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Emerging Talents: Training Architects

Neil Spiller (Guest Editor)

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📖 DESCRIPTION

There is a newfound interest in architectural education. This *AD* is a survey of some of the best contemporary architecture student work in the world. The most forward-looking architecture schools worldwide are reinventing pedagogy in the hope of developing radical syllabi that are a rich mix of the virtual and the actual. Design education is changing and adapting to compensate for the new material changes to the discipline, and is being used to disentangle old, outmoded spatial practices and replace them with new paradigms of space and representation. This issue showcases the students and teachers who are pushing the envelope of architecture in extraordinary ways, offering their insights into its future materiality and spatial dexterity. It premieres a new young generation of architects who are likely to become names in the architectural profession and possibly important teachers themselves. Their work has been selected by their own influential teachers of architecture who describe the studio methodologies – and reasons for them – that prompted the work.
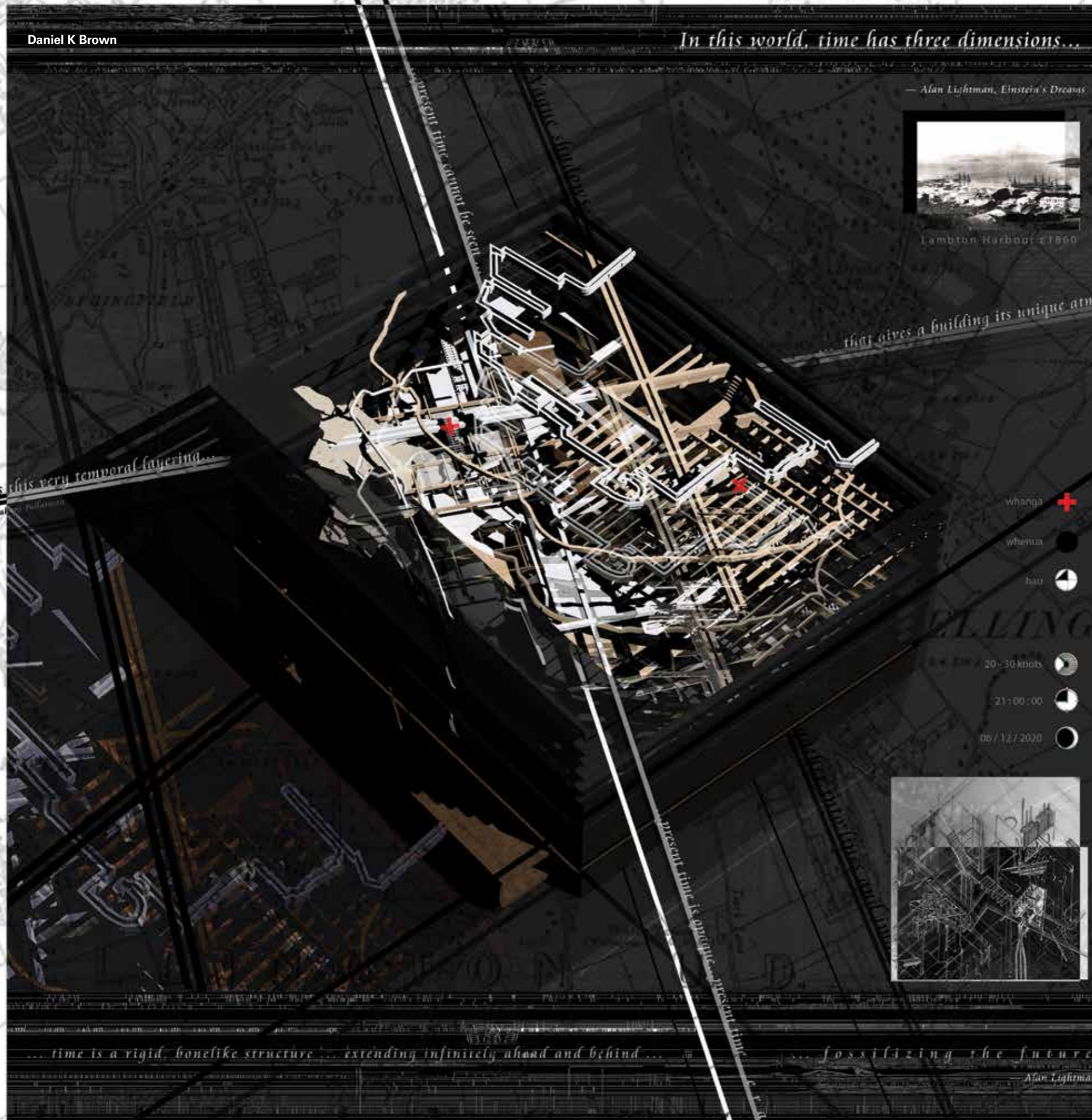
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Featured institutions: A Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan; Architectural Association, London; Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London; Carleton University, Ottawa; CONFLUENCE Institute for Innovation and Creative Strategies in Architecture, Paris; Cooper Union, New York; University of Greenwich, London; KU Leuven, Belgium; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York; Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), Los Angeles; Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne; Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand; and the University of Applied Arts, Vienna

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📓 SERIES

Architectural Design

In this world, time has three dimensions…

— Alan Lightman, Einstein's Dreams

Lambton Harbour c1860

…that gives a building its unique atmosphere…

…It is this very temporal layering…
— Juhani Pallasmaa

…time is a rigid, bonelike structure…extending infinitely ahead and behind…

…fossilizing the future…

Alan Lightman

— John Hejduk

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The Allegorical Architectural Project

Provocateurs, Propositions and Confrontations

Daniel K Brown, **Professor of Design Studio (Architecture) at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, knows how to nurture his students into producing extraordinary work. He uses a narrative point of departure for each project, instilling spatial imagination provoked by literary presences. He is a great believer in the power of architectural drawing and modelling as well as the 'word' – whether poetry or prose. The combination of these notions creates a heady mix of ambiances in the studio's output.**

Alice Charles,
Archiving the Void,
Narrative Architecture final-year
MArch(Prof) thesis studio,
Victoria University of Wellington,
New Zealand,
2021

The layers beneath two opposing harbourside sites in Wellington, like horizontal palimpsests, negotiate time and identity, pausing and leaping forward, converging and separating again. They leave traces upon one another. Each layer calls out in its own voice, relevant to its own period of time – their combined voices a cacophony of fragile cries.

In his book *The Ontology of the Work of Art* (1928), philosopher Roman Ingarden argues: 'When writing his works, the novelist is free to a much higher degree than even the most independent architect. A whole realm of possibilities that are simply out of the question for the architect stands open to the writer's fantasy.'[1] Students in the Narrative Architecture final-year MArch(Prof) thesis design stream at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand are challenged to confront Ingarden's assertion by selecting a provocative literary work that tackles an issue that might be considered 'out of the question' for an architect. This 'literary provocateur' is explicitly chosen to provide an unanticipated, perhaps even disturbing, proposition for an allegorical architectural project. How would you design a building's soul? How would you design a building whose inhabitant is the shadow that it casts? How would you design a library for books that are stillborn and never reach the written page? With such unanticipated starting points, lateral thinking enters the forefront of the studio discourse.

Storytelling and Lateral Thinking
To encourage lateral thinking, students interrogate theorists who approach storytelling from unanticipated points of view. For example, museum studies specialists Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale describe how artefacts – including architecture – can be 'curated' to reawaken stories that contribute to placemaking.[2] Heritage theorist Jennifer Hill reflects upon how retaining scars of damaged architectural environments can unveil stories of transformation.[3] Environmental psychologist Jonathan Sime argues that patterns of human behaviour can imbue architectural contexts with narrative opportunities,[4] and education and culture theorist Rosemary Ross Johnston considers how layers of the landscape, like palimpsests, can enable stories to unfold.[5] Students develop matrices that link a theoretical framework with their literary provocateur and their architectural proposition. Discoveries arising from these matrices provoke iterative design experiments that are assimilated to arrive at a polyvocal, allegorical architectural outcome.[6]

Certain unspoken 'rules' apply within the studio to facilitate lateral thinking: students never use the words 'building', 'façade', 'door', 'window', 'room' or 'wall'. Instead they describe the aperture through which a view is framed or the liminal condition between two opposing environments. The studio maintains a dedicated website as a visual resource that students mine for inspiration.[7] Studio shelves are filled with non-traditional model-making materials: decaying railway sleepers, rusty metal spalls, sandstone offcuts, sextants, mariners' clocks, broken sewing machines and pistons.

To further encourage lateral thinking, proposed architectural interventions are discussed anthropomorphically as dynamic entities – living inhabitants of a site – paused in a moment of time. Students reflect upon how their architectural interventions can be situated into cause-and-effect relationships within a contextual field. The interventions become not only the inhabitants of the site, but also the narrators of its tale. Students are introduced to compositional principles from fine art (focus, balance, directionality) that
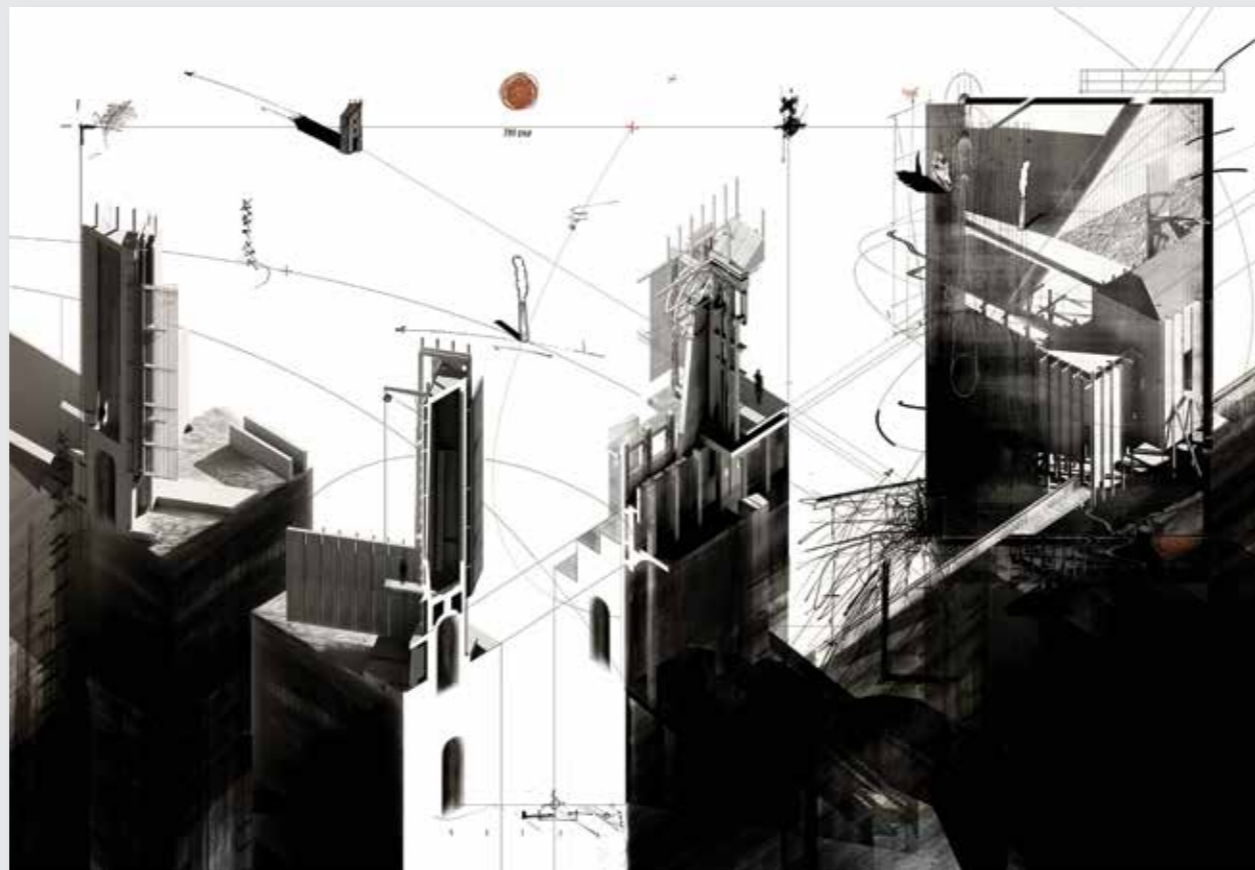
Nicholas Wilkey,
The Repository of Shadows,
Narrative Architecture final-year
MArch(Prof) thesis studio,
Victoria University of Wellington,
New Zealand,
2020

above: The Gateway (left) and the Gatehouse (middle and right) of the Repository of Shadows are situated in the Shadow Realm cast by the 'Wall'. The Shadow Realm moves, groans and creaks, only visible in moments of stillness captured in time.

below: The drawing layers shift and rotate, inciting the Shadow Realm to expand and contract in spatio-temporal circumlocutions. Drawing layers above cast shadows onto drawing layers below. Light is peeled away to reveal the Repository of Shadows as an architectural volume *trans*-forming over time.

Dion Andrews,
The Graveyard of Unwritten Books,
Narrative Architecture final-year
MArch(Prof) thesis studio,
Victoria University of Wellington,
New Zealand,
2020

In the Graveyard of Unwritten Books, the Balustrade Codex is one of six architectural fixtures and fittings that foreshadow the nascent metamorphosis of a book about to unfold and transform. But these are stillborn books that will never reach the written page. In the realm of censorship, a library must remain vigilant.

reinforce underlying allegorical meaning.[8] Speculative works by contemporary designers – Raimund Abraham, Bryan Cantley, Sophie Cauvin, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Emma McNally, Mary Miss, Jeane Myers, Walter Pichler, Pascale Sablan, Chiharu Shiota, Neil Spiller, Masahiko Yendo – are evaluated using similar principles, and students interrogate their own architectural compositions using analogous techniques. They work systematically across media – analogue drawing, physical modelling, digital rendering, animation – building generative ideas in progressive 'washes' moving from one medium to another. The final outcomes are published on studio websites that set a bar for students in following years.[9]

Provocateurs and Propositions
Each student's literary provocateur is used to incite an unexpected proposition that addresses a speculative issue relating to architecture. The examples illustrated here were all submitted or conceived in 2020.

Nicholas Wilkey's provocateur was Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985),[10] a novel that alternates between two parallel narratives. The odd-numbered chapters tell the story of 'Hard-Boiled Wonderland', a cyberpunk representation of the conscious state, while the even-numbered chapters tell the story of 'The End of the World', a fantasy representation of the unconscious state. The narrator of the second story enters a walled city (an architectural allegory for the deep subconscious) where he is required by the gatekeeper to leave his shadow (his conscious self) behind. Wilkey tackled this provocative tale by designing the 'Repository of Shadows', a dual architectural realm at the threshold of the conscious and the subconscious. Wilkey was also inspired by a compelling quote in French author Jean Giono's fictional novel *Joy of Man's Desiring* (1935): 'One has the impression that [men] … build with stones, and they do not see that each of their gestures to set a stone in mortar is accompanied by a shadow gesture that sets a shadow stone into a shadow mortar. And it is the shadow building that counts.'[11]

Nedim Gürsel's short story 'The Graveyard of Unwritten Books' (1991)[12] interrogates themes of censorship by setting up architectural oppositions. The story begins in a public library, beneath which lies an alternate library that lurks in the darkness, stealing words from the written page rather than safeguarding them. Some books in this 'graveyard' are forbidden, while others are stillborn, self-censored by their authors before ever being written. Student Dion Andrews explored Gürsel's proposition that a library is not only defined by the books that are there, but also by the books that are not there. His 'library' design consists of six curated architectural fixtures – a drinking fountain, handle, door, balustrade, wall and armrest – re-presented as allegorical 'codices', architectural 'books' that have never reached the written page.

In Philip Pullman's novel *Northern Lights* (1995),[13] each character has a 'dæmon' – a manifestation of their soul who travels alongside them. A character's outer visage represents one side of their self, while their dæmon (their soul) embodies the other. Student Jonathan Morrish used this provocateur to interrogate architecture's dæmon, the very different identity a building may possess that lurks behind its façade.

right: In Philip Pullman's novel *Northern Lights* (1995), a guillotine inside the 'dæmon cage' separates people's souls from their outer selves. Pullman's provocation was here used to incite the design of an architectural intervention sited above a buried, historic Māori pā (settlement) in Wellington. The lost pā represents the soul of the land, and the guillotine lifts the soul into an architectural timeline that enables its tale of separation to be witnessed.

below: The *rākau whakapapa* (the Māori orator's mnemonic staff) stands vigil, a sentinel chronicling the heritage and the identity of the *tangata whenua* (people of the land). It observes and it protects, bearing witness to the future in one direction and to the past in the other.
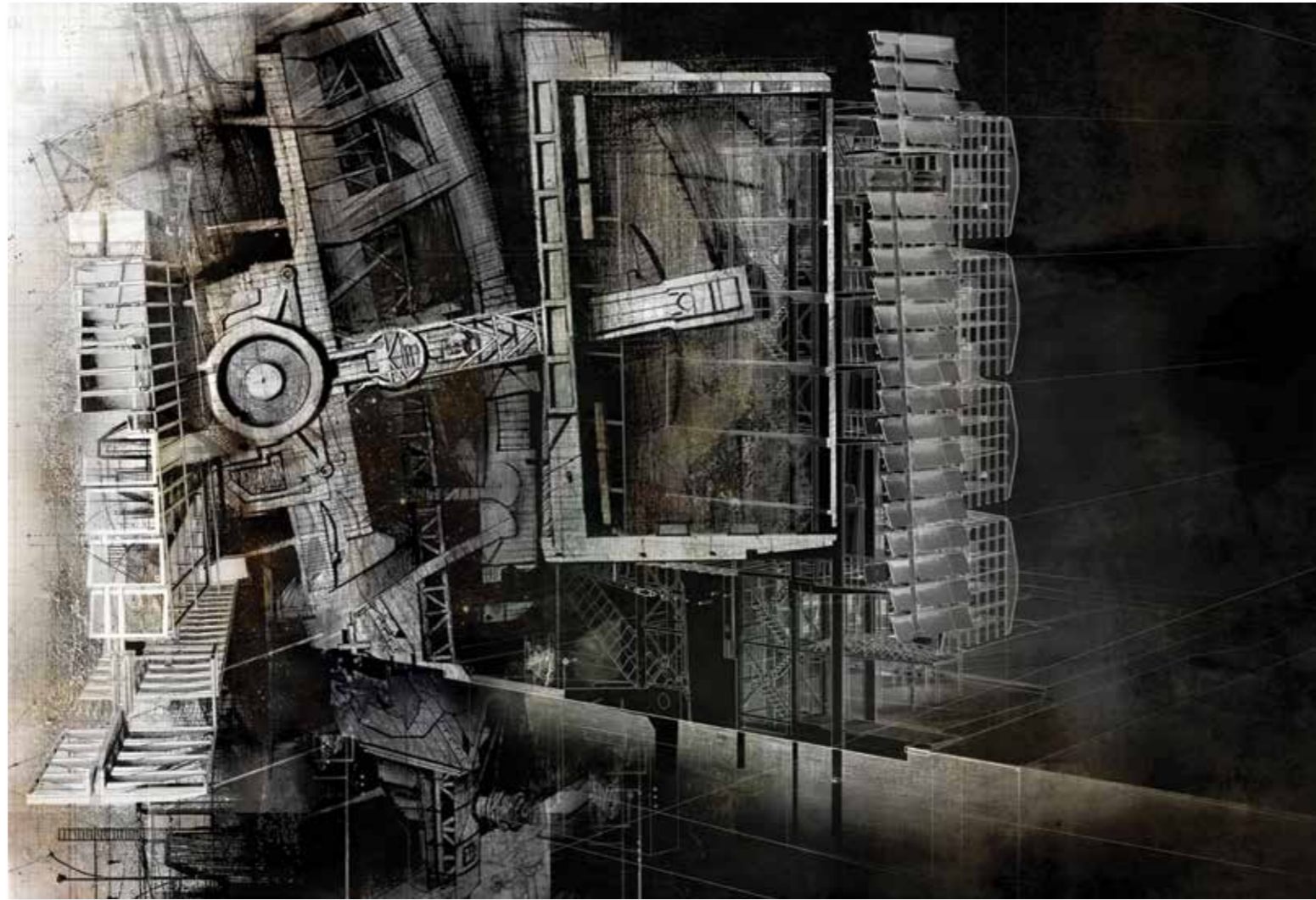

His proposition was that a building's soul is epitomised by the underlying heritage stories that define its context, while a building's outer visage – its façade – personifies its programme or 'brand' identity in relation to the present.

The literary provocateurs for student May Myo Min were the poem 'My History is not Mine' (2012) by Burmese poet Zeyar Lynn,[14] and nine superstitions told to her by her Burmese parents. Myo Min's proposition was that ongoing oral narratives enable unique cultural identities to be retained for future generations. She translated the nine superstitions into architectural models that actively avoid Western architectural constructs, then situated her interventions in a computer game that enables players to have cultural agency over how they personally experienced and interpreted the interwoven spatio-cultural narratives.

below: A computer game environment was designed as an architectural representation of the poem 'My History is not Mine' (2012) by Burmese poet Zeyar Lynn. Lynn's poem laments that Eastern identity is typically defined by Western theoreticians with Western biases. Myo Min's proposition was that culturally specific oral narratives enable Eastern cultural identities to be retained for future generations, and she translated this concept into an architectural game environment. Inside Myo Min's game, the players experience their own history. The shadows of culture illuminate their paths. The architecture of the imagination becomes their context. Darkness and light are inverted; traditional oral narratives come to life.
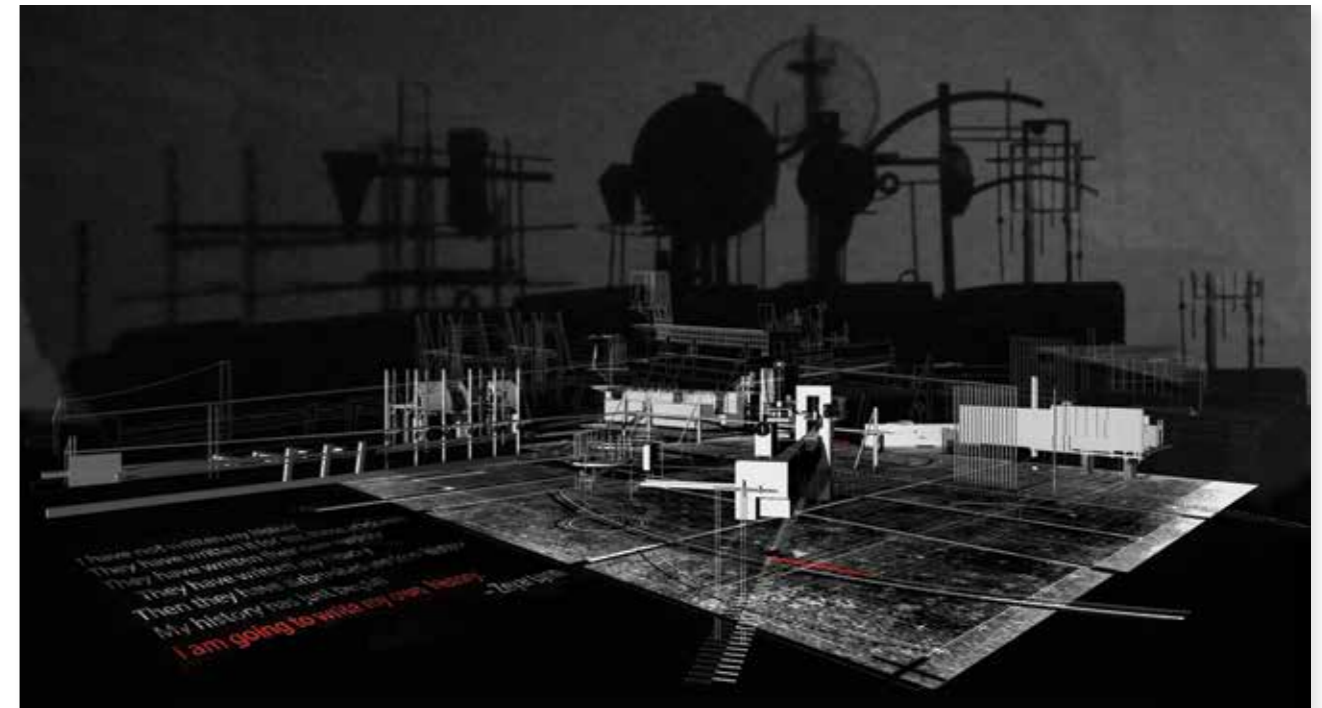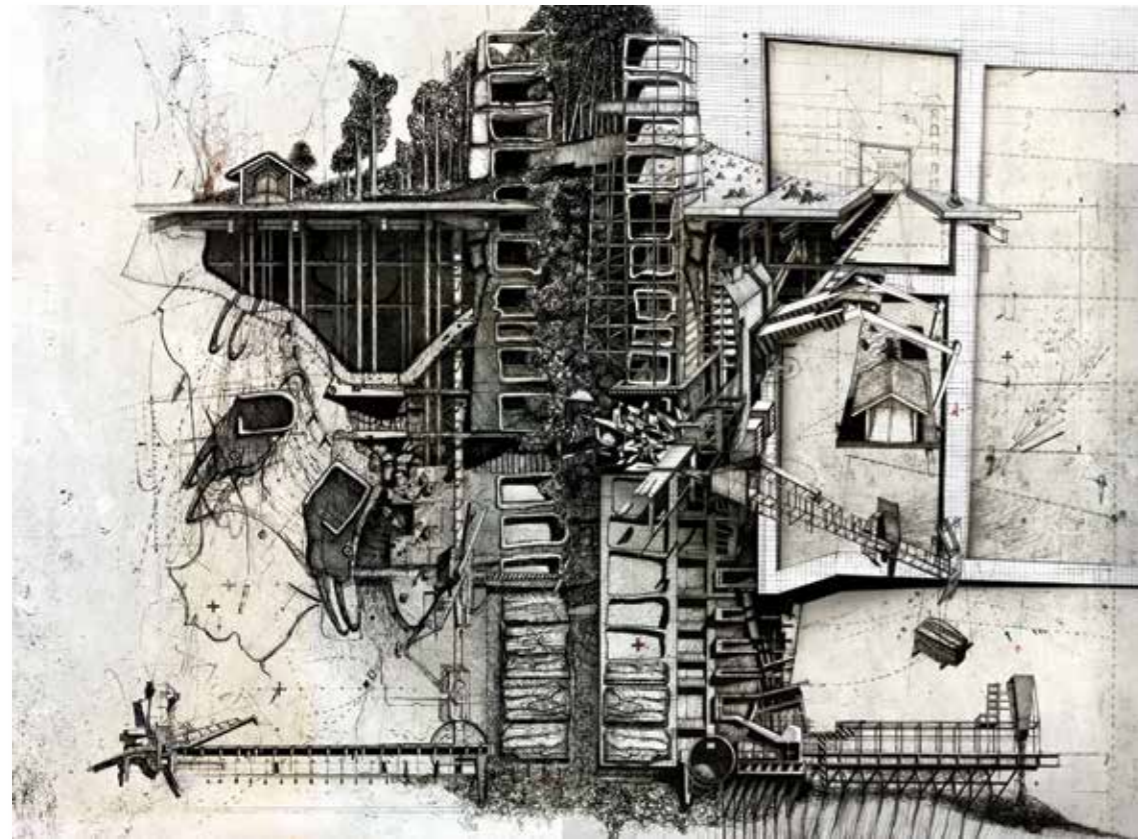
Contextual Provocations

Narrative Architecture thesis students are also encouraged to interrogate actual sites whose stories parallel the theme of their literary provocateur. In EM Forster's short story 'The Machine Stops' (1909),[15] society relies on technology to provide for all its needs – and when the machine breaks down, civilisation collapses. Student William du Toit used Forster's story as a provocateur to reawaken stories of place identity in New Zealand's rural province of Otago, which was virtually uninhabited until hundreds of stamper batteries – now rusting in the wilderness – were imported into the region to crush stone during the short-lived 1860 gold rush. Du Toit reawakened this heritage story by establishing architectural points of pause around a deteriorating stamper battery in the rural wilderness outside Macetown, where visitors witness this tale from the points of view of seven key sites: the mining shaft, redirected stream, elevated trough, cableway, stamper battery, tailings, and traces of an earlier battery swept away in a flood.

Hans-Jörg Rheinberger's book *The Hand of the Engraver: Albert Flocon Meets Gaston Bachelard* (2016)[16] examines the friendship of Surrealist engraver Albert Flocon and architectural philosopher Gaston Bachelard. To Bachelard, the 'hand of the engraver' symbolised the challenge of meeting resistance in a radically changing environment.[17] Student Ryan Western investigated the New Zealand site of Quartz Reef Point at Lake Dunstan, Central Otago, which had been deeply scratched due to severe strip mining. He re-presents the site as a metaphor for a deeply scratched copper engraving plate with a story to tell. His architectural

below: The stone-crushing machines of the Macetown gold rush have ground to a halt. The mountainside is broken, and the machines themselves begin to fall – rusted, fragmented and decayed. The damaged landscapes and the shattered machines are the only remaining witnesses to this tragic tale. Their voices clamour and cry out, radiate and recede, repudiate and lament.

bottom: In the thematic matrix (left) for a speculative design relating to an abandoned stamper battery outside Macetown, Otago, architectural 'players' enter the theatre and find their marks on stage. An architectural morality play commences, and the scenes slowly unfurl (above right). The sentinels and the settings converge; framing devices shift alliances; circulation pathways retreat; the story unfolds (below right).
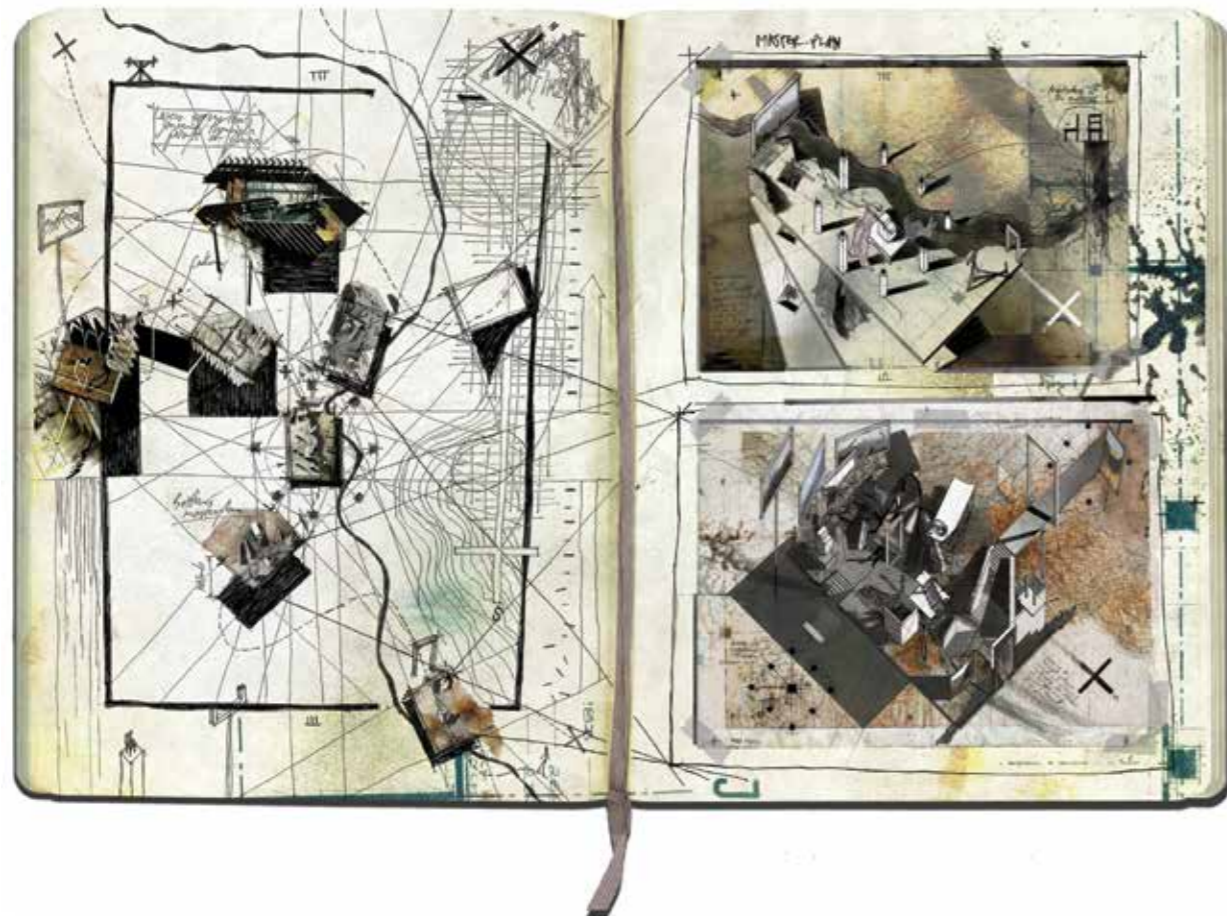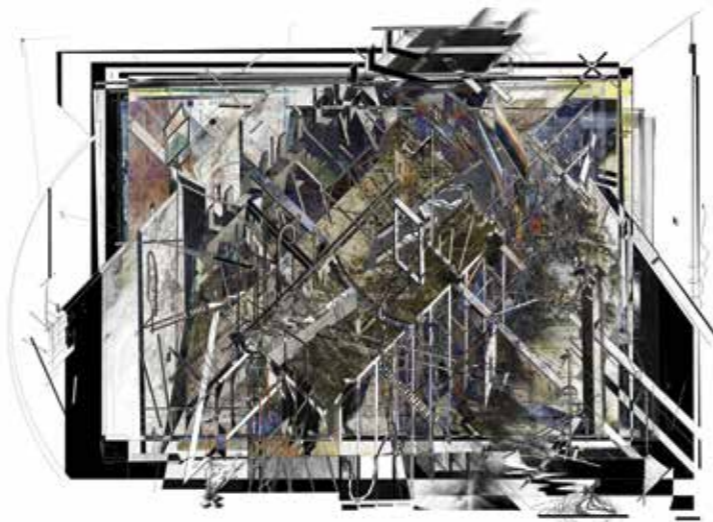
interventions represent allegorical elements related to engraving, wherein the voices of the engraver, philosopher and architect are brought together to tell the tale from three points of view.

Alan Lightman's novel *Einstein's Dreams* (1992)[18] describes 30 dreams by Einstein, each representing a different concept of time. Student Alice Charles used these 'dreams' as provocateurs to situate two opposing Wellington harbourside sites into a dialogue. Through natural disaster, reclamation and redevelopment, the sites have come to represent unique place identities at unique periods of time. In Charles's design proposition, provocations drawn from Lightman's novel are used to re-present the heritage voices of the two sites as they transformed their identity through successive layers, from one time period to the next.

Confrontations

When students conceive of architectural interventions as dynamic, living inhabitants of a contextual field, they are, in effect, being challenged to design a moment of time in spatial form. Narrative landscape theorists Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton describe three methods for 'representing time in spatial form': the frozen moment, the linear series of linked episodes, and the continuous narrative that 'uses spatial depth to represent temporal position, with the present occupying the foreground and the past in the distance.'[19] Temporal position is intimately linked to spatial memory. Raimund Abraham argues that the 'manifestation of the memory of spatial events … is idealized through the abstraction of the language of architecture, while the elements of architecture become the

catalysts for the process of memory' through a 'process of dialectical *confrontation*: equilibrium through tension.'[20] Italian Rationalist architect Giuseppe Terragni, in notes describing his design for the narrative 'Danteum' project (1938), expressed this dialectic as follows: 'Architectural monument and literary work can adhere to a singular scheme without losing … any of each work's essential qualities only if [they are allowed] to *confront* each other, so that they may then be read in a … relation of parallelism or subordination.'[21] The goal of the Narrative Architecture MArch(Prof) thesis design stream is to position both the literary provocateur and the architectural proposition into just such a temporal confrontation. ∞

Notes

1. Roman Ingarden, *The Ontology of the Work of Art: The Musical Work, the Picture, the Architectural Work, the Film* [1928], trans Raymond Meyer with John T Goldthwait, Ohio University Press (Athens, GA), 1989, p 301.
2. Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale (eds), *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions*, Routledge (London), 2012, pp 12–33, 288–97.
3. Jennifer Hill, 'Six Degrees of Intervention', in *The Double Dimension: Heritage & Innovation*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, (Canberra), 2004, pp 63–83.
4. Jonathan D Sime, 'Creating Places or Designing Spaces?', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 6 (1), March 1986, pp 49–63.
5. Rosemary Ross Johnston, 'Landscape as Palimpsest, Pentimento, Epiphany…', *CREArTA*, 5 (1), 2005, pp 4–22.
6. Daniel K Brown, 'Narrative Architectural Design: Research Methods and Processes for Storytelling': https://vimeo.com/358559771.
7. 'Sentinels+Settings': https://danielkbrown.tumblr.com.
8. Daniel K Brown, 'The Voice of Architecture: A Moment In and Out of Time', 2018: https://vimeo.com/267943510.
9. http://cargocollective.com/danielkbrown and www.instagram.com/danielkbrownarchitecture.
10. Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* [1985], trans Alfred Birnbaum, Kodansha (Tokyo), 1991.
11. Jean Giono, *Que ma joie demeure (Joy of Man's Desiring)*, Bernard Grasset (Paris), 1935, p 27.
12. Nedim Gürsel, 'The Graveyard of Unwritten Books', trans Alberto Manguel, *Index on Censorship*, 25 (6), 1996, pp 124–32. Original work 'Son Tramvay' published in *Son Tramvay*, Can Yayinlari (Istanbul), 1991.
13. Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, Scholastic Point (London), 1995.
14. Zeyar Lynn, 'My History Is Not Mine', in Ko Ko Thett and James Byrne (eds), *Bones Will Crow: 15 Contemporary Burmese Poets*, Arc Publications (Todmorden), 2012, pp 148–9.
15. Edward M Forster, 'The Machine Stops', *The Oxford and Cambridge Review*, Archibald Constable & Co (London), Vol 7, November 1909, pp 83–121.
16. Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *The Hand of the Engraver: Albert Flocon Meets Gaston Bachelard* [2016], trans Kate Sturge, State University of New York Press (Albany, NY), 2018.
17. *Ibid*, back cover.
18. Alan Lightman, *Einstein's Dreams*, Vintage (London), 1992.
19. Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton, *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*, John Wiley & Sons (New York), 1998, p 7.
20. Raimund Abraham, *[Un]built*, Springer (New York), 1996, p 101.
21. Giuseppe Terragni, 'Relazione sul Danteum' [1938], in Thomas Schumacher, *The Danteum: A Study in the Architecture of Literature*, Princeton Architectural Press (Princeton, NJ), 1985, p 97.

Architectural 'engraving tools' scratch the tragic story of an abandoned strip mine onto the scarred New Zealand terrain of Quartz Reef Point at Lake Dunstan, Central Otago District – an allegorical 'engraving plate' with a tale to tell. Clockwise from upper left: the bridge, the burin, the vessel, the observatory and the matrix.
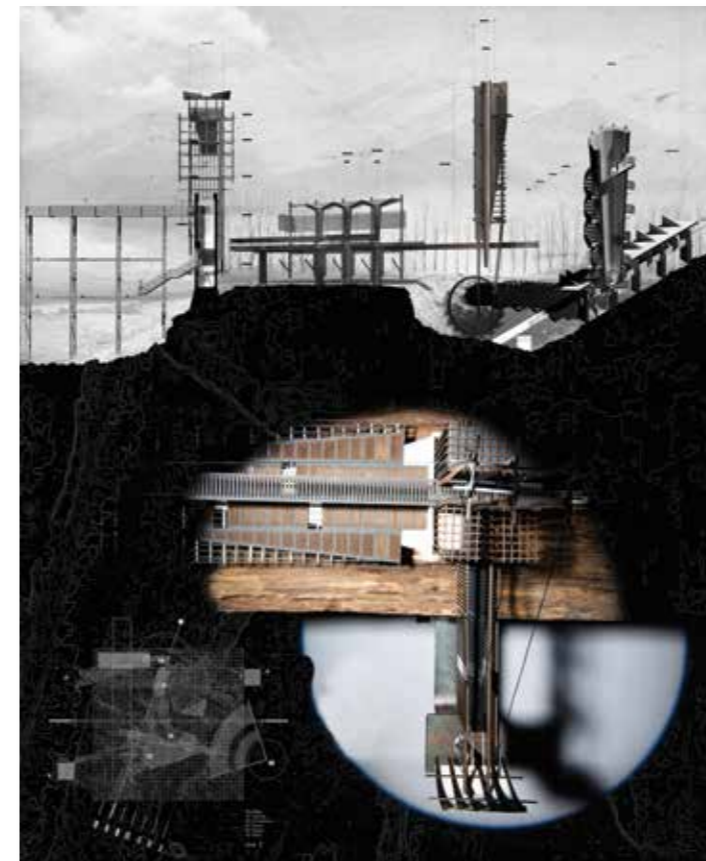
Daniel K Brown received his MArch from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. He is Professor of Design Studio at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His research investigates allegorical architecture – design as storytelling – situating architecture within the realm of social and cultural activism. A five-year retrospective of his work was showcased in the Italian Pavilion at the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale. Prior to entering academia, Brown was Vice-President of Emilio Ambasz and Associates in New York. He has won numerous international research fellowships including the Fulbright, as well as 12 teaching awards including the New Zealand National Award for Sustained Excellence in Tertiary Teaching.

Jane Burry is an architect and Dean of the School of Design at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. She is lead author of book *The New Mathematics of Architecture* (Thames & Hudson, 2010), editor of *Designing the Dynamic* (2013) and co-author of *Prototyping for Architects* (Thames & Hudson, 2016). She has authored over a hundred other publications. She has practised, taught, supervised and researched internationally, focusing on the use of data and computation to understand and shape a more liveable and sustainable built environment.

Nat Chard is Professor of Experimental Architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL), following professorships at the Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen, University of Manitoba and the University of Brighton. His work has been published and exhibited internationally.

Evan Douglis is Dean of the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York, as well as the principal of **Evan Douglis Studio LLC.** Prior to his leadership appointment at RPI in 2009, he was Chair of the undergraduate department at Pratt Institute, a visiting professor and director of the Architecture Galleries at Columbia University, and a visiting professor at The Cooper Union. He has received the prestigious John Q Hejduk Award from Cooper Union and has been recognised numerous times by *DesignIntelligence* as one of the 30 Most Admired Educators in architectural education.

Riet Eeckhout currently holds a postdoctoral research position at the Faculty of Architecture of KU Leuven in Belgium. As a researcher she exhibits, publishes and writes about her drawings from within the discipline of architecture. She is a guest speaker and teacher at a number of international universities and conferences where she talks on her research in relation to practice. Her drawings have been exhibited internationally including at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Galerie d'Architecture in Paris, Tchoban Foundation – Museum of Architectural Drawing in Berlin, Architectural Museum of the Technical University of Berlin, and Art Omi: Architecture in Ghent, New York.

Mark Garcia is the Senior Lecturer in MArch Histories/Theories/Futures at the University of Greenwich in London. He has held academic posts at the University of Oxford and at the Royal College of Art in London in the departments of architecture and interiors. He has lectured and exhibited works in Japan, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany and the US. He is the guest-editor of *AD Architextiles* (Nov/Dec 2006), *AD Patterns of Architecture* (Nov/Dec 2009) and *AD Future Details of Architecture* (July/Aug 2014), and editor of *The Diagrams of Architecture* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010). His 2017 solo show on the architectures of Zaha Hadid was held at the College of Architecture, Art and Planning at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He is currently undertaking his PhD on the '21st-Century Posthuman Design of Spacecraft' at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Nicolas Hannequin is an alumnus of the *École Spéciale d'Architecture* (ESA) in Paris. His works as an independent architect are in France, the US, Belgium and Mexico. He has been an Associate Professor of the Confluence Institute for Innovation and Creative Strategies in Paris since 2015, working closely with its founder Odile Decq as the academic advisor of the school. He has also held the position of Adjunct Professor of the Master of Urban Strategies at Sciences-Po in Paris since 2014, and has regularly contributed to publications including *The European Spectator*, *Raison présente* and *Espace Temps*.

Perry Kulper is an architect and Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He was a faculty member of the Southern California Institute of Technology (SCI-Arc) in Los Angeles for 17 years. His interests include the generative potential of architectural drawing, the different spatial opportunities offered by using diverse design methods, and broadening his conceptual range. He was the Sir Banister Fletcher Visiting Professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL in 2018–19. In 2013 he published *Pamphlet Architecture 34 – Fathoming the Unfathomable: Archival Ghosts and Paradoxical Shadows* with Nat Chard. They are currently at work on a new book to be published by UCL Press.

Elena Manferdini is principal of Atelier Manferdini, and has 20 years of professional experience in architecture, public art, design and education. She currently teaches at SCI-Arc where she serves as the Graduate Programs Chair. In 2019 she was honoured with the ICON Award as part of the LA Design Festival, a prize that recognises iconic women who have made an indelible mark on Los Angeles, culture, and society in general through their work, character and creative leadership. With a body of work that spans various scales and disciplines of design, her eponymous atelier has completed projects over three continents. She loves art, technology and inventions, and believes deeply in the positive power of education, community outreach and creative collaboration.

Mark Morris is Head of Teaching and Chair of the Senior Management Team at the Architectural Association (AA) in London. His research focuses on questions of visual representation in the context of the history of architectural education. He previously taught architectural theory and design at Cornell University's College of Architecture, Art and Planning where he served as Director of Graduate Studies and Faculty Director of Exhibitions. He is a member of the V&A Museum's Architectural Models Network and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Academic Publications Panel.

Hani Rashid is a professor of architecture at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna where he heads up the Studio Hani_Rashid and the Deep_Futures Lab. He has held many prestigious visiting professorships including the Kenzo Tange Chair for Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD). In 2000 he co-represented the US at the 7th Venice Architecture Biennale. He has also been a member of the Aga Khan Steering Committee, has served as President and Head of the Board of the Kiesler Foundation (NYC/Vienna), and is a practising architect in New York City having founded his firm Asymptote Architecture with his partner Lise Anne Couture in 1989.

Michael Young is an architect and educator practising in New York City where he is a founding partner of the architectural design studio Young & Ayata. Young & Ayata has received a Progressive Architecture award, the Design Vanguard Award and Young Architects Prize. He is currently an Assistant Professor at The Cooper Union. He was previously the Louis I Kahn Visiting Assistant Professor at Yale University, and has taught studios and seminars at Princeton University in New Jersey, SCI-Arc and Columbia University. He is author of the book *The Estranged Object* (Graham Foundation, 2015), and has published numerous essays. He was the 2019–20 Rome Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Rome.