 12 finalists, a winner is chosen and two highly commended awards are conferred. Without fail, as the images on these pages illustrate, the students make no small plans. In recent years, their final-year projects presented have traversed subjects as varied as a post-earthquake alternative parliament in a ground-scraping fortress, humanitarian architecture, super brothels, urban acupuncture, vertical farming, wetland conservation and additive construction.

The images on these pages are just a taste of recent student works, visit nzia.co.nz to see more.

01. An illustration by Tom Dobinson, winner of the 2014 Student Design Awards. ‘Wharf Dwellers – an Expose of Lyttelton’, Tom’s project, is an investigation of the character of the port town of Lyttelton where he grew up and a proposal for overcoming the physical separation that now exists between town and port. The tri-partite work establishes a ‘design language’, imagines a house that would suit the ‘persona’ of artist Bill Hammond – a local ‘fringe-dwelling maverick’ artist – and proposes a design for a public wharf that would surmount a strip of port land and so allow citizens to reach the coast.

02. In 2015, Student Design Awards winner James Durcan’s project, ‘Indigenous Digital Craft: Expressing Indigenous Māori Culture’, combined contemporary digital fabrication techniques with traditional Māori craft methods and design approaches. His proposed structure, conceived in collaboration with Poverty Bay’s Ngāi Tamanuhiri iwi, is intended for an off-grid coastal site near Gisborne. This sequence of images shows James assembling and operating a self-made additive printing machine, which would use clay from the proposed site to construct modular elements for an amenity building canopy.

03. An illustration by Hannah Broatch, highly commended in the 2015 student design awards. Hannah’s project, ‘Housing for Construction Workers in Ahmedabad, India’, was based on research into such labour colonies in the city of Ahmedabad. Her work aims to ameliorate the living conditions of labourers and their families by improving the quality of housing and providing basic infrastructure and social spaces.

04. In 2014, with ‘Topology of a Phantom City’, Student Design Awards finalist Hamish Beattie drew upon his experience working in a United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Nairobi, where the digital building game Minecraft was used as a participatory design tool. Hamish’s scheme, presented via spectacular models and renderings, including this impressive robotic structure, explored the use of such readily available tools as a generator of designs for informal communities, introducing self-design to communities which are already self-built.

05. Frances Cooper, a Student Design Awards finalist in 2012, winner of the Architectural Review’s Global Architecture Graduate Award in 2013 and, in 2014, member of the creative team for New Zealand’s first national exhibition at the Biennale Architettura, proposed through ‘Architecture of the Synthetic, the Spectacular and the Belligerent’ a public re-appropriation of a prime waterfront site in downtown Auckland. The Seafaring Building, pictured, was a component of her radical, low-impact redevelopment.
What are some qualities that you think might distinguish a New Zealand approach to the interior form? It is a complex question. I don’t think the right way to answer is to say that and define how a New Zealand approach is 'looking' but more, you need what kind of approach would really suit a New Zealand interior. This is really a matter of criteria as one of the most fundamental aspects of interior design. If we consider it, one of the most profound depth and validity to any space. In the search for local materials, we know that locals are the most appropriate and, in many ways, make work look like the way it does. And, as with architecture, context is key to understanding the environment in which you are working.

Any observations on the difference in interior practice between the two places?

Certainly in Europe, it seems, that part of yourself in embedded in a way of working that is very much part of a broader cultural approach – one that can be taken for granted. Given New Zealand’s growing requirement for more comprehensive design thinking, this type of thinking needs to be encouraged, so it is interesting to note how architects who are working with the concept of ‘soft reconstruction’ and are engaged in creating new buildings that are sustainable and respect the environment are now interested in creating a more engaged space and relative privacy in New Zealand. What is clear is that the interface between nature and the built environment is something that is always engaging. Also, interior design appears to have an inherent multi-disciplinary, which is so easy to move into music, art, architecture. That has always been very appealing. Also, it comes down to where I feel I can be most engaged and I find it very hard to engage with the excess of buildings.

Before you designed the New Zealand rooms you were working as a designer, at Vincent Van Duysen studio. How did that come about?

A director of work was acquired, it’s quite different. I had been working on Vincent Van Duysen studio for a decade, however, I found it hard to find ways to use my skills in a way other than the craft that I love. In Vincent Van Duysen studio, I think that the thinking that goes into the New Zealand interiors contributed to making the project. The New Zealand rooms are a combination of the Van Duysen team’s approach, alongside the New Zealand exhibition of art and landscape. I was commissioned to design the rooms and a small team of us were able to create a sort of one-off project to see if there was an interest in this kind of work. The rooms were designed for the exhibition at the Palazzo Bollani in Milan. We were given the chance to design our own interiors for the first time, which gave us the chance to create a very specific and unique project. The rooms were designed as an extension of the exhibition and were used to create a connection between the exhibition and the visitors.

How did that come about?

I was on a sabbatical in Europe when I was offered a job in New Zealand. I was interested in the idea of working with the Van Duysen team and the opportunity to work with such a talented team. I was interested in the idea of working with New Zealand’s local materials and craftsmen. I was also interested in the idea of working with a team that had experience in designing for the New Zealand market and was interested in creating a unique project. I was interested in the idea of working with a team that had experience in designing for the New Zealand market and was interested in creating a unique project. I was interested in the idea of working with a team that had experience in designing for the New Zealand market and was interested in creating a unique project.

The New Zealand Room, a hosting and event space at Palazzo Bollani, New Zealand’s venue at the Biennale Architettura 2016, was established with the assistance of the people and companies on these pages.
PLAYING WITH COLOUR

Resene is a New Zealand-owned company that began in a garage 50 years ago. From humble beginnings, it has grown into a large company that offers diverse services to New Zealand architects and designers. For 25 years the paint maker has been the sponsor of the New Zealand Architecture Awards, and it is also a supporter of New Zealand architecture abroad, at the Venice Architecture Biennale. The company also runs its own awards programme, the Resene Total Colour Awards, to encourage the use of colour in all building environments.

In 2015, the overall winner of the Resene Total Colour Award was Mike Parr Partnership, designed by Helen Kay and Hayley Muir of Architype. The Auckland piquette, which also won the Resene Total Colour Landscape Award, was described by the judges as “also in Woodlands meets Derry Lane – a collection of colourful kid-friendly houses through to life through building emerging colour.”

At the piquette, skilful masons, mind and body, are at play – conceptually, literally. In this small space, there are a network of open windows that vibrate with (!) plant for smelling and pondering, large perforated louvres for the cooling, and thorough semi-openable blast doors for the ventilation. In this zoning of space, design is practical and practical design is daily. The Teakiel Timber desk provides platforms for a plethora of observation and conversation. It enables continuity to the idea of creating play spaces in a city branded with a common plural identity for the city’s, the city’s and the city’s. To encourage social play between children, there are low, concrete step-up walls studded with colourful cut-outs and playful shadow edges. Building a visual and spatial playground. There are also traditional play items – stairs and slides, against a neat but not enlivening and more physically challenging space of equipment to entertain and challenge regular users from a nearby school. Through the desk, a creative possibility provides for a course for scholars and fools.

In the bold daylight, these essential characters floating in the park play with paint colour: being a source of joy and playfulness, accessible to children and their parents.

UNDER A CLOUD

Aotearoa New Zealand is a long and narrow island nation with shores of coastlines bathed by taut salt of water. The weather is changeable and wet—especially in Wellington, where prevailing northerlies call the air through the city’s waterfront and getting around easily on foot, this weather is a necessary driver for urban rainwear, the duo channelled their frustrations with a lack of options for protective wear, for warmer northern hemisphere winter coats, and design and textile development, aiming to accentuate coat is cut from very lightweight, technical two-layer of adventure-wear protection and urban styling. Each initiative. When their Kickstarter closed in late 2014 they had 200 per cent funding and pre-orders from 23 countries. Simm’s story about a lack of options for protective wear and inspiring textile development is the world was about to become their Okewa (large grey raincloud in Māori) rainwear.

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RENDERS FROM THE EARTH

Natural renders are often thought of as a traditional building material, but Resene, a New Zealand-owned company that manufactures and supplies render and dry-mix products, has a number of well-respected New Zealand designers in its stable. However, New Zealand citizenship is not a prerequisite for Resene membership. “Ideas are more important,” says Simon James. “Every product needs its unique set of magic.” A case in point is urban lighting designer Flynn Talbot, the latest addition to the Resident Group. Talbot’s Mesh Space阮贤 recently won one of New Zealand’s highest design honours, a Gold Pin at the 2015 Best Awards, and was featured by Resene’s magazine in its latest ‘W’ house. “We approach designers whose work we admire,” says Bridgens. “That Chamber, for instance, a director of Charleswritten Architects, a practice that does special projects at incredibly varied scales, from urban design right down to bespoke products for handbags.” Jamie McLellan’s ties have time since New York, and New Zealand, design not just about but is also about building, shoes, kayaks and bicycles. Simon James has produced some greener products, including the Tangata iki family, Roof Chair and Pick Up Sticks Chair. Some of our most successful products – the Geometric Family of Hex, Cross and Tri Pendants – are designed by our in-house directors, Resident Studios.

A small but quality growing company, Resident is finding a wide international buyer for its designs, including those of the British designer Tom Dixon, who last year invited the studio to play to the 100,000 strong crowd at the Old Selfridges Hotel on Oxford Street, London.

“Just pick up the phone and ask if we would like to be involved,” says Bridgens. “We had started a sales office in London, so got together and created ‘Resident’, looking at every single idea that was there.”

Bridgens and Resident is a regular exhibitor at the Milan Furniture Fair, London Design Festival and New York Design Week. Its products are sold in 23 countries, including China, at Design Warehouse in the UK, through Design Within Reach, Matter in New York, At Ease in Los Angeles, as well as other retailers, and throughout Britain and Europe.

BUILDING THE BEST

Auckland, positioned on a narrow isthmus between two remarkable harbours, is often referred to as “The City of Sails,” thanks to the large number of yachts that ply and plot courses across its sparkling blue waters. As might be expected of a city with a long fascination with all things nautical, Auckland is also home to a number of companies at the forefront of the marina industries. Some of these are backed by New Zealand participation (and sometimes success) in the America’s Cup. Others cater to service facilities built around the design, construction, maintenance and refurbishment of the world’s most advanced yachts – “superyachts”

One such company, Robinson Interiors, has also contributed its expertise in design and fabrication to the construction of custom made furniture for New Zealand’s one-off Americas Cup cis at the Palazzo Bellini. Robinson Interiors in a New Zealand firm that works around the world, undertaking interior and refurbishment projects for luxury yacht owners as well as exclusive private projects, such as stores for concepts for fashion rewriter. Luckily Stuart Robinson, managing director of the company, is a third generation. “We never” furniture maker. We understand the need to create high quality interiors. Since the company’s formation, Robinson says, the firm has worked on all the vessels established through these generations of furniture craftsmanship – “traditional, quality workmanship, value, and service.”

“Each and every project we are involved with is fully customised in every way,” says Robinson. “The process by which we design and manufacture our interiors enables our clients to continually push design boundaries both with materials and style. The complete interior is 3D-modelled using the latest CAD software, allowing an owner to easily review and make changes before construction commences. This enables changes to be made easily without the cost associated with changing any part of an interior that may already be constructed.”

Robinson Interiors is New Zealand’s oldest and most experienced marine manufacturer. Over the years, it has worked on projects for companies on the company’s website.
Six of the best

It’s a tough question to put to an architect: what’s your favourite building? Any architect could name dozens of candidates. So we narrowed the scope of enquiry: What’s your favourite Aotearoa New Zealand building? Six New Zealand architects respond.

Rau Hoskins (Design 1961)
To Ngākau Māhaki (2009) by Lyons Grant

My favourite Aotearoa building is To Ngākau Māhaki, the wharenui or meeting house at Te Noho Kotahitanga / Unitec Marae in Auckland. It opened in 2009 and in the culmination of six full time carving and weaving courses. It provides a place for a new guard of Māori carvers and weavers.

It’s a building which embodies the values of our people. It’s our deep roots and connection with the land. It’s a place of history, culture and heritage. It’s a place of striving to be a good Maori, a good person.

Gerlock Bird’s tips withTo Ngākau Māhaki used modern technology and independent application of wool – not surface covering. Brise-soleil puffs, which are smooth and soft, but also strong, and 30 per cent wool ultra high density wool, was creatively used to create a one-off system that is light, fire resistant and able to “profit from the natural material properties of wool”, that is, wound and colour absorb, regulation of humidity, sustainability and recyclability.

In March 2010, Campbell for Wool New Zealand reported the workshop format with some of New Zealand’s up-and-coming architects, product and interior designers. Stephen McDougall, CPW Wool in Architectural Ambassador and Director of Studio Pacific Architecture, says: “Reimagining wool was the challenge for Weekend in a Woolshed, a follow up from the International Wool Innovation Awards and we are thrilled with the concept created by the New Zealand Nine.”

“New Zealand has the reputation of being a innovator in new form and function. With this workshop we explored how wool can be used to create a very modern, refined and sophisticated effect.”

Richard Naish (RTA Studio)
Future Chapel (2007) by John Scott

John Scott’s Future Chapel in Wellington is my current favourite. I have many more buildings to visit. The chapel’s references to Māori, Pacific and European traditions, and the creation of a new church form are beautiful objects within a park.

Christina van Bohemen (Solo van Bohemen Architects)
Shackbank (2008) by IOTA Studio

To pick a wheat or most beautiful building is too hard but Iota Shackbank, designed by IOTA Studio, is a favourite contemporary building because it demonstrates the transformation power of good architecture in the city. I like the way the north-south boundary gets the street, home country modern facade and at well with its nineteenth-century neighbours not self-effacing or deferential, but strong and complementary.

The south-elevation at street level cleverly mimics the gritty and quirky character of the crofters, coffee shops, backpacker hostel and business startups that currently populate Cross Street. Up high, the building boldly marks the edifice of modern New Zealand architecture that reminds us of the very few distillates that are actually made – not self-effacing or deferential, but strong and complementary.

Our office has been in Ironbank for five years in the north elevation bends gently with the street, because it demonstrates the transformative power – not self-effacing or deferential, but strong and complementary.

The chapel represents a pioneering tradition of modern New Zealand architecture that reminds us of the very few distillates that are actually made – not self-effacing or deferential, but strong and complementary.
A perfect getaway

In summer the neighbour’s page drove my parents crazy and they dreamed of an escape from the heat and the stink. They had fallen in love with the West Coast on a South Island tour a few years before and acquired a madly cheap ten acres of cut-over bush south of Hokitika. They commissioned architect John Scott, who had designed their home and pottery/ workshop in Heretaunga Bay, to design a small cottage they could build themselves as a getaway.

My mother, Estelle, had boundless ideas, and my father Bruce’s usual role was to moderate and then implement them. They were a good team and achieved remarkable things through this combination. The Hokitika house is one of them.

I had been on the first South Island trip, my last holiday with my parents, when I was fourteen or fifteen. We stayed on a wonderful place, Panamakia, Liberis, Gillipiaqua Beach, the glaciers further south. When I returned a year or so later to prepare a building site in the newly notified section I thought they were mad. The large trees had been felled forty-odd years earlier and the bank was slowly regenerating, but it was also cluttered with gorse, across the public land for miles around. Anywhere you desired or scrathad the surface ever gone would spread. To my adolescent eye it looked like a maze and, therefore, incomprehensible.

John Scott designed a simple, two-story cottage, with extra detailing for unique sensual balance. Bruce made chaks wood model of the studio, joints, beams and rafters to get an idea of how all fit together. He also bought an old Bedford truck to cart our gear from Ngatarawa, near Hastings in the North Island, to the flat by the beach near to the section by Mirror Lake near Lake Mapukau in the South. We drove in convoy in the family car and the truck, with a new coil required for the Bedford in Levin. The further south we drove the less traffic there was and the friendlier the waves from the locals.

We visited some wonderful places: Punakiaki, Okarito, Sideway with my parents, when I was fourteen or fifteen. I had been on the first South Island trip, my last holiday with my parents, when I was fourteen or fifteen. We stayed on a wonderful place, Panamakia, Liberis, Gillipiaqua Beach, the glaciers further south. When I returned a year or so later to prepare a building site in the newly notified section I thought they were mad. The large trees had been felled forty-odd years earlier and the bank was slowly regenerating, but it was also cluttered with gorse, across the public land for miles around. Anywhere you desired or scratched the surface ever gone would spread. To my adolescent eye it looked like a maze and, therefore, incomprehensible.

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Great architects should design small buildings because there they can show best what architecture matters, why design matters, why the material matter. The bush house is shaped like many barns or farm sheds because there they can show best why architecture matters, why design matters, why the material matter. The bush house is shaped like many barns or farm sheds because there they can show best why architecture matters, why design matters, why the material matter. The bush house is shaped like many barns or farm sheds because they can show best why architecture matters, why design matters, why the material matter.

The house is a perfect getaway: it has everything you need for a holiday with added pleasure from the coast. The proportions. This is what makes an architect, the buildings in three dimensions until I made the model. I found it remarkable that Scott was able to imagine the spaces he was designing, the volume, the proportions. That is what makes an architect, of course, and it is what John Scott got right in his buildings, space, proportions and site.

The house is compact and clever. The stairs at the lower level provide volume to the bedroom above, and the wall window at the bottom of the stairs is a delight, a挑剔. The windows out to the bush are almost square and generate. At tree height the birds come and rest, bath and drink, to listen to the rain or the distant sea polishing the rocks on the beach at Ross. After forty years the sea has been bleached, the idea and solution still delightful, the wood has mellowed and the house settled in the bush.

Words by Craig Martin

In my teens I built models of John Scott houses for my parents’ house in Heretaunga Bay, this house, the Brown house in Napier. I found it difficult to imagine the buildings in three dimensions until I made the model. I found it remarkable that Scott was able to imagine the spaces he was designing, the volume, the proportions. That is what makes an architect, of course, and it is what John Scott got right in his buildings, space, proportions and site.

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After decades when the publication of two New Zealand architecture books in the same year seemed miraculous, piles of new works now test the tolerance of coffee tables and designer shelving. Many of the books are about houses and some are monographs. But there are other books, too, the sort of smaller publications – collections of essays or reflections – which every self-respecting profession should generate. Here’s a sample of the recent crop of books about New Zealand architecture (many of them are on display in Venice, at the Reading Room in Palazzo Bollani – the Future Islands exhibition venue):

Every book has an author.
Every film has a director.
Every dance has a choreographer.
Every play has a playwright.
Every symphony has a composer.
Every building has an architect.
Every exhibition has a curator.
Every poem has a poet.
Every sculpture has a sculptor.

Pai mutunga te mahi hoahoa where
Architektur ist wichtig
けんちく は じゅうよう
Arquitectura es importante
建築学很重要
建築学 は じゅうよう
L'architectura conta
L'architecture, c'est important
वासुकला महत्वपूर्ण है।

...Architecture matters
The facade of Spark Central in Wellington, New Zealand, designed by architecture+. In 2015, architecture+ director Stuart Gardyne received the NZIA Gold Medal, the highest individual honour in New Zealand for architecture. Photo by Paul McCredie.