ABUNDANT
Australian Pavilion 11th International Architecture Exhibition
la Biennale di Venezia 2008

Neil Durbach, Vince Frost, Wendy Lewin, Kerstin Thompson and Gary Warner

Australian Institute of Architects
Commissioner’s Foreword

Hello and welcome to the Australian Pavilion. This year the Australian Pavilion explores the idea of architectural abundance and richness. Many people still imagine Australia to be a remote and depopulated island continent. In fact, it is one of the most urbanised nations in the world. Our population is densely concentrated in cities and large towns. It is mostly in these cities and large towns that we can see the nature and scale of Australia’s ability to create great architecture and design. On the upper level of the pavilion, it is possible to see what has been achieved to date through a great audiovisual installation of images and themes of what exists today. On the lower level of the pavilion, there has been an extraordinary and unprecedented collaboration of our top architects and designers. It is a great testament to the talent of our architects that one hundred and eighty Australian architectural practices have each contributed models of their future works and ideas. It is a great expression of abundance, richness and the capacity of the human imagination.

Congratulations to the creative team of Neil Dusheiko, Vince Frost, Wendy Lewin, Kerstin Thompson and Gary Warnor supported by Maryam Guirri. Congratulations also to the Australian Institute of Architects, which has managed this program and contributed significant staff resources and management to ensure the success of Australia’s presence in Venice, and particular thanks to Shohana McKenzie who is the team leader.

Thanks also to the Australia Council for the Arts, in its support through lending us the pavilion. Unlike most other pavilions at the Architecture Biennale, this exhibition receives not one cent of project funding from the Australian government. So it is only the support and collaboration of the Institute, its architects members and our sponsors, including Virgin Atlantic Airways, Austral Bricks, Bassett, Zip Industries, Valad Property Group, Dulux, Lend Lease, Bellevue Constructions, Euroluce Australia, Architecture Mosaic and supporters, that this entire project is possible.

Lucy Turnbull
Commissioner, Australian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2008

President’s Preface

The Australian Pavilion at the 11th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, exhibits Australia’s diverse architectural history and exciting potential. Exposing the range of Australian work and broadening the view of Australian architecture is central to the vision of the Abundant creative team who curated the exhibition. The breadth and depth of current achievements belies the youth of Australia’s built history. The exhibition explores this creative laboratory that is Australian architecture. It looks at our astonishing capacity to blend new influences. It acknowledges dramatic buildings in equally dramatic landscapes. But it also demonstrates that Australian architecture is much more: both abstract and urban. The Venice Architecture Biennale is the most important architectural exposition in the world, and participation in this prestigious event is one of the Institute’s most significant international activities. This is the second time that the Institute has managed and funded an Australian presence at the Biennale, and we are committed to a long-term involvement. The Biennale offers Australian architects considerable opportunities to enhance their international profile and to showcase their talents to key international audiences. The Biennale is a critical international forum for profiling Australia’s dynamic and richly diverse architecture profession. The Australian presence at the Venice Architecture Biennale would not have been possible without the inspired leadership and tireless commitment of the Australian commissioner, Lucy Turnbull. We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation for her energy, enthusiasm and support. I also thank the Venice Biennale Committee members for their invaluable advice and contributions in making the exhibition a reality.

The creative team directors Neil Dusheiko, Vince Frost, Wendy Lewin, Kerstin Thompson and Gary Warnor and the architectural historian, Conrad Hamann, are to be congratulated for their insightful presentation of a challenging and exciting exhibition. Of course, Australia’s participation has required the huge efforts of a very professional and dedicated Venice project team led by Shohana McKenzie, and our warmest thanks are extended to them all.

And a very special thank you to all our sponsors for their important contributions, to the Network Venice supporters (including many architectural practices), and to the Australia Council for the Arts, all of whom were essential to the success of this venture. The Australian Institute of Architects is proud to present the 2008 Biennale exhibit entitled Abundant.

Howard Tanner
President, Australian Institute of Architects
Mark Taylor, Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering,
Queensland University of Technology

Full Body Massage Suite

Design team: Diana Chan, Matthew Randell, Yi Wen Seow, Yijing Xu

Original Author Full Body Massage Suite: Yijing Xu
Studio Leaders: Mark Taylor, Mark Burry

Spatial Envelope: This design project engages with ideas of iteration, space and connection, speculating on the way space influences and is influenced by the body, occupation and activity. Responding to the notion that ‘space defines the people in it’ and the reflexive position that ‘people define space’, the makers’ movement maps a spatial boundary that transcends traditional modernist paradigms. This approach integrates data analysis with speculation, such that form is an outcome rather than a preconception, and is seen as a precursor to broader design enquiries. The intention is to more closely align the morphology of body and space. This experiment was conducted at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Photo: Gina Lee, Model: Matthew Randell (RMIT), Melissa Johnston (QUT).

Marsh Cashman Koelmaas Architects

Commercial Development, Darlinghurst, Sydney

Design team: Marsh Cashman, Jason Border, Tine Fannning-Poulsen, Greg Bachmayer

Rooted: What is more important, saving our heritage or saving the planet? Our historic sites provide vital cultural connection, an anchoring and relationship to origin, a positioning within the time continuum providing roots, the source of growth, without it? Our natural environment provides existence, the trees providing the vital air we need for survival, without it? Our architecture can provide a vital link and understanding of both. The forms and spaces we create allow dialogue, recognition and sustenance, without it? Our current debate with authorities is manifested with these issues, the necessary coexistence of all three seemingly impossible, without it?

Photo: Vanilla Potts, Model: Dominic Lovino, Jason Border, Tine Fannning-Poulsen.