

MONASH
University

MONASH
ART
DESIGN &
ARCHITECTURE

R:ADAR

REVIEW: ART DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE **RESEARCH IN ACTION** ISSUE 2025

MAADA
RESEARCH
IN ACTION

**We acknowledge
and pay respect
to the Traditional
Owners and Elders—
past, present and
emerging—of the
lands on which
Monash University
operates.**

**We acknowledge
Aboriginal connection
to material and
creative practice on
these lands for more
than 60,000 years.**

Welcome

Coinciding with the launch of the **Research in Action** Symposia, this issue of R:ADAR showcases some of the important projects being undertaken by Monash Art, Design and Architecture PhD candidates. Working with research partners across industry, government and diverse communities the research practices outlined in this edition set out new and dynamic approaches to complex social, cultural, and environmental challenges. This next generation of researchers unleash the transformative potential of their creative and critical practices to provoke change across diverse contexts, including urban planning, construction innovation, design for inclusion, and Indigenous understandings of Country and Place. Research partnerships are also key to the 'real-world' applicability of these projects. By working with stakeholders spanning from neuro-divergent learners, to clinicians and medical imaging experts, and riverfront communities, the projects outlined herein demonstrate our PhD candidates' abilities to reimagine cities, and create safer and healthier communities for a more equitable and responsible future.

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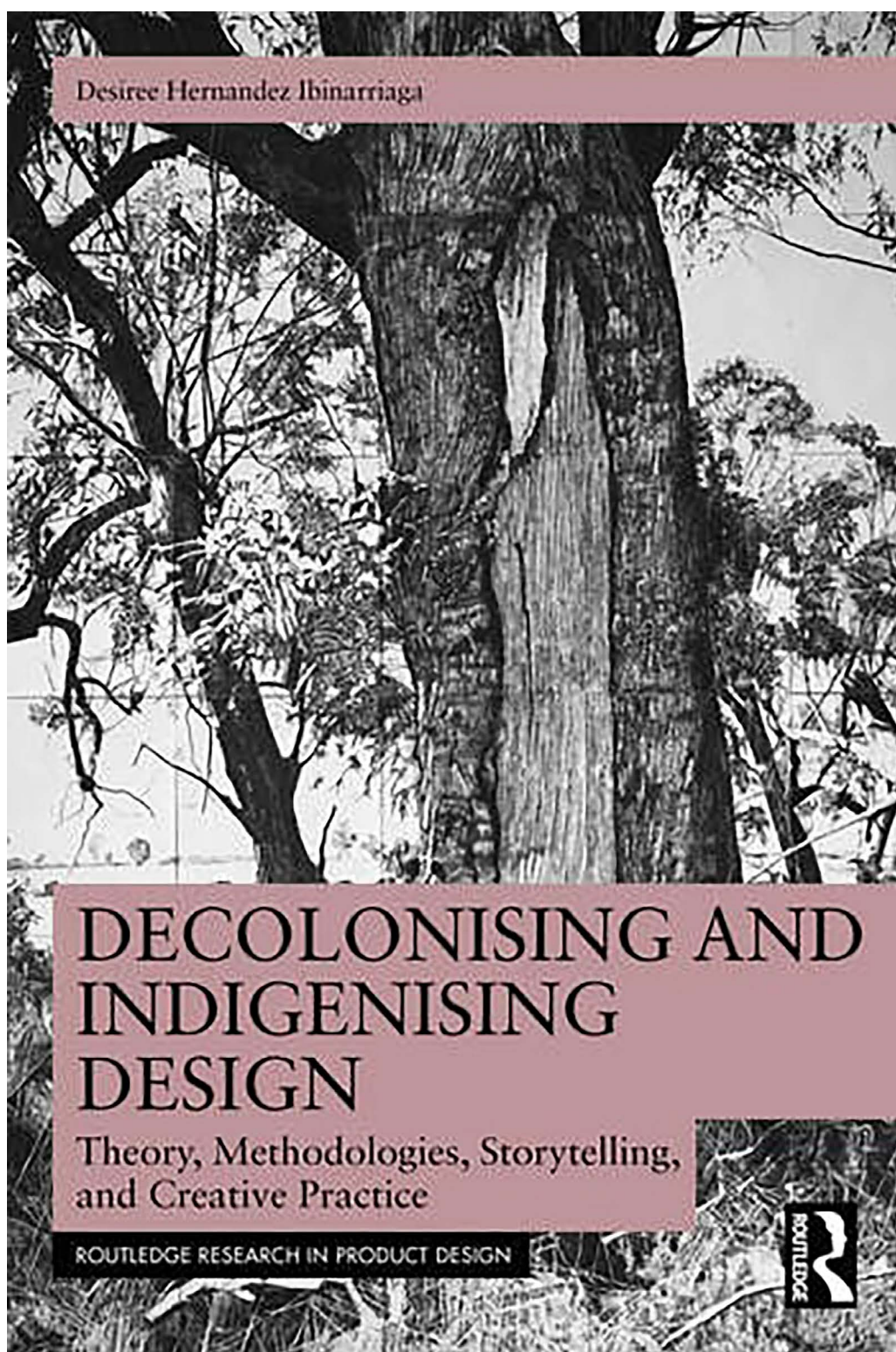
Connect to video using this icon



Connect to additional stories and research using this icon

Supervisor profiles

Desiree Ibinarriaga | Design Tara McDowell | Fine Art Jason Crow | Architecture



Dr Desiree Ibinarriaga, an Indigenous creative practitioner, researcher, and educator, is the Indigenous Higher Degree by Research coordinator and supervisor. Her expertise lies in Indigenous creative practice-led research, focusing on decolonising and Indigenising curricula and research. Her supervision and mentoring has fostered a new generation of researchers adept at navigating Indigenous research methodologies. Dr Ibinarriaga's pedagogy centres on Indigenous self-determination and advancing Indigenous knowledge systems founded on Country/Land. She is the author of the recently published monograph "Decolonising and Indigenising Design" (Routledge 2025).



Dr Tara McDowell is Associate Professor and Director of Curatorial Practice at MADA. The program

she has directed for over a decade has strengthened relationships between industry and the university while training Australia's next generation of cultural leaders. She has been at the forefront of developing the academic discipline of curatorial practice, including fostering outstanding graduate research in this area. In 2023, she was awarded Monash's Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Supervision.



Dr. Jason Crow has close to twenty years of experience in leading and developing higher degree by research courses.

From 2019 to 2025, he was the course coordinator for higher degree research in the department of architecture at Monash University, where he has mentored the development of over thirty early career academics and researchers. His approach to guiding the growth and development of early career researchers is grounded in learning traditional approaches to scholarly research methods and extends to the translation of those methods for applied research, undertaken by project.



Alicia Frankovich, 'The Eye', 2022, Brunswick Baths, as part of Take Hold of the Clouds, curated by Tara McDowell and Fleur Watson. Photo: N Bebbington

HDR Candidate Industry partnership

Maryke Laubscher



Maryke Laubscher is an Industrial Designer and doctoral researcher at Monash Design Health Collab. Her practice-based PhD research focuses on designing deployable healthcare solutions for austere environments, with a specific focus on surgical X-ray and Computed Tomography (CT) equipment for field hospitals. These environments include combat operations, disaster relief and humanitarian aid settings where access to advanced imaging is often critically limited.

The project is supported by a scholarship from Micro-X, an Australian X-ray technology developer, and is conducted in close collaboration with engineers, clinicians, and medical imaging experts. This partnership enables the research to be grounded in real-world technical capabilities while using participatory design methods to address the specific needs of users working in high-pressure, resource-limited environments.

In addition to designing the physical equipment, Maryke's work investigates the surrounding services, systems, and contextual challenges—including portability, sterilisation, usability, and workflow design integration. Her research contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary work seeking to advance mission-customisable medical technologies and improve healthcare access for underserved populations globally.



Above:
Design sprint ideation sketches of X-ray concepts

Right:
Full-scale plywood prototype of imaging-integrated surgical table



HDR Candidate James Cox Scholar

Darcy Zelenko

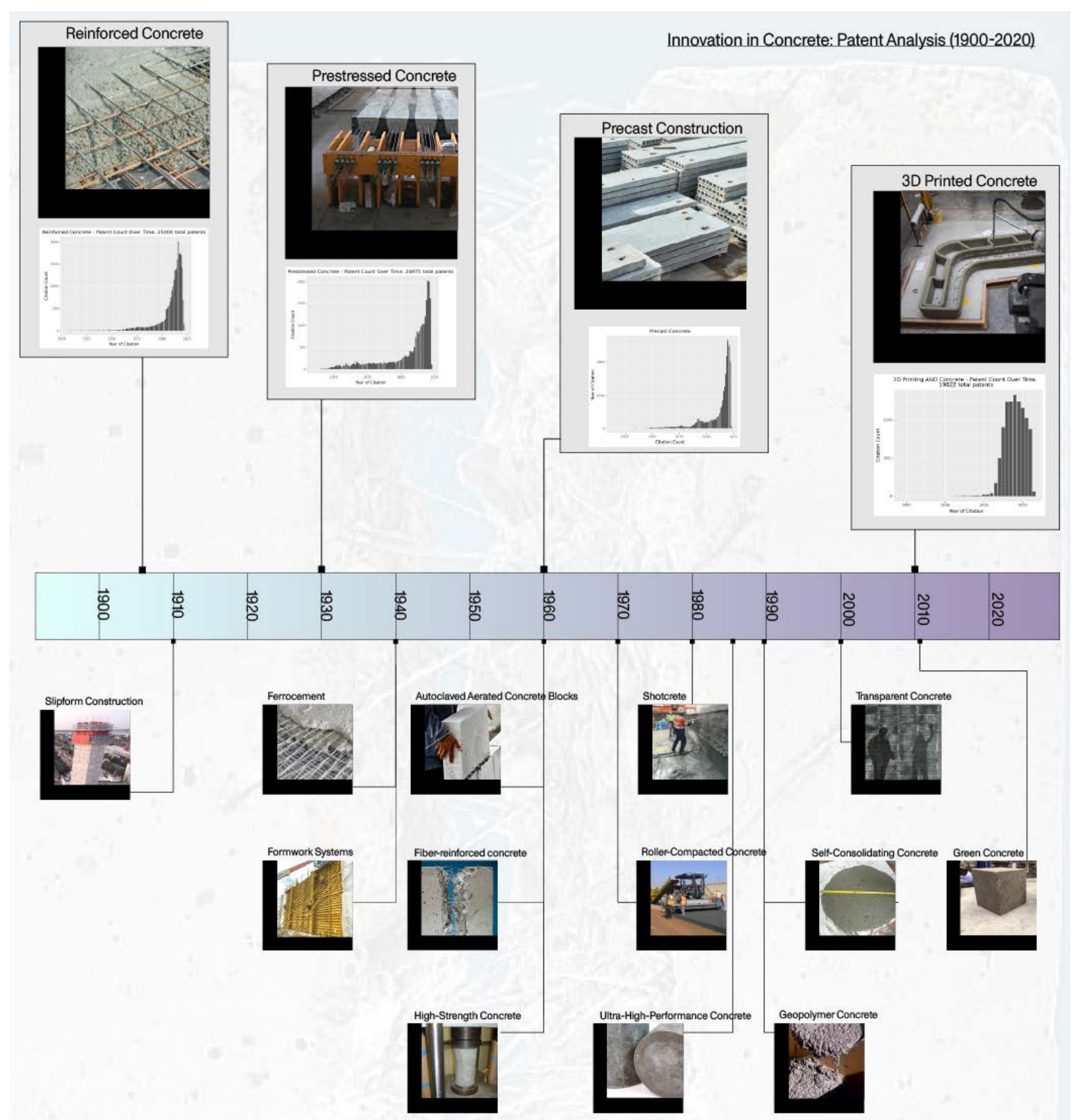


Darcy Zelenko is a PhD candidate and belongs to the Future Building Initiative. His PhD research has concerned the development of a design-based approach to prototyping, to help built environment practitioners to successfully bridge the ‘valley of death’ and implement innovation. Darcy’s PhD research addresses the need to improve productivity in the construction sector and lift the quality of the buildings it outputs, through the enabling innovation pull-through to achieve greater impact and uptake. As a recipient of the James Cox PhD Scholarship in Architecture, Darcy’s research has been undertaken in service of improving the Melbourne urban environment, while maintaining a practical leaning that incorporates an international outlook. Darcy’s thesis draws from work on applied research projects completed in conjunction with Building 4.0 CRC through a top-up scholarship. He uses case studies to illustrate the use of digital and physical prototypes in the built environment, taken from projects covering the topics of Modern Methods of Construction, Mixed Reality, DfMA, AI, and architectural design quality. These are synthesised into a collection of best practices to guide industry towards undertaking a more strategic approach to prototyping to guide innovation implementation.

Below left:
Building Facade Prototype to communicate an MMC-based design system for social housing as part of FBI’s work on Project #95 The Homes NSW MMC Program in conjunction with Building 4.0 CRC.

Below right:
Conceptual Mapping of concrete innovation across the period 1900-2020 and supported through an analysis of patent citations.

The James Cox PhD Scholarship in Architecture was established in 2008 in honour of James Cox. The scholarship has supported significant research projects including investigations in medium-density housing typologies, urban design and planning strategies, and tree-centric urban design.



HDR Candidate Internship program

Lachlan Petras



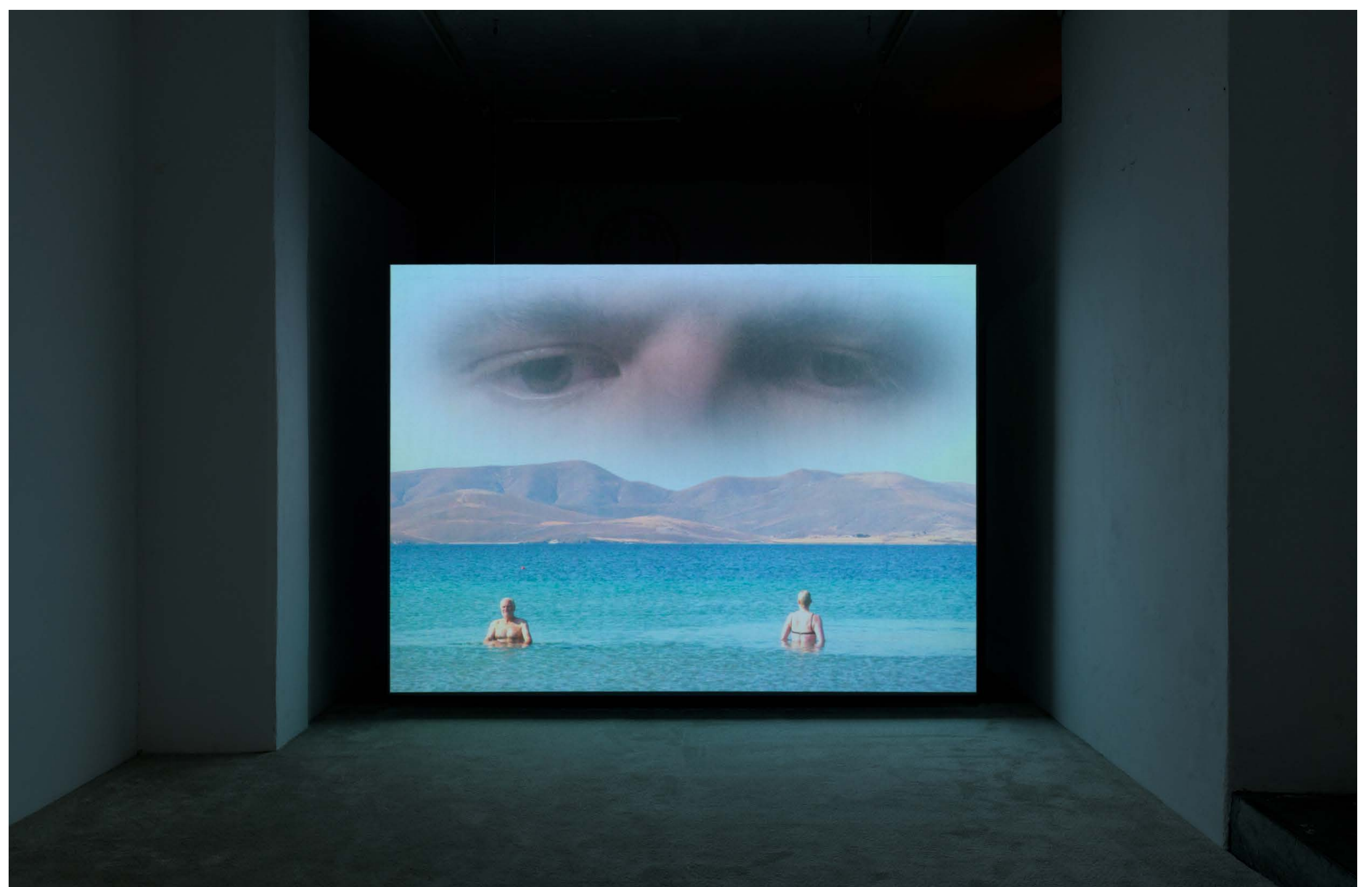
PhD candidate **Lachlan Petras** is involved in the Research Internships Program with the project space 'The Wig' in Berlin. Lachlan's short film, titled 'American Woman' was shot with a film crew in Lemnos, Greece using non-actors in a contemporary narrative of a family drama, where a protagonist American woman character comes looking for her estranged father on the island. The video was shot on a mixed digital format, and is structured in a sequence of shifting styles appropriating details of real events, historical reenactments, documentary footage, and scripted dialogue. Criteria and structures of narrative are explored through references to a variety of moving image media and sound production, such as neorealist film, video-documented operas, concerts, and music-videos.

Projects at 'The Wig' take place both on and off-site. The Wig serves as a research conduit, providing an alternative context to existing curatorial frameworks. Conceptually, The Wig draws on Michel de Certeau's notion of 'La Perruque' introduced in his 1984 book 'The Practice of Everyday Life'. Practicing 'La Perruque' or 'The Wig,' broadly refers to anything undertaken under the guise of work, which may not be always considered work or valued as such. The space is coordinated by artists' Richard Sides, Angharad Williams and writer Gianmaria Andreetta, who involved themselves in the work's post-production and supervised its resolution/realisation as a show. They work screened from 1 May – 19 April, 2025.



Above and right:
Stills from *American Woman*, The Wig,
Berlin, 1.3–19.4.2025

**Tap the icon below
to see more.**



HDR Candidate Monash VYT Winner

Alisdair Gurling



Alisdair Gurling uses design to weave together research on assistive technology, learning mindset shift, and extended cognition to create transformational experiences for neurodivergent learners. His work helps participants reframe limiting narratives through participatory, strength-based methodologies that critically examine relationships between technology and identity.

Alisdair was the winner of the 2024 Monash University's Visualize Your Thesis Competition. His submission outlines how neurodivergent cognition can be amplified rather than "corrected." Through collaborative workshops and creative encounters, he cultivates communities of practice grounded in lived experience and experimental engagement. The work positions neurodivergent learners as active agents in increasingly digitally-mediated educational landscapes, challenging institutional structures and societal discourse surrounding neurodiversity.

Below:
'Sense of Purpose'
workshop images



Above: A still from Visualize Your Thesis. Tap the arrow to watch.

HDR Candidate Wominjeka Djeembana

Juc Romanis



(Dis)connected to Country: Mapping Archives Through Arts Practice is a project that maps the intersections of Place, identity, and family, critically examining the encoded biases embedded within photographic technologies from an Indigenous perspective. Using a practice-led research approach, this project interrogates archival representations and explores the concept of photographs as entities with their own agency. By disrupting and subverting colonial approaches to image-making and mapping systems, **(Dis)connected to Country: Mapping Archives Through Arts Practice** highlights the omission of significant Indigenous Knowledges. Guided by questions such as how

decolonial cartography practices can reconnect family history and Stolen Generations to Pitta Pitta Country, the project examines the transformative potential of creative methodologies in addressing these themes. It explores how archival documents, particularly those from the Tindale Genealogical Collection, enable family mapping practices and strengthen ties to Country. Additionally, the research investigates how arts practices—spanning Spoken Word Yarning, photography, video, and performance—can facilitate connections with Ancestors and Pitta Pitta Country.



Top:
Juc Romanis

Photo:
Jason Hamilton

Left:
(Dis)connected to Country: Mapping Archives Through Arts Practice, MADA Gallery

Photo:
Andrew Curtis

HDR Candidate Building 4.0 CRC

Fernando Pavez



Fernando Pavez's research advocates for new, holistic solutions involving designers, suppliers, builders, demolishers, and waste management firms across the Building Value Chain (BVC) to change how buildings are designed, procured, built, operated, and disposed of. Fernando's research is based on the premise that current environmental approaches in the building sector are insufficient because emissions, resource depletion, pollution, and waste generation need more drastic reductions. Circular Building (CB) addresses these challenges by making buildings require fewer materials, last longer, and use components fit for reuse, repair, or upgrade at end-of-life. However, significant hurdles hamper adoption, including confusion and misunderstandings on definitions, practices, indicators, and even the field name. The Building 4.0 CRC supports this PhD thesis and other improvements to the built environment.

Fernando's thesis develops a conceptual framework that clarifies the field name, principles, strategies, practices, metrics, expected outcomes, and guidelines for CB implementation. Since CB requires changing building delivery processes, the research proposes a series of guidelines for the BVC at the conceptual, strategic, and operational levels and advocates that implementing CB is not a one-off project approach or even by one firm alone. Rather, a network of collaborating organisations is needed—a CB Ecosystem, like the one fostered by the B4.0CRC.

Below:

Copenhagen's Resource Rows housing – an award winning circular project.



HDR Candidate IITB Joint PHD Program

Yash Bohre



Yash Bohre's research explores how adaptive and bespoke assistive technologies can be co-designed for individuals with progressive conditions such as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Situated at the intersection of design, healthcare, and emerging fabrication practices, the work investigates hybrid manufacturing approaches, including 3D printing, 3D knitting, and craft-based techniques, to enable point-of-care customisation and rapid iteration.

His doctoral journey has been shaped by the unique opportunities of a dual-institutional program between Monash University and IIT Bombay. The global experience has offered him access to diverse healthcare ecosystems, research cultures, and maker communities, allowing for a more grounded, transdisciplinary understanding of assistive design.

By engaging with clinicians, caregivers, and individuals living with ALS across India and Australia, the research foregrounds the nuanced, evolving needs of users and the socio-technical barriers they face. Through participatory methods and contextual prototyping, the work highlights how design can mediate between clinical constraints, personal agency, and the systemic delays in assistive technology provision.

The project underscores the potential of responsive, maker-clinician collaborations to challenge the “one-size-fits-all” paradigm and advocates for more agile, localised models of assistive technology development.

Below:

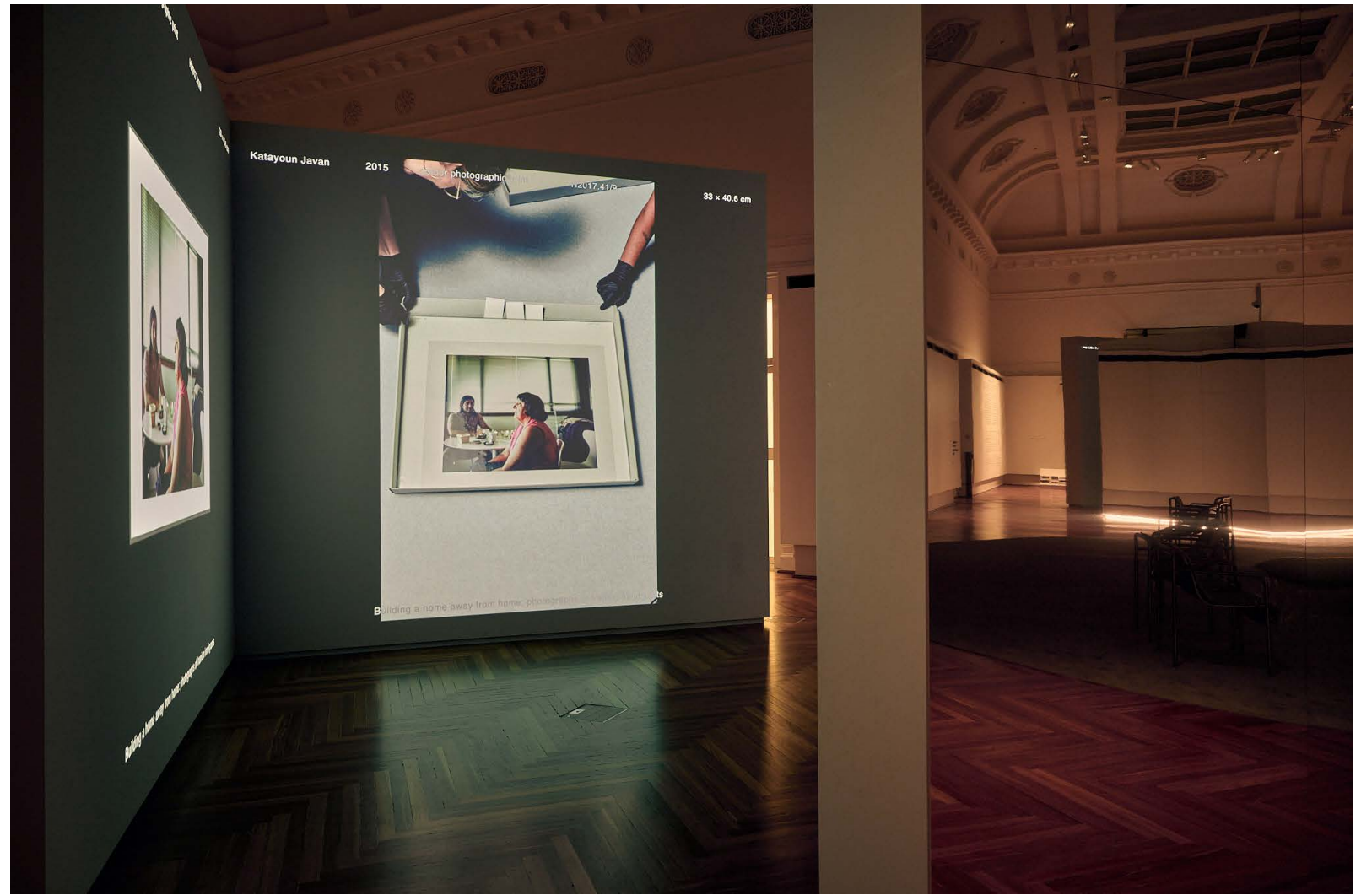
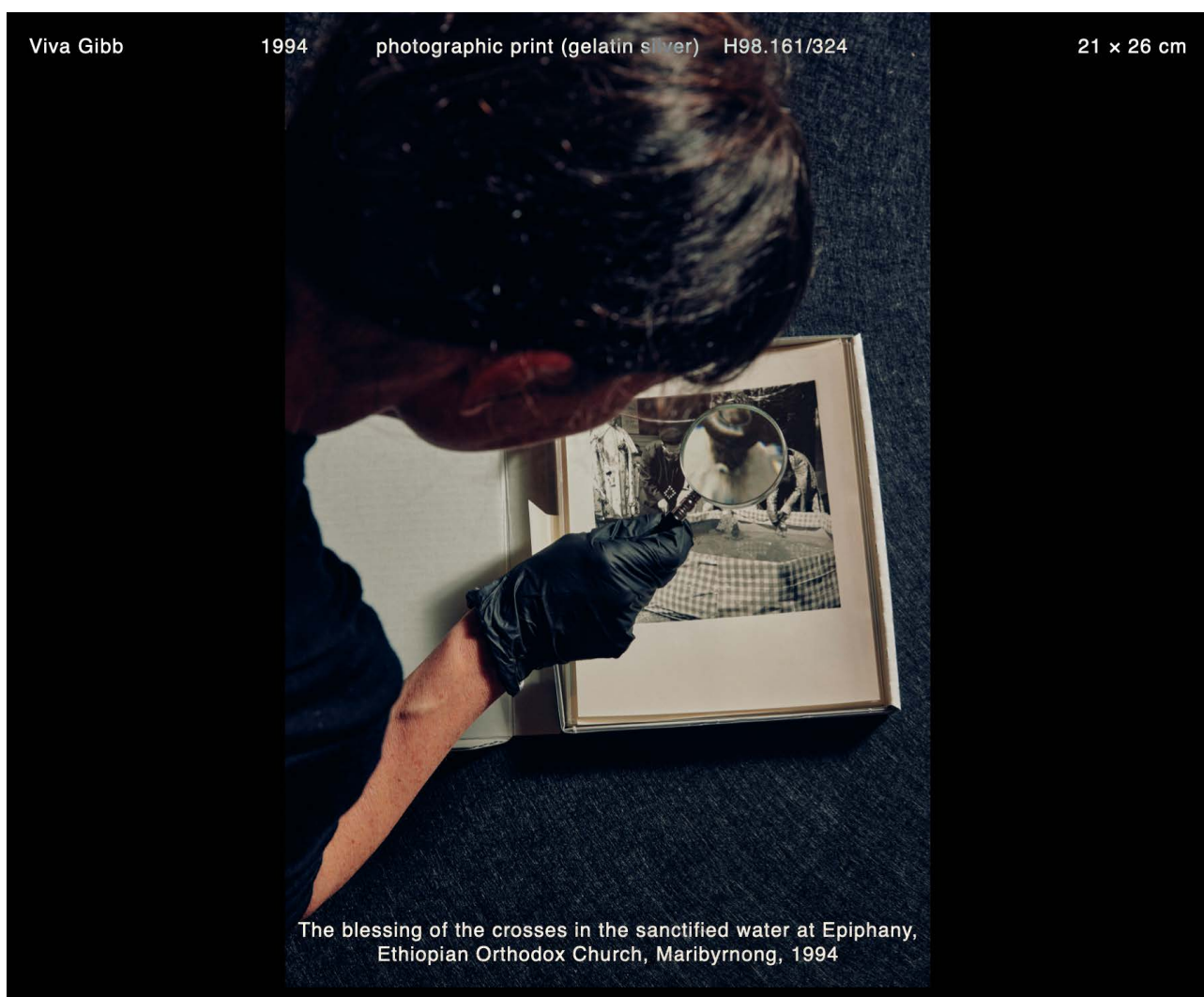
Head and neck support collar designed for individuals with Dropped Head Syndrome, developed using hybrid manufacturing techniques to enable bespoke fitting and modular adjustability.



Alumni Profile

Fine Art | Curation

Kate Rhodes



Kate Rhodes is a Senior Curator at State Library Victoria where, as part of a team, she makes exhibitions, films and digital projects that unpack the State collection. The team frequently commission artists and writers and work closely with creative collaborators in architecture, design and sound composition. Kate's research is focused on new ways of understanding and sharing collections spatially within the context of libraries; their audiences, histories and futures; and what constitutes 'a library exhibition'. Kate is currently examining the history of when private documents become part of the public record – when published and unpublished stories converge at the State Library – for a forthcoming exhibition on the theme of memory. Kate was recently awarded the prestigious Mollie Holman Award for her PhD Thesis.

Top: Still from Mouthful of Dust – a cinematic web experience of Ned Kelly, State Library Victoria.

Above: Mirror: New Views on Photography exhibition, State Library Victoria.

Photo: Eugene Hyland.

Alumni Profile Architecture

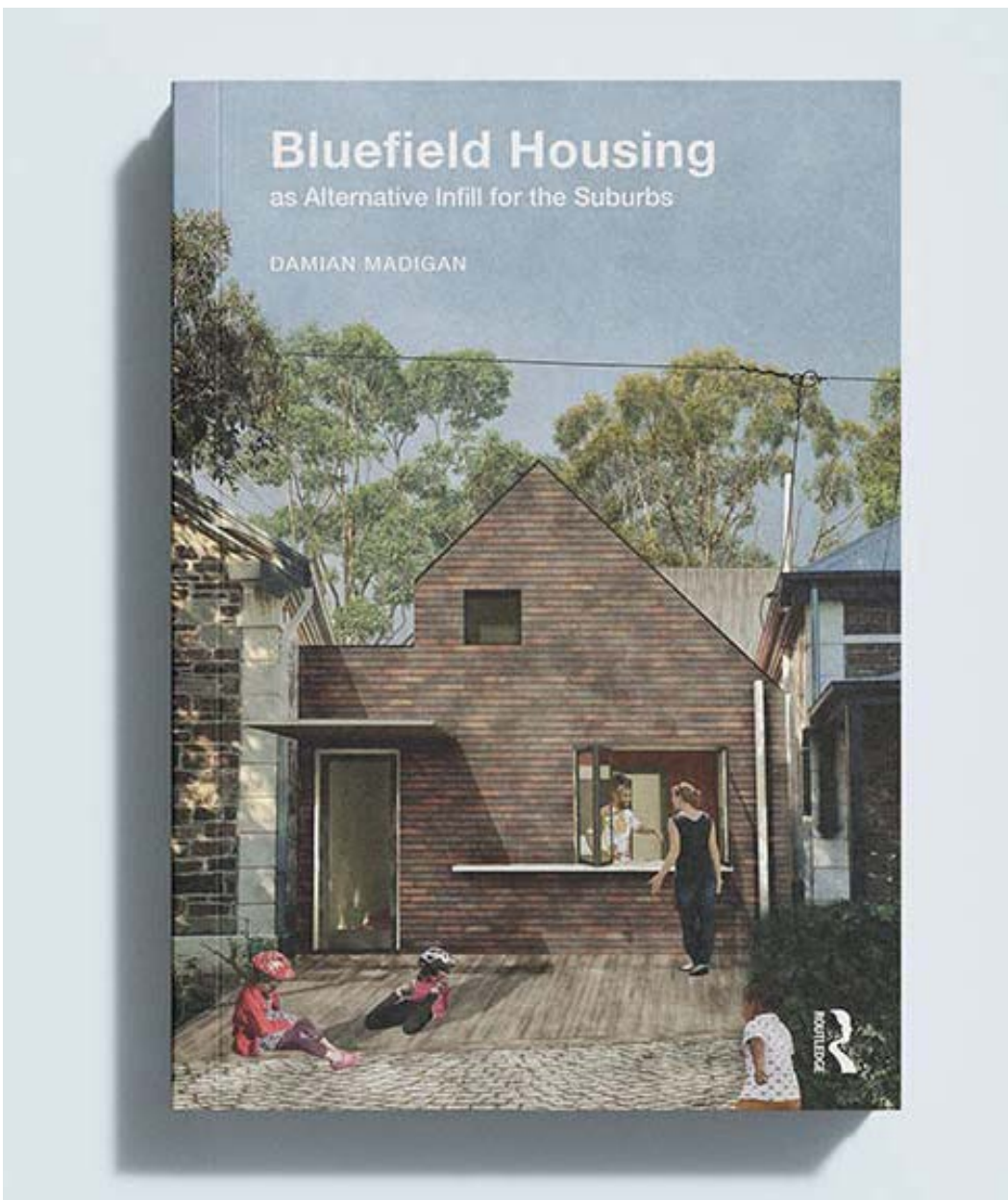
Damian Madigan



Damian Madigan is an Associate Professor in Architecture at the University of South Australia/ Adelaide University, where his research centres around what he calls ‘bluefield housing’. This is an adaptive-reuse co-location infill model for established suburbs first developed in his PhD by major project at Monash University. Since completing the PhD, Damian has undertaken expanded research projects exploring scalability of the model, including his book ‘Bluefield Housing as Alternative Infill for the Suburbs’ (Routledge, 2024), and has focused on partnering with State and Local Governments to write the planning policy for it. In April 2025, ‘Co-located Housing’ was adopted by the Minister for Planning, Housing and Urban Development into South Australia’s State Planning & Design Code as a new Land Use Definition and permitted form of infill development.

Below
Bluefield Housing as Alternative Infill for the Suburbs, 2024

Tap the icon to connect to Routledge



Alumni Profile Design

Lisa Fu



Lisa Fu is the Associate Innovation Director at AKQA, of a small global interdisciplinary team of thinkers and doers. Her time in the agency has spanned sectors such as beauty, retail, QSR, cyber and energy. Her industry practice involves thinking about the ethics and implications of emerging ideas and technologies and embodying this knowledge in experiences, products, services and spaces.

Lisa previously completed a practice based design research PhD called "Getting on board: designing the user experience of bicycles on Melbourne's future metro trains". Her research broadly focused on enabling multimodal transport solutions as part of transitioning to better climate futures. This work was completed in the Monash Mobility Design Lab and the Public Transport Research Group.

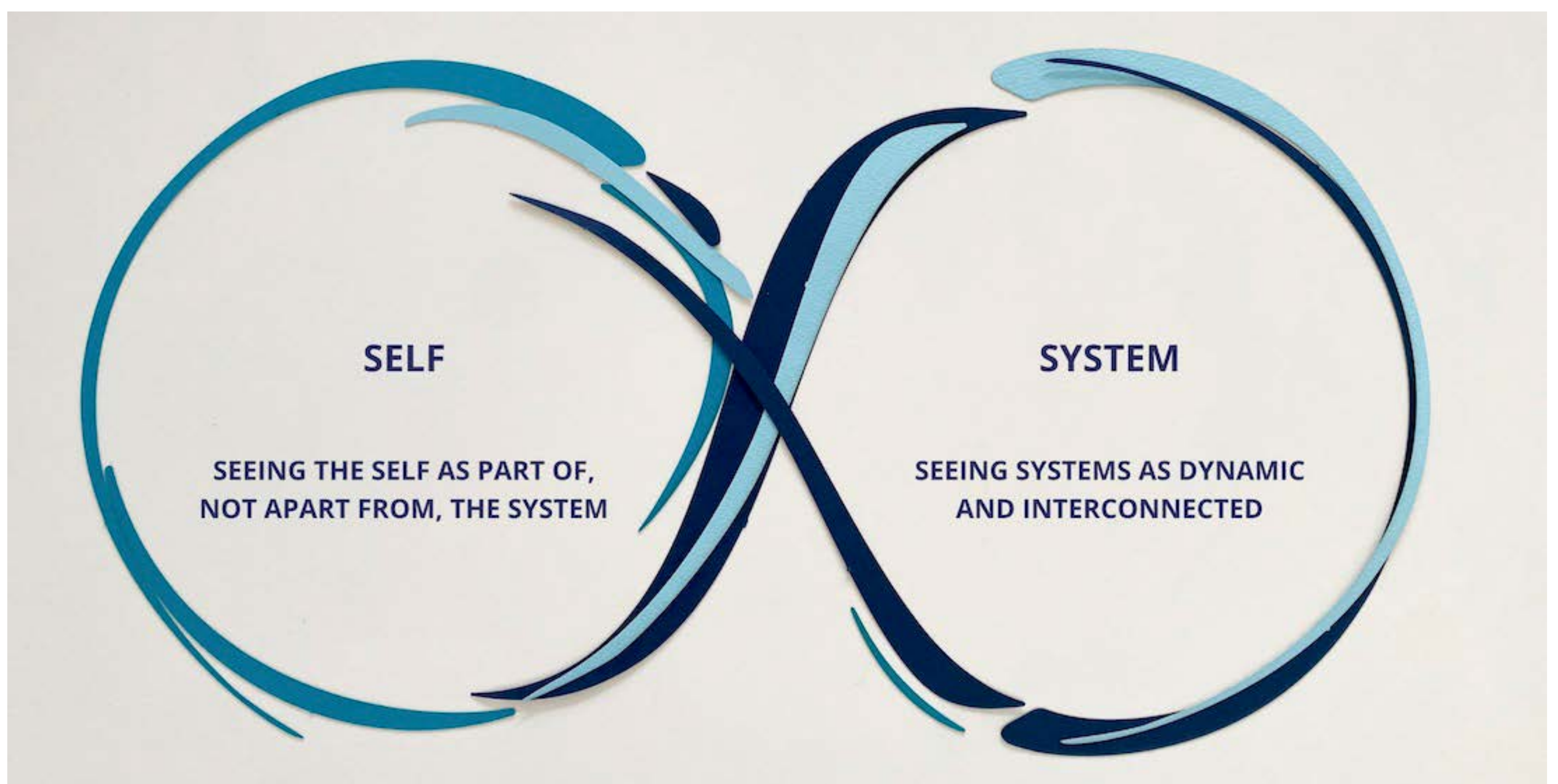
Above:
Getting on board: designing the user experience of bicycles on Melbourne's future metro trains. Australian Good Design Award, "Next Gen" Winner, 2022

HDR Community

WonderLab

WonderLab is more than a community of 20+ PhD candidates and 10 researchers—it's an interdisciplinary creative practice space for making, playing and learning together. Myf Doughty, one of our PhD candidates, gifted us the phrase, "It doesn't have to be this way." We love how this both critically and hopefully invites PhD candidates to frame their research around the "it" they believe could be made better. Finding intrinsic motivation for a PhD is crucial, and locating the shift you'd like to see within a broader conversation about co-designing more just and equitable futures becomes a meaningful way to engage in the hard work of shifting complex systems. Pursuing a PhD can often feel isolating, but initiatives like our Stitch Club sessions foster deeper creative and intellectual connections. In these weekly gatherings, a candidate designs a hands-on playdate that is equally constructive for their research and generative for others. These exploratory sessions enhance research quality and deepen relationships by stitching together our shared lines of inquiry.

We recognise that meaningful connections extend beyond WonderLab. We create paid opportunities for candidates to collaborate on national and international projects or participate in study tours with European and UK candidates. At scale, these partnerships broaden WonderLab's impact in responsible, community-driven research, while locally, they cultivate a culture where belonging, curiosity, co-design, and systems change go hand in hand.



Above:
A shiftwork workshop

Far Left:
Making Space workshop

Left: The Tomorrow Party. A futures workshop

Discover
more

Fostering Industry Innovation



If you would like to learn more about the Industry partner projects, or you are interested in partnering with MADA researchers please connect with the full publication, “Fostering Industry Innovation”