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WAYOUT

Design Workshop with KSCA & Atelier Bow-Wow

Abstract

This exhibition content displays results of a co-design workshop between Atelier Bow-Wow, artists from the Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA) and local community members for an arts facility called WAYOUT. This facility will provide a permanent home for the CEMENTA Contemporary Art Biennale in Kandos, a post-industrial rural town in NSW about 4 hours' drive west of Sydney.

The significance of this research is, firstly, that the project elucidates and showcases aspects of Atelier Bow-Wow's hybrid art and architectural practices, which include the design of buildings in rural areas in collaboration with local communities alongside creating places and pavilions for new types of social exchange. Secondly, the workshop results are significant as an extension of the contemporary art practices of KSCA artists who engage with members of the community to promote social and economic change. Thirdly, the project considers the interaction of diverse art and architectural practices and more specifically how socially engaged contemporary art practices can influence architectural design.

Introduction

CEMENTA, a contemporary art Biennale has been running for the past 6 years in Kandos, a post-industrial town about 250km north west of Sydney.¹ In these festivals local and interstate artworks are made in response to the town, which are then exhibited at various venues. To date, this festival has taken place without a permanent building.

This practice-based research project works collaboratively with contemporary artists from the Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA),² local community members, and Momoyo Kaijima from Atelier Bow-Wow to design an arts facility for the festival, so it can expand into a year-round program and continue growing its relationship with the local community through various activities and events.

The approach of Atelier Bow-Wow to their work has many links to the interests and art practices of the KSCA. Atelier Bow Wow are both architects and practicing artists, who have

participated in major arts biennales around the world. They are “fully aware of the interactive nature of architecture as a form of common cultural capital, or creative commons in public and shared platforms.”³ The KSCA see little delineation between the practices of art and architecture.⁴ In particular through its ability to create cultural change, some practices of architecture can also be considered a contemporary art form. This interest is expressed in their mission statement: “KSCA is a platform for artists and others who are experimenting with adaptive cultural change. It aims to support creative work that reaches beyond the familiar contexts of art to investigate new ways of acting in the world.”⁵ Both Atelier Bow Wow and the KSCA carry out cultural engagement through their work, and often aim to contribute to rejuvenating rural areas. These common interests prompted the collaboration on this project.

The main question of this research project is to explore how different contemporary art practices and needs of the community come together to impact the design of the building. The first iteration of the project involved the co-design of a new building by the authors, KSCA artists and the local community, and has been written about and published in more detail previously.⁶ The second iteration of the project shifted to be an adaptive re-use of an existing building with some of the original artists and community members from the first iteration, but also some new participants. As one of these new collaborators, Kajijima’s approach to the workshop helped to draw out the needs of the community and the impact of various artists practices in an experimental way, yet one that generated tangible ideas for the building.

Workshop Formats

The first iteration of the research, was mostly carried out through brainstorming and conversation, which was written at the time on large sheets of paper, around the themes of the way the new building would ‘function’, ‘feel’ and ‘look’. This process, carried out in two distinct groups, firstly revealed that the main concerns of the community were to create a welcoming experience for locals and visitors, as well as to address financial/economic concerns for the town. Secondly, it revealed that the concerns of the KSCA artists were focused on creating a connection between the local community and the art world, as well as addressing environmental concerns. These concerns were distilled into a concept for the design that highlighted the multiple contradictory elements that the different groups asked us to work with. These concerns were integrated into an architectural design between the authors and the directors of the Cementa Festival.

The second iteration of the project with Kaijima, was initially proposed, by the authors, in a format to explore more explicitly how the contemporary art practices could act as an agent in the architectural design process. This was conceived as a process of asking each of the contemporary artists to devise of a short visualisation exercise (based on their own practice) to take all members of the workshop though following the outline below.

- Use: drawing, model making, sound recording, writing, voice work or performance
- To respond to: the existing building, context, proposed program, local materials, local culture or Cementa festival etc.
- To visualise: a new physical form in space, new uses of building, new types of social exchange, or new communities formed by the arts facility etc.

After discussing this workshop idea with Kaijima, it became apparent that while it would be a good research project with multiple outcomes clearly linking different art practices to the needs of the community, it actually would not lead us closer to a design. The outlined workshop below was Kaijima's revised approach. Where, instead, we would start with the broadest ranges of ideas, finding commonalities and finally moving toward a focused set of architectural ideas. This approach helped with translating concerns of various practices and the community more directly into built form.

- Whole group discussion about main agendas
- Mōsō = individual wild ideas (delusions)
- Develop common themes in groups
- Work in groups to physically tape demarcations of spaces from themes onto building

Outcomes of Workshop.

Before Kaijima's workshop, the outcomes from the first iterations were circulated and tabled, to ensure a sense of continuity. Following this, the attendees were given a chance to express what they thought the main agendas of the design should be. The Mōsō part of the workshop enabled these ideas to be explored and expanded beyond reality. Delusion is closest English translation for Mōsō, and it was Kaijima's aim to allow the attendees to be uninhibited by constraints of budget, existing structure and location of the building. All of the Mōsō drawings were laid out onto the floor and assessed, and it was revealed that there were four main common themes emerging that were then developed further; these were to create: a landmark for the town, connection to outdoors, new communal spaces and flexible exhibition

spaces. Each of these themes will now be discussed in relation to the needs of the community, as well as the various art/architectural practices by KSCA and Atelier Bow Wow.

The first theme that emerged was to create a landmark, or something ‘different’ for the town. This resulted in ideas such as: a pool gallery, tall towers being added to the existing building, dissolving the façade of the building, and adding a new façade to the building. While this was motivated by the desire to make the facility noticed by the local community, an increased interest of tourists to the town is also a factor. This aspect of the project aligns with Atelier Bow-Wow’s track record of designing for areas in need of economic support from new buildings and types of cultural exchange. This is specifically evident in the projects they currently work on in Fishing Villages of Japan that were affected by the 2011 earthquake.⁷ The project also extends the existing practices of KSCA artists who work on ideas for rural regeneration,⁸ and the ongoing efforts of the local community to develop welcoming cultural experiences in Kandos.

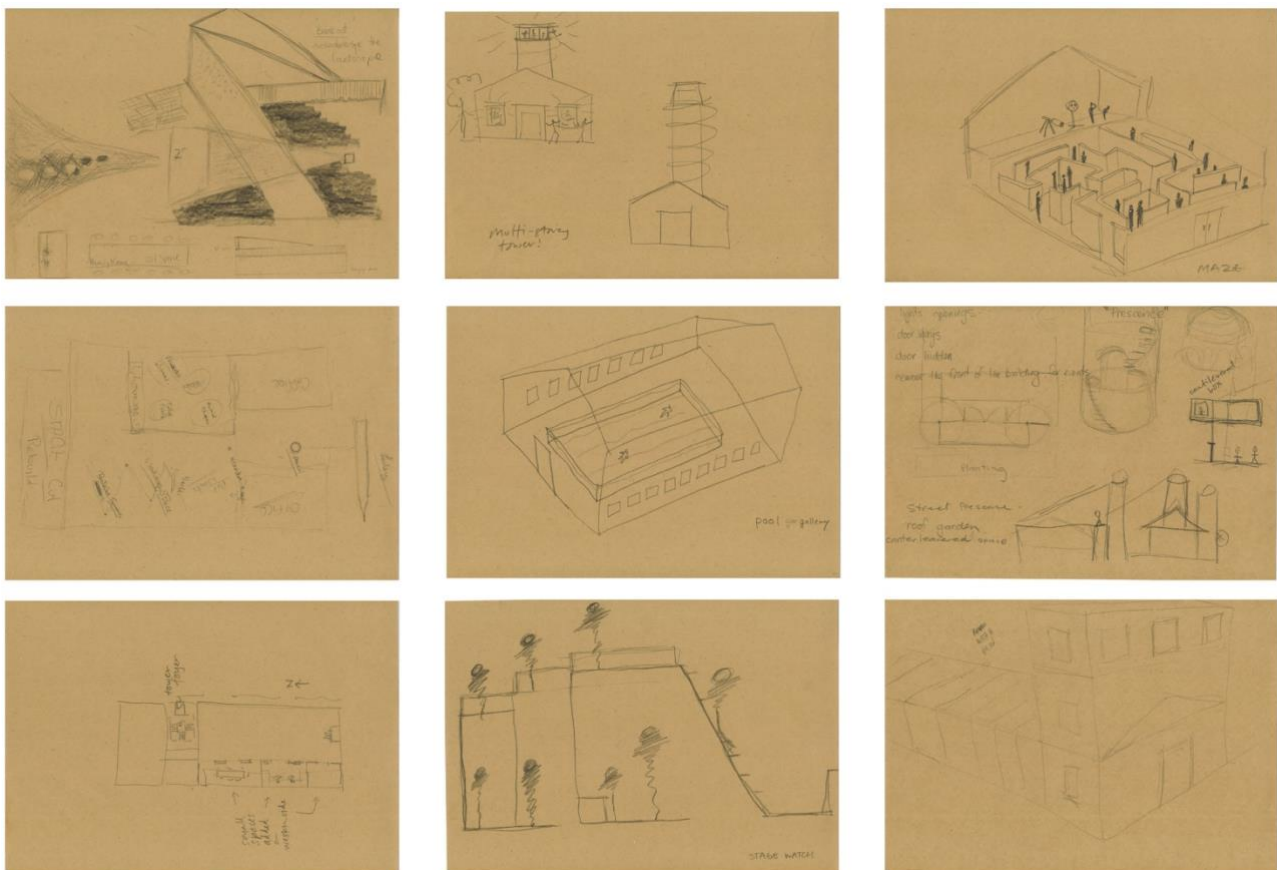


Figure 1. Landmark

Another theme emerging from the idea of the tower, is the second theme of connecting to the outside environment. The building itself is situated in the town of Kandos, which is

surrounded by beautiful hill sides and valleys. If the proposal were to extend above the existing building envelope, users would have a chance to see this context, thereby bringing it indoors. This idea was explored in ideas of: redirected windows, garden paths, edible gardens, a driveway greenhouse, energy saving devices and of linking energy generated by the building to direct use by the local community. These ideas are specifically seen in the work of Atelier Bow-Wow's designs that consider the whole context of architecture, its outside environment and inhabitants as a living ecosystem.⁹ Also, the practices of the KSCA artists are reflected in their concerns with "farming, urban planning, rural industry, food production, commoning and infrastructure development."¹⁰ This theme is expressive of the community's concerns to pay homage to the surrounding context and to ensure the building will be as sustainable as possible.

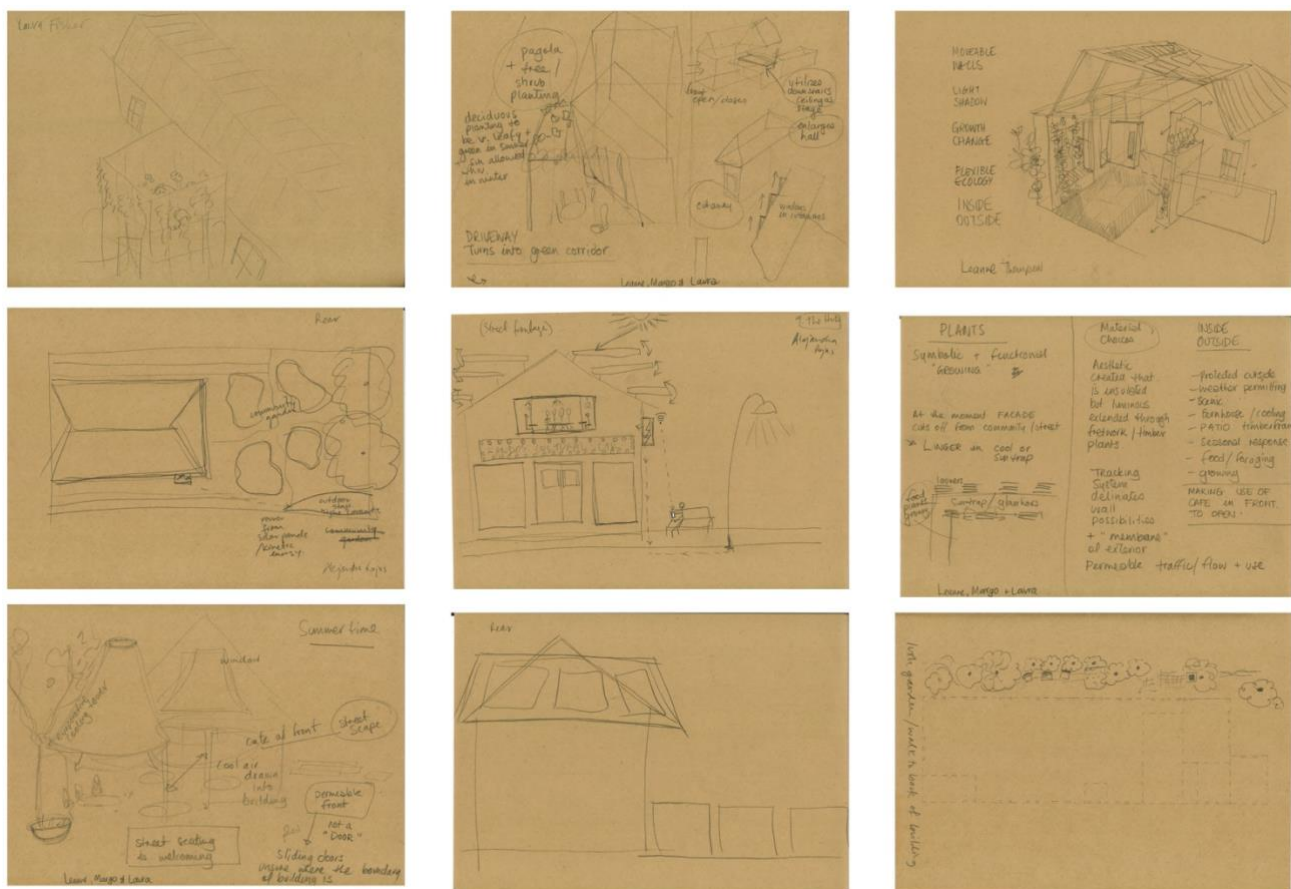


Figure 2. Surrounding Environment

While this idea of connecting to the landscape outside has obvious contextual and environmental benefits, it also leads into the next theme, which is focused on creating new types of communal space. This theme was developed through ideas such as: taking the corner off the building to create an outdoor gathering space, maintaining the existing fireplace at the center of the arts facility, creating buildings within the building for different groups to meet, exhibiting on table surfaces that double as café or meeting space, and

making the whole space one large meeting room. This theme builds upon Atelier Bow-Wow theories of Behaviourology, and their practice which centers around creating places and pavilions for new types of social exchange.¹¹ The KSCA objectives explicitly state that they aim “to build fruitful associations between communities that may be geographically remote from each other, but share particular challenges and aspirations.”¹² This theme echoes concerns of the locals that the building should be useable and welcoming to different community groups.

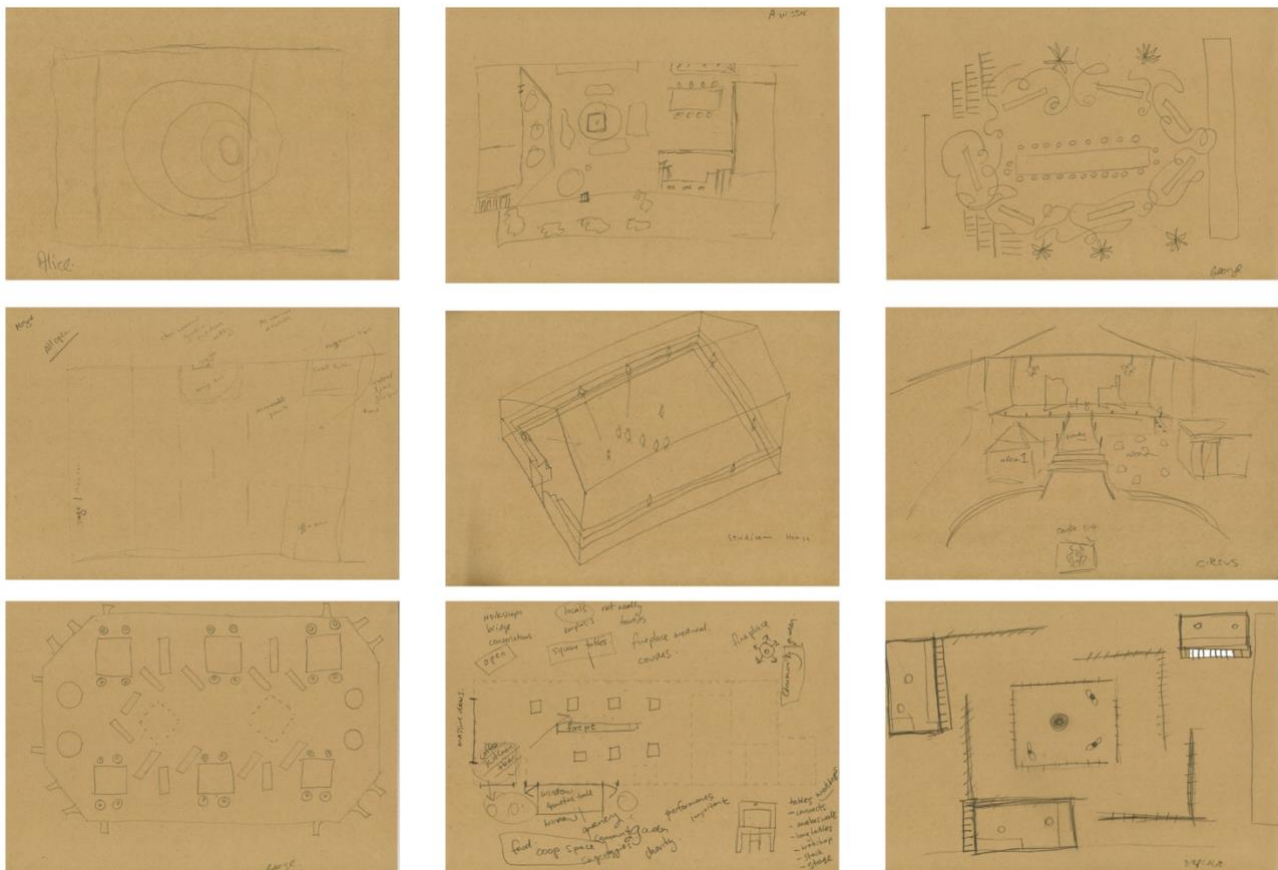


Figure 3. Community

This notion of the art facility as communal meeting space also has an impact upon the final common theme, which was the notion of flexible exhibition space. This was proposed through ideas of: movable walls, changeable spaces, and designs for buildings within the building. The notion that a gallery needs abundant wall surfaces is challenged by the contemporary artists involved,¹³ pointing out that many of the activities that would take place may be performance, discussion groups, or focus groups such as the one we were having. This builds upon KSCA’s explicit statement that “anything that changes culture is art.” While Atelier Bow-Wow’s own practice clearly illustrates the value of drawing and installation,¹⁴ but it also creates social space and interaction zones, which do not rely on the traditional gallery format for its display.¹⁵ This theme also highlights the desires of the community to make the space multi-use and adaptable.



Figure 4. Exhibition Space

This short outline has attempted to summarise the main outcomes of a number of focus groups bringing together community needs with contemporary art practices of KSCA artists and Atelier Bow-Wow. While the initial formats were useful in drawing out the plethora of concerns and ideas, the final format, involving wild ideas and drawing exercises very explicitly drew out main themes, and tangible architectural ideas to be carried forward into the next stage of the design. The extent to which these can be realised may be limited in the future by budget and other practicalities. However, it is important that the inception of the project is not yet burdened by such limitations, so that the full potential of the collaborations can be explored. These ideas will be explored into the next stage of workshopping with Atelier Bow Wow and the community to develop the design further.

Endnotes

¹ Cementa Inc, *Cementa*, <https://cementa.com.au/> accessed, accessed 8th July 2019.

² Artists in Kandos School of Adaptation directly involved in the project are: Alex Wisser, Georgie Pollard, Ian Millis, Laura Fisher, Gilbert Grace, Lucas Ihlein, Leanne Thompson, Eloise Lindeback and guests of KSCA artists Lea Celestial and Alejandra Rojas. Members of the local community that have been involved in the project have included: Alex Wisser, Georgie Pollard, Laura Fisher, Leanne Thompson, Christine McMillian, Sam Paine, Alice Fisher, Leo Cremonese, Margot Polk, Jennifer More Fleur McDonald and Fiona McDonald.

³ Toyo Ito, Ryoji Suzuki, Hiroshi Naito, Atelier Bow-Wow, Hiroshi Kikuchi, Ryuji Nakamura, Hideyuki Nakayama, *Where is Architecture? : Seven Installations by Japanese Architects*, (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tōkyō, 2010), 62.

⁴ Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, *Origin*, <https://www.ksca.land/origin-story>, accessed 8th July 2019.

⁵ Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, <https://www.ksca.land/>, accessed 8th July 2019.

⁶ Authors, 'Expanding Architectural Practice through Contemporary Art: Case Study on the Kandos Art Facility', in *Scroope: Cambridge Architecture Journal*, 28 (2019), 78-91.

⁷ CCA Channel, *Islands and Villages, Atelier Bow-Wow in Momonoura*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjBBLHtHaqs>, accessed 8th July 2019.

⁸ Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, *An Artist, a Farmer & Scientists Walk into a Bar*, <https://www.ksca.land/projects/afs-home>, accessed 8th July 2019.

⁹ Atelier Bow-Wow, *Graphic Anatomy* (Tokyo, Japan, Toto, 2007).

¹⁰ Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, *About Us*, <https://www.ksca.land/about-us>, accessed 8th July 2019.

¹¹ Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, 'Architectural Behaviourology' in *Behaviourology*, Atelier Bow Wow, (Rizzoli, New York, 2010)

¹² Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, *About Us*, <https://www.ksca.land/about-us>, accessed 8th July 2019.

¹³ Ian Milliss, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, *Defining Moments Object and Idea by Ian Milliss*, https://soundcloud.com/acca_melbourne/defining-moments-object-and-idea-by-ian-milliss, accessed 8th July 2019.

¹⁴ Micheal Hayes, *The Architectural Ethnography Incidents* (United States, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Sternberg Press, 2017)

¹⁵ Meuro Washida 'Atelier Bow Wow as Artists: Changes in Art and the Potential of New Social Space.' in *Behaviourology*, by Atelier Bow Wow, (Rizzoli, New York, 2010),