



REAL
MATERIAL
ETHEREAL

**Proceedings of the
Annual Design Research Conference 2019**

Edited by Laura Harper

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We acknowledge and pay respect to the people of the Kulin Nations, the traditional owners of the land on which Monash Art, Design and Architecture is located. At MADA we acknowledge Aboriginal connection to material and creative practice on these lands for more than 60,000 years, and celebrate their enduring presence and knowledge.

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Peer Review

The papers in this volume were presented at the 2nd Annual Design Research Conference, held October 3-5 2019 at Monash University, Australia. All papers accepted for publication were blind reviewed by two referees; papers not accepted by one of the referees were blind reviewed by a third referee whose decision was final. Papers were matched, where possible, to referees in a related field and with similar interests to the authors. A full list of referees is published at the back of these proceedings.

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Photo by Michael Hansmeyer and Hyunchul Kwon

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Foreword

Monash University was very pleased to host Real/Material/Ethereal: the 2nd Annual Design Research Conference, held on the 3rd & 4th of October 2019 in Melbourne. This annual conference invites academics, researchers and design practitioners in architecture, interior, design, landscape architecture, urban design and other related fields to convene for a series of presentations, panel discussions and a conference exhibition.

The inaugural ADR conference was held at University of Sydney in 2018 convened by Professor Mathew Aitchison and Dr Sarah Breen Lovett. In the opening lecture to ADR18, Aitchison identified the aim of the ADR to fill a gap within the field of design research by establishing an annual forum which would support and develop the role of design in both academia and practice. ADR was intended to act as an experimental platform to test and evolve new modes of disseminating and valuing design as research in comparable ways to traditional textual or scientific based research. ADR19 continued and built on the work of ADR18, explicitly encouraging proposals in any and all formats, medium and methods and supporting a diversity of design research outcomes through a combination of conference activities including textual and practice based research papers, lectures, performances and discussion panels and through the conference exhibition. The conference included six keynote speakers, 25 exhibition pieces, 50 peer review research papers and five discussion panels, all taking place in and around the central exhibition in MADA's building G in a busy and vibrant event.

In ADR19, we introduced a conference theme, or rather three themes, Real/Material/Ethereal. Together, these themes were intended to maintain the inclusive and pluralist approach envisaged by the original ADR team, while at the same time introducing a structure through which we could find, analyse and discuss overlaps and adjacencies between disparate design research approaches. A deliberate decision was made to design these themes so that more recognisable contemporary and design research trajectories (such as urban research labs, or advanced fabrication labs) which have developed within academia could fit within them but also that they were not indexical. As an open and inclusive event, particularly with its focus as a forum for non-traditional design research contributions, ADR is an opportunity to loosen contemporary design research definitions and to imagine different ways to align. This was the aim of the themes for ADR19.

The same approach to overtly express inclusivity and diversity was employed in the selection of speakers for the conference including from local, national and international settings. We were honoured to have Boon Wurrung senior elder N'Arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs AM give the Welcome to Country. N'Arweet spoke about the word Wominjeka, a shared greeting in Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung languages, which means 'to come with a purpose'. In the context of the creative disciplines, wominjeka is a reminder both of a shared purpose but also shared responsibilities as designers, to consider not only the fascination and novelty within research but also the intentions it begins with, and the impact it has on the world.

Associate Dean Indigenous at MADA Brian Martin, Director of Monash's Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab gave the first of the six keynote presentations, building on the words of N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs, to reiterate the importance of understanding our relationality as designers with the world and the people around us. Martin was joined later in the day on Thursday by Yoko Akama, Associate Professor in the School of Design, RMIT and in the evening by Professor Laura Lee, Advisor to the European Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community. On Friday we welcomed Professor Jon McCormack Founder and director of SensiLab at MADA, Professor Cameron Tonkinwise Director of the Design Innovation Research Centre UTS, and Assistant Professor Benjamin Dillenburger from the Digital Building Technologies ETH Zurich. Each lecture was accompanied by other events which allowed participation between the audience and the speakers. Helen Nori from UTas hosted an extended question time with keynote Laura Lee, Naomi Stead with Cameron Tonkinwise and Roland Snooks (RMIT) with Benjamin Dillenburger. Shane Murray chaired a discussion panel on the nature of design research with keynote Brian Martin and Shanti Sumartojo chaired a discussion on urban atmospheres with Yoko Akama. Jon McCormack led a tour of the adjacent Sensilab space where he is director.



Exhibition floor talks at ADR19: Matthew Bird presents *Double Edged*, co-authored with Tom Morgan.

In ADR19 we invited Charlotte Day, head curator at Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) to curate the exhibition in collaboration with convener Laura Harper and artist Georgia Nowak. The curatorial team focused on considering ways in which the exhibition could become a means to distinguish the ADR from other conferences by creating a more interactive and dynamic experience – one which works to promote new types of engagement between attendees. In reviewing the ADR18 conference, architectural theorist and educator Pia Ednie-Brown noted the importance of the exhibition, and posed a question for the future of ADR to consider how the exhibition may become more central to the conference, and even become the ‘primary venue for discursive exchange.’ In support of this idea, Ednie-Brown noted the productive and engaging ‘floor talks’ that took place at ADR18, when exhibitors explained their work and received questions within the exhibition context.

We had these ideas in the back of our minds when designing both the overall layout of the 2019 conference as well as the program of events. The conference was held in Building G, designed by DCM Architects in 1999, which is spatially organised around a tall curving atrium space from which serves as both a lateral as well as vertical circulation space for the building. The atrium became the exhibition space and this allowed conference sessions, keynote presentations, floor talks and drinks/food to take place in and around the exhibition. To further build on the potential of the exhibition we scheduled times into the program for semi-informal floor talks. On Thursday, Professor Naomi Stead led floor discussions with Toby Reed & Anna Nervegna, Eduardo Kairuz & Sam Spurr, and Matthew Bird. On Friday, Senior Curator of Design and Architecture at the NGV Ewan McEoin convened discussions with Pia Ednie-Brown, visiting keynote speaker Benjamin Dillonburger and Roland Snooks. Exhibitors presented in front of and with reference to their own and each other’s work.

A potential strength of the ADR conference is in being able to encourage and harness the diverse range of modes through which design research is practiced and delivered in order to produce a new kind of event – one that is inclusive, engaging, productive and exciting. In ADR19 we aimed to embrace this idea, focusing the conference around a central exhibition; activating the exhibition works through presentations and floor talks; including multiple keynotes and discussion panels; and in supporting a great variety of modes through which contributions were presented including performance, film, virtual environments, textual papers, installation and others. Of our ideas that didn’t make it this time, such as podcasts, interviews and workshops, we hope to see them and more in future ADR events.

Laura Harper