



Design Diplomacy

The Transmission of Autochthonous Practices & Customs

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

Singapore | Spain | Korea | Japan | Australia | Oman | Hawaii

Organised by
Dr Alban MANNISI, A/Professor Dr Charles ANDERSON
RMIT Landscape Architecture

Alban Mannisi is a Landscape Urbanist and Senior Lecturer in the School of Architecture and Urban Design. His research focus is on the emerging political ecology implementation in landscape planning and the social ecology deployment through various indigenous environmental mediation. The recent projects decipher the globalisation of sustainable narrative and the foundation of localised citizen resistance to translate intangible landscape components in environmental design. Deeply concerned with environmental, social, and social injustice issues, he develops appropriate environmental observation protocol that translates associated human & non-human conflicts into resilient spaces. With the increasing illegibility of the environmental construction of our societies, he elaborates a Political Philosophy of Landscape to decipher the generation / de-generation & re-generation cogs of our fragile landscape mutation to produce ethical design and equitable planning. Intrigued by how connected histories and hybrid cultures model our scape, he has lived, practiced or taught in France, Korea, Singapore, England, Thailand, Japan and as of now Australia, involving in a variety of projects among 13 different countries in collaboration with the professionals in various fields, such as landscape architects & planners, architects, urban & territorial planners, environmentalists, governmental officers, researchers, and academics. Director of the landscape planning platform SCAPETHICAL (www.scapethical.org), Alban Mannisi works particularly to enable the visibility of environmental resistance and ecological management hardly appreciated by the built environment expertise.

Contact: alban.mannisi@rmit.edu.au



Charles Anderson is a Landscape Architect and Artist with over thirty years experience making and exhibiting work in Australia and around the world – with a particular focus on the Asia Pacific region having worked in partnerships on design research and exhibition projects in Japan, China, South Korea and Singapore. Charles' research foregrounds the fertile character of collaborative, interdisciplinary, and process based modes of practice. Advocating new methods of approach and of attentiveness, and exploring new generative procedures, he argues that process thinking is not simply an operational stance, but an ethical position. Taking seriously the relationship between process thinking and place making Charles' research advocates a mode of place making which, rather than reproduce planned environments as systems of control, configures place as a discursive contested meshwork of movement, encounter, and exchange. Charles has a particular expertise in collaborative design research projects.

This work has increasingly been attuned to community engagement, participatory and co-design strategies. This has been demonstrated in a number of industry engaged projects recently in including Touchstone, an interactive public artwork in collaboration with City of Casey and researchers across SoAUD and SoD, and an interdisciplinary and collaborative design research project The Exchange which, in partnership with Lendlease, explored the Community engagement in High Density Environments (book published in May 2019). This design research project was funded by Lendlease and given seeding funding by the Design and Creative Practice ECP in 2017.

Contact: charles.anderson@rmit.edu.au





Design Diplomacy is a research project, constituted by a series of international embedded on-site workshops, investigates design practices and customs that exist outside of international environmental conventions in order to report on and disseminate off-the-shelf and non-speculative practices. Emphasising and brokering an expanded interdisciplinary and collaborative dialogue between experts, governmental institutions, indigenous knowledges and practitioners, and diverse communities, this research project seeks to empower civil society and especially aims to offer to the new emerging generations of practitioners in the built environment, a richer knowledge of the opportunities offered by the expanded landscape economy – a demonstration of ways of doing things differently.

Pursued through a series of workshops taking place in regions sharing global concerns through local issues, this research project is envisioned to unfold in two phases. The first taking place across the Asia Pacific (e.g. Seoul (South Korea), Coranderrk (Australia), Fukuyama (Japan), Singapore, Cameron Highland (Malaysia), Oahu (Hawaii)), and the second focusing on Europe and the Middle East (e.g. Nizwa, Muscat (Oman), Seville (Spain)). These workshops enable us to meet people in their own environment and context, as well as the various types of stakeholders disregarded by globalisation and speculation of current environmental markets. Internationally expanding the knowledge of these environmental resilience movements is both a logical continuation and an opportunity to define a multi-sectoral and transnational critical tool for the built environment community.



Sustainable Habitat Lab
Seville, Spain

Aflaj Lab
Nizwa, Oman

Jeongbeobsa
Seoul, Korea

Sendai
Tohoku, Japan

Oahu
Hawaii

Edible Garden City
Singapore

Coranderrk
Victoria, Australia



Seminar Series Program

Each seminar takes place in a specific site and will enable various stakeholders to expose their approach and debate with participants.

1 or 2 days Seminar (Talk + Site Visit + Dinner)

SINGAPORE / MALAYSIA_Cameron Highland

Specific Issues: Food Security / Environmental Justice
 Location: Singapore & Cameron Highland
 Research Fund: SRIC School of Architecture and Urban Design
 Partners: Edible Garden City
 Developing Partners: Temasek Poly. [Environ. Dpt.], Yale Urban [Planning Dpt.],
 AVA (Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore)
 Date: July 2019

SPAIN_Seville

Specific Issues: Cohesive Urbanities & Societies
 Cultural Landscape of Sustainable Touristic Region
 Location: Seville City Centre
 Developing Partners: University of Seville / School of Architecture / Sustainable Habitat Lab.
 Date: TBC

KOREA_Seoul

Specific Issues: Pre-Modern Planning / Spatial Justice / Community Design Education
 Location: Jeongbeobsa temple, Seoul, Korea
 Support: Seoul National University [Graduate School of Environmental Studies],
 Environmental Planning Institute (SNU) Online Journal],
 Landscape Architecture Korea, Boan Gallery
 Developing Partners: TBC
 Date: TBC

JAPAN_Sendai

Specific Issues: Community Care / Medical Health & Landscape Design
 Location: Tohoku
 Support: Studio L
 Developing Partners: Tohoku University [Community Design Lab], Hiroshima University [Business
 Dpt.], Kobe College of Technology, Consensus Coordinator
 Date: TBC

AUSTRALIA_Coranderrk

Specific Issues: Indigenous Practice & customs / Post-Colonial Landscape
 Location: Coranderrk (Indigenous Community Coranderrk)
 Institution: RMIT School of Design & Social Science
 Date: TBC

OMAN, Nizwa, Muscat

Specific Issues: Resilient Autochthonous Practice of Arid Region
 Location: Nizwa & Muscat
 Developing Partners: Nizwa University [Ajlaj Lab], Sultan Quabos University [School of Arch.]
 German University of Oman [College of Engineering]
 Date: TBC

HAWAII, Oahu

Specific Issues: Resilient Indigenous Practice and Customs
 Partners: New Hybrid Network
 Developing Partners: Hawaii University [Landscape Architecture dpt., Community Design Center],
 Date: TBC



Background

The need to conduct this research has emerged from the ambivalent situation of the built environment profession around the world. The landscape architecture field has considerably evolved over the last 50 years and has experienced controversial mutations since the advent of the Sustainable Development Era (Our Common Future 1987). A whole economy of human, natural and economic capital management has emerged which is significantly affecting the environmental expert's ability to ethically manage, design, and sustain our biospheres.

Various forms of civil resistance (Sukhdev 2012) have since warned the landscape community about the excesses of the neoliberal ecology (O Connors 1998) and reported on the fair and ethical conducts with which worldwide cultures and regions desire to ensure the future of communities through indigenous practices and customs (Nagoya Protocol 2010).

From this environmental resistance, the 'Globalisation from the Grassroots' phenomenon (Magnaghi 2005) was articulated. This work reports on the global insurrectional movement fighting against mechanisms of Western neoliberal speculation in order to reconsider traditional and autochthonous technologies within our contemporary practices and knowledge of ecological management. Studying the political philosophy and political ecology of these environmental phenomena in the regions was investigated through a previous workshop series (Mannisi 2012-2019). This analysed the recurrent and inherent factors of cultures and environments where they emerge.



Outcomes

Building on this previous work, this new project of international workshops aims to: provide an overview of the current situation; develop critical tools and methodologies of engaging in this arena; provide a systematic compendium of case studies of these complex phenomena for the enthusiastic new generation of landscape architects/planners/ environmental designers concerned with the ethical behaviours towards humans and non-humans.

Through the in-situ questioning and dialogue exercise of this problematic experienced internationally by the stakeholders of our sustainable biosphere (Rolston 2012), this research project aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- A series of international embedded on-site workshops. The workshops will be documented and made accessible online. Each workshop will have its own outcome formats: films, photographs, audio recordings, academic articles, exhibitions.
- Create and publish an observatorium: a linked book and digital online open access resource and sharing platform for generational change. Assembling the various outcomes from the workshop series, the observatorium will provide a guide book and operational tool kit for designers etc. The observatorium will enable an account of an international movement that is still difficult to grasp by the public and experts, and of which apparent heterogeneity does not adequately reflect common foundations. The perceived strong demand from civil society, government and a new generation of experts will thus benefit from a plural, transversal and innovative inventory.
- Clearly identify what were the mechanisms of deregulation: economic, anthropological, and ecological produced by the planners of the territory, landscape, and communities which result in these massive phenomena of environmental, social, and spatial injustice perceived all over the world during the last 50 years?
- Show how the modes currently implemented by a worldwide movement of civil resistance and readjustment of environmental knowledge may be grouped by region, climate, and culture. Build and develop geographical, community, educational, professional, industry, and government networks. This would be something akin to creating a network of networks – something that could be called a globalisation from the grass roots.
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A Network of Networks_External Research Partners

The series of workshops are based on the organisers' intimate knowledge of cultures, stakeholders and local partners, allowing a fluid logistics of events to initiate the expected conversations / debates. For each location, one or more local private/public partners has been identified and confirmed. Different type of debates are set up according to the problematics and hypotheses envisaged. These are (to date):

SINGAPORE / MALAYSIA_Cameron Highland: Food Production / Environmental Justice

Partners: Edible Garden City (Developing Partners: Temasek Poly. [Environ. Dpt.], Yale Urban [Planning Dpt.], Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore)

KOREA_Seoul_Jeongbeobsa temple: Pre-Modern planning / Spatial Justice

Partners: Seoul National University [Graduate School of Environmental Studies], Environmental Planning Institute (SNU) Online (Developing Partners: Journal Landscape Architecture Korea)

JAPAN_Fukuyama: Community Design / Intangible Landscape Planning

Partners: Studio L., Tohoku University [Community design Lab], Consensus Coordinator (Toshio Kuwako), (Developing Partners: Hiroshima University [Business Dpt.], Kobe College of Technology)

AUSTRALIA, Coranderrk: Indigenous Practice & Customs / Post-Colonial Landscape

Partners: Coranderrk Stakeholders, Wandooon Estate Aboriginal Corporation (WEAC), (Developing Partners: Wurundjeri Tribe Council)

SPAIN, Seville: Cohesive Urbanities & Societies

Developing Partners: Sustainable Habitat Lab, University of Seville / School of Architecture

OMAN, Nizwa, Muscat: Resilient Autochthonous Practice of Arid Region

Developing Partners: Nizwa University [Ajla Lab], Sultan Quabos University [School of Arch.] German University of Oman [College of Engineering]

HAWAII, Oahu: Resilient Indigenous Practices and Customs

Developing Partners: Hawaii University [Landscape Architecture dpt., Community Design Center], New Hybrid Network

Each meeting will be an opportunity to renew our knowledge of the transmission of autochthonous practices and customs. The debates will be recorded to be accessible online. Each workshop will have its own outcome formats; films, academic article, exhibition. The whole will then be processed to produce the Observatorium.

A Network of Networks_Internal Research Partners

It is intended that the research project will in fact propagate / snowball research partners as it progresses. It is anticipated that the first such addition to the project will be within RMIT itself. Clearly this project moves across several domains. We are currently identifying potential partners from across the University and are particularly 'prospecting' for potential partners at DERC, in particular Dr Jaz Choi and Professor Tania Lewis, RMIT Singapore School of Business, Dr Ferne Edwards (RMIT Europe).

References

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