

# INFLECTION

JOURNAL OF THE MELBOURNE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Inflection

Features:

Bernard Cache  
John Mandle Architects + NADAAA  
Peter Malatt of 6° Architects  
Alex Sejenitsch  
RCR Architects

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## **Jannette Le & Mond Qu (UDMK):**

United Make (UDMK) is an experimental think-tank and multi-disciplinary studio that explores design through the act of making. UDMK fabricates and designs experiences from small-scale furniture to large-scale speculations. UDMK looks at translating the intangible to the material, crafting the now, and becoming the digital blacksmiths of the future.

## **Stefan Mee:**

Stefan joined John Wardle Architects in 1993, was appointed Principal in 2006 and leads many aspects of design in the practice. He is very experienced in collaborating with other architects and disciplines and is at the forefront of many JWA projects. As a Principal, Stefan contributes to the direction of the practice including its management and culture.

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AnnMarie Brennan teaches architectural theory and design subjects at the Melbourne School of Design. Publications include *Perspecta 32: Resurfacing Modernism* and *Cold War Hot Houses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy*. She received graduate degrees from Yale and Princeton University and is the academic advisor for the MSD journal *Inflection*.

## **Bernard Cache:**

Bernard Cache, born in 1958, developed the concept of non-standard architecture in his book *Earth Moves* published by MIT Press in 1995. This concept was given the name OBJECTILE by Gilles Deleuze in his book *On Leibniz: The Fold*. In 1996 he founded the company Objectile to conceive and manufacture non-standard architecture components. He is now Associate Professor at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

## **William Cassell:**

William Cassell is a musician, photographer and Masters of Architecture student at the Melbourne School of Design. He attributes a keen interest in the human condition in the built environment to years of photographing people while visiting cities, travelling the world.

## **Ricardo Hernandez:**

By the time this issue is published, Ricardo will have hopefully just completed his Master of Architecture degree at the University of Melbourne. Either way, Ricardo would like to congratulate the *Inflection* team on the occasion of this inaugural issue. Good job!

## **Stephanie Kitingan:**

Stephanie graduated with a Master of Architecture at Melbourne University; She is currently a tutor in the MArch course, is a graduate at Nest Architects, and volunteers at CoDesign Studio. She dabbles in furniture making, teaches yoga, and has an interest in theories of participatory design, substance, meaning and phenomenology.

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Peter Malatt is a founding member of Six Degrees, since 1992 exploring human needs, high and low design, recycling and brutalism within a collective framework. He is currently Victorian President of the Australian Institute of Architects.

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**Emiliano Roia:**

Emiliano Roia was born in 1971 in Rome, Italy and has a degree in Architecture from University La Sapienza of Rome. In 2001 he established the architecture firm MORQ with Matteo Monteduro and Andrea Quagliola. Emiliano currently lives in Australia, sharing his time between MORQ, his role as Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia, and his photographic projects.

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Alex Selenitsch is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning, University of Melbourne. He practices as a poet, sculptor and architect; writes reviews of art, craft, and design for various journals and sites. His most recent solo exhibition was *fragrance permeates the garments*, at the Wunderlich Gallery, ABP, in September 2014.

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Daphne Spanos is a first-year Master of Architecture student at the University of Melbourne. Previously, she studied media and communications – an odd combination solely useful for architectural writing.

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Nader Tehrani is professor of architecture at MIT, where he served as the Head of the Department 2010-2014. He is also principal of NADAAA, a practice dedicated to the advancement of design innovation. He has received numerous awards, including the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award. recently NADAAA was ranked no. 1 in design for *Architect Magazine's* Top 50 Firms in the United States.

**Lucy Warnock:**

Lucy Warnock is a director of architecture studio WARNOCKWISE and is a PhD candidate at Monash University. Her architectural research is developed through creative design practice to consider antagonistic narratives of industrial productivity and spatial identity. Lucy has worked for leading architecture offices in both Australia and Japan.

**RCR Architects:**

Architects Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta founded RCR ARQUITECTES in 1987 in Olot, Spain. They achieved the National Award in Architecture in Catalonia in 2005, they are Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the République Française since 2008, and Honorary Fellows of both the American Institute of Architecture (2010), and Royal Institute of British Architects (2012).

**Jonathan Russell:**

Jonathan Russell is a Master of Architecture student at the University of Melbourne, and an architectural student at ROTHELOWMAN. Prior to architecture, Jonathan studied Urban Geography at Monash University and the University of California, Berkeley.

**Andrew Simpson:**

Andrew Simpson is an architect, interior designer and principal of Andrew Simpson Architects. Educated at Melbourne University, RMIT and Harvard, he was a Diploma Unit Master at the AA and taught architectural design studio in Australia and North America. He was lead consultant to Monash University during the feasibility study into developing their now highly regarded architecture program.

**Ross T. Smith:**

Ross T. Smith received his PhD from the University of Melbourne. His theoretical interests in pedagogy include phenomenology and experiential learning, with a leaning towards remote studio environments. In 2014 he is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Gerphau Laboratoire (*Philosophie-Architecture-Urbain*), L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris La Villette, France.

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John Wardle is the principal and founder of John Wardle Architects. He is an Adjunct Professor in Architecture at both the University of Melbourne and the University of South Australia, a frequent lecturer and speaker, guest critic, AIA Awards jury member and contributor to the architecture community locally and internationally.

**Lee Yang Yang:**

Lee Yang Yang is passionate about architecture that has a respect for place and memory. A Malaysian-born architectural graduate at award-winning Philip Stejskal Architecture in Fremantle, Western Australia, he taught at his alma mater Curtin University, teaches children architecture at House of Arc and has volunteered his time at CoDesign Studio.

# EDITORIAL

*Jonathan Russell, Ariani Anwar and William Cassell*

What is *Inflection*? On a prosaic level, *Inflection* is the new student-run journal of architecture and the built environment from the Melbourne School of Design. *Inflection* is a themed journal, to be published annually and features work from students, academics and practitioners. Crucially, *Inflection* is also a physical object – an artefact to be touched, handled and read in depth. At a time when our engagement with architectural ideas is increasingly digital and transient, *Inflection* offers a different, slower form of discourse and in doing so, hopes to facilitate and engage in conversations about the built environment both locally and internationally. For this first issue, our title is also our theme; we have gathered an array of perspectives on the word, finding diversity and idiosyncrasy, but also considerable thematic overlap. Future issues will follow this pattern: a single word as provocation for an open field of responses. But what do we really mean by the word “inflection”? What can it tell us about architecture and the built environment?

To approach an answer, let us draw a line. Lower your pen and trace a wave across this page, smoothly oscillating between peaks and troughs. Halfway between high and low is the inflection point: the smooth moment where our graph begins to change course. *Inflection* is about this moment, where change begins and new paths are charted. However rather than simply marking moments of change, *Inflection* aims to enable them, by bringing diverse but related perspectives together in a single volume. In this way, we hope to spark a multitude of small moments which, in aggregate, can build new ways of seeing the world.

In this issue, the word 'inflection' serves as our point of departure. The authors featured here enter into conversations on edge conditions, ambiguous boundaries and the role and nature of transitions. At pivotal moments of change the boundaries of conventions can be interrogated and re-written. In his piece on the Korean Demilitarized Zone, Dongsei Kim urges us to question the nature of national boundaries by redrawing and distorting maps, while Lucia Jalón uses the example of Rosa Parks to sketch an expanded architectural field in which the human body itself can challenge existing physical and social boundaries. The critique of architecture's boundaries is expanded in Ricardo Hernandez' call for an architectural insurgence, and bolstered by Samira Daneshvar's reflection on the relationship between space, agency and the human body through her sequence of observations on the medical white coat.

At points of change, when new directions begin to be charted, there is a rich potential to harness forces of ambiguity and uncertainty. Thomas Mical celebrates the potential for uncertainty or risk in the design process, an insight expanded upon by Ross T. Smith in his valorisation of the ambiguous condition of *le vague*. Bernard Cache – the progenitor of inflection in architectural theory – admires this moment as one reflecting both change and continuity. The photographs of select RCR Architects projects by Emiliano Roia capture the rich potential of spatially ambiguous moments, while Andrew Simpson's House 7 reconsiders suburban housing typologies through the creation of hybrid spaces.

When boundaries lie open for re-interpretation, a reflection on the past is an important tool. The unstable relationship between past and future features in Christina Caré Calgaro's essay on historical reconstruction in Stuttgart, and reappears in Lee Yang Yang's piece on urban development in Perth. At moments of transition visions of the future provide foundations for future development. In conversation, Peter Malatt discusses Melbourne's shifting architectural culture, and Nader Tehrani, John Wardle and Stefan Mee see the MSD's new physical home as a pedagogical catalyst, shifting the culture of the school. On a philosophical level, Stephanie Kitingan suggests the metaphor of henosis as a means to re-connect architecture with its potential to define our place in the world, while at a smaller scale Alex Selenitsch traces the transition of a chair from functional object to artwork and back again, an inflection physically recorded in holes, patches and scars.

Individually, the pieces collected here stand as insightful variations on a theme. Taken together, they form something much richer: a constellation of ideas to be parsed, discussed, compared and expanded upon. In the same way a graph turns around its point of inflection, discourse turns around these rich moments of ambiguity and multiplicity, and it is in this still moment that the first stirrings of change can occur. Like all journals, all change starts somewhere. *Inflection* starts here: we leave the change to you.

# ON SECRETS, PRAYERS AND STUDENT JOURNALS

*AnnMarie Brennan*

When the editors of this first issue of *Inflection* sat down to write a proposal for a new student-edited journal, they explained the reasons behind their initiative. The purpose of this publication would be to “harness the multiple meanings and nuances in a moment of change as it exists in the Melbourne School of Design,” as well as signify the moment of transition from undergraduate studies to a professional school.

Another moment of change for the Faculty is the creation of a new building, and the student editors envisioned the journal as a parallel contribution to the school’s new identity. The journal would accomplish this by creating a different type of space, a platform for student inquiry and discussion juxtaposed with contributions from academics, research students, and professional architects.

This compulsion to create another type of space, a space of discourse, is a curious motive, and I wondered why they felt so strongly the need to create a text, a journal no less, to celebrate the creation of the new building. Does the new Architecture, Building, and Planning building, this edifice of learning, require a textual companion to punctuate this moment? What would a publication add to the student experience in this age of social media and blogs?

Opposite:  
*Written Prayers*  
Western Wall, Israel  
Photograph: Yarin Kirchen



This relationship between architecture in relation to print is a recurring theme within architectural discourse, and most discussions begin with an obligatory reference to Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831). A particular passage that creates anxiety among architects is a proclamation by the novel's main character, archdeacon Claude Frollo. Pointing to a book published from the newly invented printing press and then signaling to the Notre-Dame cathedral, he proclaims "*Ceci tuera cela*" – "This will kill that. The Book will destroy the Edifice," thus forecasting the replacement of the cathedral with the invention of the printing press.

So what exactly does Frollo (or Hugo) mean with this statement? Most scholars believe that Hugo is pointing to the impending shift that the Enlightenment would bring about, the transformation from a world based upon the Church as the central authority figure in Europe, to one replaced with the institutions of Knowledge and Reason and the corresponding civic associations of the secular world that would follow.

But to truly understand Hugo's intention, we should place ourselves in front of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and examine what we are actually seeing. The Cathedral in this passage is not only symbolic of the power of the Church at that time, but its significance lies in the fact that it served generations of its community as a communication device; a 3-dimensional story board carved into the stone walls containing the stories and parables of the yet another book, the Bible. Therefore it is in this text that Hugo not only foreshadows the shift from a religious to a secular-based society in Europe through the distribution of knowledge, but also signals architecture's receding role as a central disseminator of information.

Despite Hugo's claim, there always has been a visceral inclination for people to ascribe and inscribe information onto and into walls. This communicative function of architecture does not simply exist on the surface of walls, but also occurs within the real and imagined space in-between them; voids which appear to contain another type of mystical, liminal space with access to higher powers. At the Western Wall in Israel, visitors go to pray and literally embed their written prayers on scraps of paper into the cracks and crevices of this wall. This was a practice initiated in 1743 by a student of Ohr Hachaim. The student, traveling from Morocco to Jerusalem, was instructed to go to the wall and place the note containing the prayer from his teacher, which read, "Dear God, please let my student Azulai become successful." His prayer was apparently answered as Azulai would go on to become known as Hida, the rabbinical scholar.

Hugo's 1831 novel also serves as a lament – a demonstration, through historical analogy, of how architecture had lost its ability to communicate. This loss was evidenced in the manner in which architects of that time reproduced Neo-classicism or Neo-Byzantine styles rather than develop designs illustrative of the contemporary moment. A case in point is the façade by Melbourne architect Joseph Reed, which is a wall fragment from the Bank of New South Wales originally built in Collins Street, Melbourne in 1856. When the Bank of New South Wales was cited for demolition in 1932, the Reed façade was kept and transferred to another location at the University of Melbourne, where it would be featured as part of the Commerce Building designed in 1938-41 by Public Works Department architect Percy Everett. The façade became part of the Faculty of Architecture, Building, and Planning when the Commerce department moved, and it remains encapsulated in the new Faculty building by John Wardle Architects and NADAAA, completed in 2014.



Above:  
*3-dimensional storyboard*  
Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris  
Photograph: Rafael Laguillo

Although we admire the Reed façade as a surviving fragment of Melbourne's history, an exemplar of craftsmanship, and as an exquisite demonstration of light and shadow through detailed stonework, it is a manifestation of other values from another period and exemplifies the indefinite communicative nature of architectural irrespective of its use and urban context. Joseph Reed was one of Melbourne's most significant architects, designing such important institutional buildings such as the State Library of Victoria (1854), the Melbourne Town Hall (1867), and the Royal Exhibition Building (1880), and therefore it seems appropriate to have his façade as part of the new Faculty building. Yet this is a historic reason, not necessarily an aesthetic one. The façade for the Bank of New South Wales was originally inspired by the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (1560), a library designed by Renaissance architect Jacopo Sansovino. Reed felt that the architecture of the merchant city was an appropriate style to replicate for a Melbourne bank. However one may ask if his decision seems arbitrary. If Reed wanted to base his design on a Venetian building, why not the Zecca, the Venetian Mint located near the library, also by Sansovino? The transient nature of this façade, and its ability to re-appropriate a style from a different time and location, demonstrates Hugo's claim regarding the changing role of architectural style and its ability to communicate something meaningful.

Today, only fragments of banks remain, as this building typology is quickly disappearing. We now conduct our banking inside walls, in front of machines embedded within this liminal space that negotiates the transformation of digitized information into real, material currency. This void between walls is not only limited to the mythical and mysterious, but also it is the place of secrets. Located within one of the post office boxes at the southwest corner of the old Architecture, Building, and Planning building was the original location of Julian Assange's Wikileaks, a fact which demonstrates that even the most slippery of information eventually needs to touch ground and find a home within architecture.

Opposite top  
*Fragment of History*  
Joseph Reed facade, The University of Melbourne  
Photograph: Peter Ashford

Opposite bottom:  
*Original Wikileaks Location*  
Post Office Boxes, The University of Melbourne  
Photograph: Andrius Lipsys

While contemporary architects are still interested in the aesthetic form of architecture, they are not concerned with adhering to a specific style and are more invested in building performance. Yet this does not mean that architecture ceases to communicate with its users, in fact one of the main objectives behind the design of the new Faculty building was to create a structure that would not only communicate, but perform as an instrument in teaching students. This can be seen in the exposed ceilings revealing the air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, and fire services so that students can see how systems are integrated into the building. A series of sensors have also been placed in the walls and ceiling of the newly transplanted Japanese Room. These sensors measure and record the temperature, humidity, heat exchange, and CO<sub>2</sub> levels and communicate this information through an interface located at eye level.

Based on both the historic and current use of walls as a means of communication, Hugo's passage is the description of one moment in the perpetually fluctuating relationship between architecture and information. Both the old and new building for the Faculty of Architecture, Building, and Planning demonstrates this fluid capacity of architecture as a container and communicator of information. We cannot claim that the book has killed architecture, but in fact it seems that the two have merged and intermingled. This is a relationship that will always be in flux, with the two entities continuing to dissolve into one another. So this leads us back to the original question: what purpose does this new journal serve in a new building? Like most other student architectural journals, it will perform as a type of discursive cornerstone containing a record of the debates, events, and activities of the Faculty and serve as a vehicle to distribute these lessons beyond the walls of the school to an international audience. These are the usual functions of a student journal recounted in many editorials. However its true task, which is rarely communicated but is in fact a foundational premise of most student publications, is to perform as a repository of student hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future, and, like the prayers inserted into the crevices of the Western Wall, it is the space where their teachers place their wishes for their students' success.



# VISIONS | CHANGE

## REFLECTING ON INFLECTION

*2014 Exhibition, Wunderlich Gallery,  
The University of Melbourne*

As a new student journal, *Inflection* aims to create a platform for discourse at the Melbourne School of Design: to facilitate a dialogue between text, image and event. In this first issue selected images from the 2014 Visions|Change exhibition act as scattered provocations that interweave a visual narrative through the text, reflecting on the theme of inflection.

Curated from an open competition, the exhibition collated work from a range of international designers responding to their interpretation of inflection. Individually, each piece represents a fragment of meaning, a personal perspective on inflection and its relationship to change and visions of the future. When taken as a whole the exhibition explored themes of layering, multiplicity, gradualism, ambiguity.

Interspersed with the written pieces throughout this journal, Visions|Change is intended to activate an open visual and textual discourse, and to provoke a reflection on the complexity of the term inflection.



Overleaf left:  
Sunga Park  
*Martyr's Memorial*  
(Visions|Change 2014)

Overleaf right:  
Ross Jordan  
*Squatting the Highrise*  
(Visions|Change 2014)

Opposite:  
Michal Pecko  
*Spaces Between*  
(Visions|Change 2014)







# INTO ART AND OUT AGAIN

*Alex Selenitsch*

*Photographs by Robert Colvin*

1.

One chair equals one person.

This spatial fact embodies a value that is easily overlooked because we are surrounded by thousands, if not millions, of chairs.

Until the French Enlightenment, the single chair was the seat of Kings, Princes, Bishops, and Generals. Everyone else had to stand, or perch on benches or stools.

In ceremonial spaces, all subordinates, or subjects, had to remain standing. This generalization is given a more complex and subtle description by Witold Rybczynski in his book, *Home*,<sup>1</sup> but the trajectory has resulted in this: a chair is and stands for an individual.

And it does so as a fact and a value.

Alex Selenitsch

*tumble*, 2012

new pine chair, jarrah, spotted gum,  
kwila, masonite, screws

118 x 147 x 75cm

Photograph: Robert Colvin





# FROM INFLECTION TO PROJECTION

If the moment of inflection suggests transition into an uncertain future, the moment after inflection requires something bolder and more concrete – a projection.

All design is an act of projection – it requires us to imagine a world which does not exist and, through our own efforts, attempt to bring that world into existence. It is only through projection that we can move from a reactive mode into an active one: seeing trends, extrapolating present conditions and anticipating futures.

When we begin to look, projection appears everywhere. Brunelleschi, whose Duomo in Florence revolutionised Renaissance architecture and engineering, was simultaneously pioneering perspectival painting by calculating projected lines and planes in two-dimensional space. Today, complex projection mapping can temporarily disrupt the image of our architecture, rendering the meaning of urban space less absolute. Architects, as they always have, will continue to project – telling stories and crafting imaginary worlds for their projects to inhabit, trying to will a different future into being.

For its second annual edition, *Inflection* asks for your projections, offering publishing opportunities for written works, visual pieces or peer-reviewed academic articles. To learn more, and for details on submission requirements, visit us at [inflectionjournal.com](http://inflectionjournal.com).

What is the relationship between architecture's present and its future?

Why do we project?

Are we all just projecting?

In 2015, *Inflection* brings you: Projection.

– JR, AA, WC

INFLECTION is a student-run journal of architecture and the built environment from the Melbourne School of Design and published by AADR - Art Architecture Design Research.

INFLECTION is a space to gather and share ideas.

INFLECTION is a home for provocative thought.

INFLECTION asserts the value of the printed word.

INFLECTION values the discursive voice of students, academics and professionals.

Like all journals, all change starts somewhere.  
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