

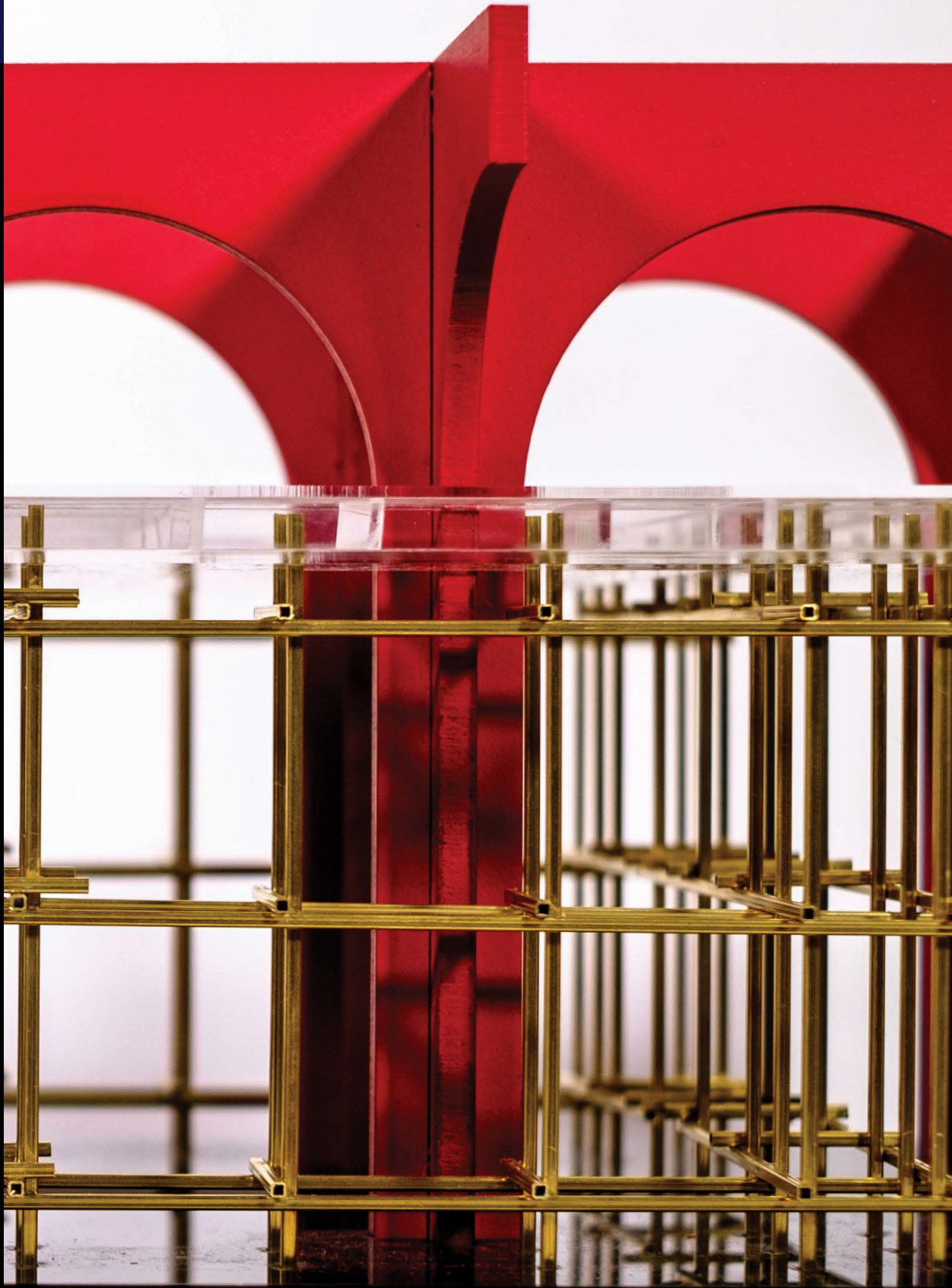


THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

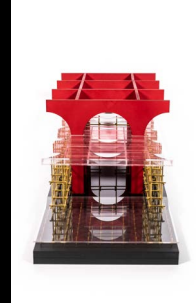
Faculty of
Architecture,
Building and
Planning

2023
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Attrium



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Inside the Faculty



From the Dean Julie Willis

As the year draws to a close, we can collectively reflect on our achievements as a Faculty for 2023. The MSD building has been swarming with activity. From guest lectures in our basement theatres to exhibitions in our gallery spaces, we have had many events to celebrate the work of our students and staff.



We opened our doors to a huge number of prospective students and their families for Open Day, with our theatres overflowing with people wanting to find out how they can study a Bachelor of Design.

We held our two remaining Dean's Lectures – firstly Professor Chimay Anumba, Dean of the College of Design, Construction and Planning at the University of Florida who discussed the growth of Digital Twins and their role in industry transformation, and then landscape architects and designers Chloe and Michael Humphreys, founders of award-winning firm The Landscape Studio.

There were amazing exhibitions on display at the Dulux Gallery. 'Thinking of You: Projects by MGS Architects' explored the work of Melbourne-based practice MGS Architects, which was founded by our alum Rob McGauran and Mun Soon. This was followed by 'Matrix – How We Live Now', which celebrated the social justice politics and projects of the Matrix Feminist Architectural Co-operative of 1980-1996. You can read more about it on page 6. Finally, we wrapped up with an exhibition curated by renowned landscape architect Richard Weller, who recently published his monograph 'An Art of Instrumentality'.

We hosted our annual ABP Symposium – this year's brought together academic, government and industry experts to discuss the role of

retrofitting in the transformation of Australian cities. The two-day Symposium included keynote lectures by Indy Johar (Architecture 00 and Dark Matter Labs), Nicky Drobis (Fender Kastilidis) and Mandy Nicholson (Lecturer in First Nations Design), panel discussions and site visits.

Other events included a panel discussion on Victoria's Future Cities, Suburbs and Building Reforms, the Melbourne Centre for Cities' annual symposium 'Why is real change so hard? Leveraging the city and university connection for impact', and the annual Miles Lewis Oration, which was delivered by writer and historian Rosemary Hill on the lives of Stonehenge.

It was great to represent the Faculty on a few overseas trips as well.

A few months ago I attended the opening of the Venice Architecture Biennale and had some constructive meetings with the European Cultural Academy and IUAV University to discuss further engagement opportunities.

I joined the Vice-Chancellor's delegation to China and I was delighted to meet with deans or deputy deans at Tsinghua, Tongji, Peking, Shanghai Jiao Tong and Nanjing universities, who had considerable interest in deepening our connections. It was fantastic to also meet with more than 500 alumni in both Beijing and Shanghai.

In September I visited TU Delft, Cambridge University and the Bartlett, UCL to meet senior leaders to discuss engagement opportunities and catch-up with students who were on exchange.

Finally, I travelled to ITB in Bandung, with whom we have a long-standing relationship, where we signed a new study abroad agreement with their School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development. It was also wonderful to see the many friends and alumni we have at ITB.

As always, we wrapped up the semester with MSDx Summer, our bi-annual showcase of student work, and designX, which celebrates the work produced in our 12 capstone Bachelor of Design subjects. It's always such a pleasure to see the beaming faces of our students as they present their hard work to their family and friends.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Atrium and best wishes for a safe and restful holiday season!



Bringing light to the ‘shadow places’ through sustainability tools

— TIANA STEFANIC

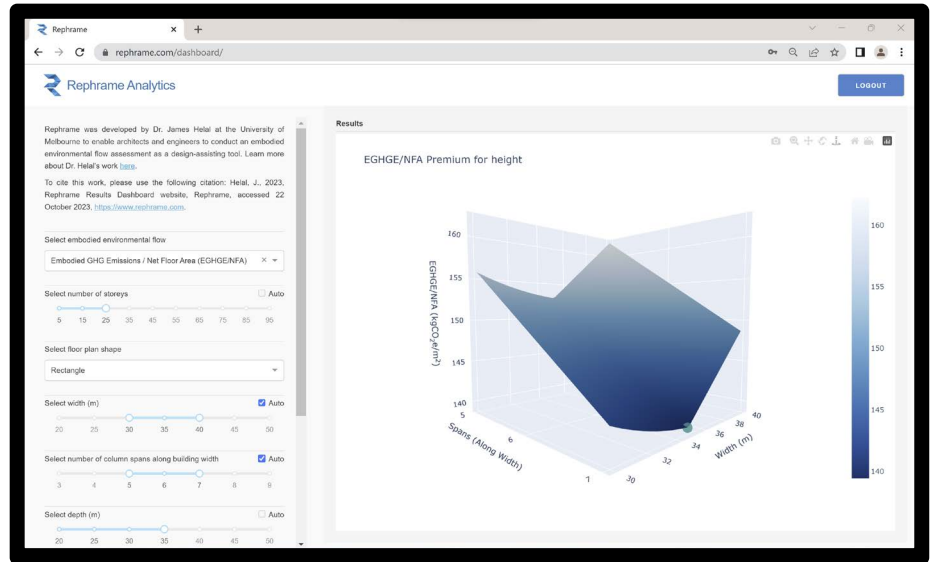
As companies around the world now strive to reduce embodied emissions, tools developed by researchers at the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning are providing easy solutions to this complex problem.



Dr James Helal



Professor Robert Crawford



Professor Robert Crawford and Dr James Helal have developed data and software that is being utilised by a wide range of industry stakeholders to easily assess the levels of embodied emissions early in the design process for construction projects.

The Environmental Performance in Construction (EPiC) Database is the culmination of a four-year project to develop a comprehensive model for assessing the environmental impact of construction projects. Initially released in 2019, the [EPiC Database](#) is freely available and functions as a design tool that incorporates large amounts of data related to the environmental impact of building materials, from their extraction from the ground to their arrival at the factory gate.

The objective of the project is to enable industry stakeholders to improve the environmental performance of projects at their earliest stages, when change is most feasible.

“Not enough work has been done to understand how construction materials affect the environment, including through the release of greenhouse gases. Our hope is that by integrating the EPiC Database into their decision-making processes, industry practitioners will be able to make better informed choices during the early stages of a project,” Prof Crawford said.

The EPiC Database has been utilised in the [Rephrase web app](#), which further integrates embodied emissions assessment into the design process.

Developed by Dr Helal, the app enables anyone to enter a small amount of information about the size of a plot of land and the intended height of a building to rapidly assess the level of embodied emissions in a building design. The project has received a further \$100,000 in Proof of Concept funding from the University of Melbourne, which will enable the team to integrate a cost assessment and optimisation function into the tool.



LEFT: SCREENSHOT FROM THE REPHRAME WEB APP.

RIGHT: IMAGES FROM A REPORT ON THE EPIC DATABASE.

“We plan to build on EPiC’s success as an industry standard and develop a suite of tools including Rephrame that will help not only with the structural process of building design, but other building systems and life cycle stages as well,” Dr Helal said.

Although the EPiC Database has been widely adopted as part of the planning process for many major design and construction firms and is the basis of the New South Wales’ BASIX embodied emissions assessment tool and the Green Star Upfront Carbon Calculator, it has not yet become part of the regulatory and planning landscape in Victoria.

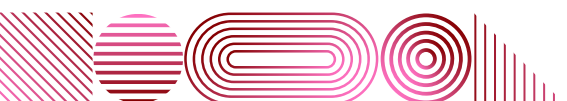
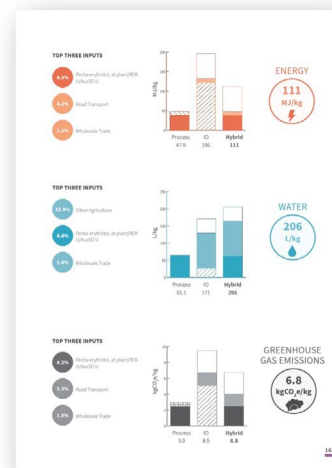
One of the roadblocks to the widespread application of this type of design tool is the perceived complexity of life cycle assessment for quantifying embodied emissions. Efforts to improve the environmental performance of buildings have traditionally focused on the operation of buildings, such as heating, lighting and ventilation. Materials and embodied emissions are forces that seem to operate in some unseen place, an effect described by feminist eco-philosopher Val Plumwood as ‘shadow places’.

“These are places that we rely on in terms of our consumption, but they are neglected in terms of our understanding of them and the effects that we have on them. The challenge is trying to make people understand that there are no ‘shadow places’ – all of these places are connected. Part of what EPiC and Rephrame do is try to simplify the process and remove complexity and to shed light on those places by offering this easy means of assessing the environmental implications of material use,” Dr Helal said.



Not enough work has been done to understand how construction materials affect the environment, including through the release of greenhouse gases.

It is increasingly understood that the most sustainable building is one that is already built, as Dr Helal explained, “The greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of new buildings typically accounts for more than half of the greenhouse gas emissions throughout the life cycle of a building. By maintaining what we have, and retrofitting to meet our current needs, there’s massive potential for saving or avoiding unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions.”



Dismantling hierarchies in architecture



The Matrix: How We Live Now exhibition celebrated the essential work of the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative, a radical feminist architectural practice active in London from 1980 to 1996.

Held in the Dulux Gallery from 11 September to 20 October 2023, the exhibition was curated by Dr Karen Burns and Master of Architecture student Sophie Adsett, supported by Professor Dan Hill. It featured artefacts including posters, pamphlets and provocative street art by members of the co-operative, drawing from their extensive open archive.

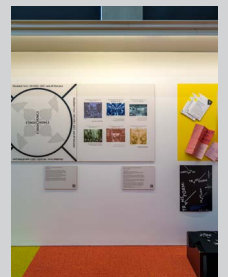
The bottom-up approach of the collective was led by a multiracial group of women who responded to the needs of community. As a co-operative dedicated to advancing social justice, Matrix abolished hierarchies in the workplace, on the building site and in the client meeting. The Matrix office was peopled by “workers” and “student trainees”. Traditional labour hierarchies between architecture and construction were disrupted.

In line with this ethos of collaboration and the questioning of hierarchal structures, twenty researchers from the Faculty, from all disciplines including landscape, architecture, urban planning, construction and engineering were invited to exhibit projects on gender, bodies and ecologies.

Professor Sarah Bell worked on a co-authored piece *Engineering Comes Home*, which is an extension of a project with residents of the Meakin Estate in London to understand how communities engage with co-designed local infrastructures to improve resilience. Other key works include a drawing by Dr Simona Castricum, Research Fellow in Architecture and winner of the 2023 Chancellor’s Prize, that analyses acts of transphobic violence in public space. Dr Hannah Robertson’s piece was drawn from her partnership with the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation to realise their vision for a Cultural Centre on Country.



IMAGES OF THE MATRIX EXHIBITION
BY JAMES RAFFERTY.



Opening up new paths for architectural discourse

— TIANA STEFANIC

Kim Vō is an alumni of the Master of Architecture program at the Melbourne School of Design. He is currently undertaking a Master of Design Studies at the prestigious Harvard University Graduate School of Design, enabled through the generous support of the [Fritz Janeba Travelling Scholarship](#) awarded by the faculty.

We spoke to Kim while he was in Vietnam to visit friends and colleagues before embarking on his trip to the United States.



How did it feel to be awarded this scholarship?

I was surprised! It's a very generous amount, in fact I was surprised by how much was awarded compared to what was advertised. This will give me a lot of freedom by taking off the financial pressure, widening the career options available to me.

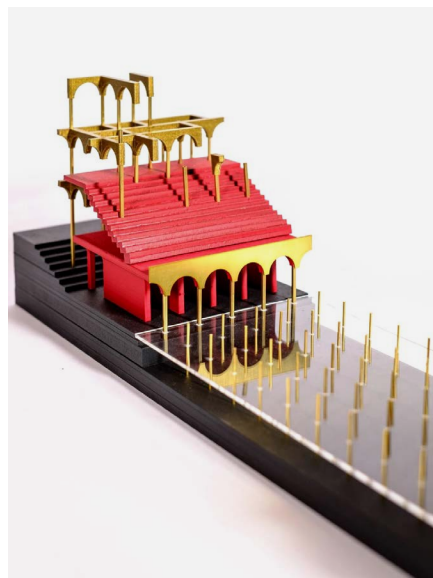
Why did you choose to pursue further study in the United States?

The topic I'm interested in is very uniquely American. I'm particularly interested in the history of postmodernist architecture, which can be considered as a different species of architectural theory over in the United States. Partly because of the legacy of the seventies and eighties over there, with events like the oil crisis making it difficult for architects to practice and actually build, there was a lot of time spent on theory as a form of practice. There is criticism that this period was indulgent, in the sense that it produced a lot of theoretical projects, but I feel like it was an exciting time in the sense that there was a lot of open discussion happening, in a way that doesn't happen as much anymore as



the industry is largely driven by financial pressure. I've always been interested in knowledge that people see as forbidden in a way, in a sense that people might not see it as practical, or not directly related to you.

The more people say that the more I want to see what's going on! The great thing about the course I'm doing is that I can select from breadth options across Harvard and MIT. I'm interested in the idea of architectural exhibition, and I think that within the schools of visual studies at Harvard they probably have a lot more research and expertise about the idea of seeing, and how the way you encounter something shapes the way you think about it. So that is a very interesting theory, that the way you set up an exhibition preconditions you to think about a certain thing, and stop thinking about others.



TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT: IMAGES FROM KIM'S INDEPENDENT THESIS PROJECT 'IMPOSSIBILUM THERMARUM'.

TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: VENICE STUDIO EXHIBITION AT DULUX GALLERY. IMAGES BY JAMES RAFFERTY.

What are your ambitions for the future?

I think that as academics we should have some form of practice. Although I recognise that academia is a very privileged space, with the opportunity to experiment with different ideas, I don't think that we should be confined within that space. With my experience as a studio leader, I see the opportunities available to build a discourse around architectural practice. In the studio environment, being open to different lines of enquiry creates the potential for a studio to become a creative collaboration between studio leaders and students. The ability to create and the ability to conceptualise are two different things, and the studio is an environment that allows you to bring those two things together in a very interesting way.

One of the reasons I wanted to come to Vietnam is because I'm hoping to build discourse around architecture here. There are a lot of new architects at the moment and they're starting to do more experiments. But there's a gap in knowledge because there aren't a lot of books and materials on architecture that are in Vietnamese. There is a need to connect the network here with the global network, which is a challenge with a lack of infrastructure and because of the language issue. As an outsider it's hard to get access, but once you're in that makes it easier for others and my hope is that through my opportunity other people can get access to the network and be part of the global conversation.



Designing from the inside out

— TIANA STEFANIC

Melbourne School of Design student James Urlini is preparing for his final thesis project for the Master of Architecture. In May this year he won the prestigious Walls Around Us design competition run by the Robin Boyd Foundation, which gave him the opportunity to attend the Vernissage period of the Venice Architecture Biennale. We spoke to James about his trip, and how the work of Robin Boyd and a deep consideration of heritage and place informs his research.



LEFT: THANKS TO HIS PRIZE, JAMES WAS ABLE TO EXPLORE THE VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE, INCLUDING THE AUSTRALIA PAVILION 'UNSETTLING QUEENSTOWN'.

TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: PRESENTATION PANELS FROM JAMES' WINNING PROJECT 'HOUSE IN A GRASSY PLAIN'.

What was your reaction when you heard you'd been awarded the prize, including a trip to Venice?

It was quite exciting to even be shortlisted, and then it was an absolute shock to win. Three of the students who completed Studio 24, 'Completing Boyd' with Norman Day, were shortlisted, alongside another two MSD students. The submission had taken me a long time and I completed it a few hours before it was due while I was travelling in Japan. My approach to the project didn't follow a linear narrative, and I think that might have been one of the captivating things for the jury.

What were your reflections after the trip?

The trip to Venice wasn't my first, my mum is an academic and we'd go on sabbaticals to Italy every four years when I was growing up. But this was my first time going alone, and it meant I could do my own thing and explore. Venice is a place that's full of mystery, and really deep history that's super layered. I was grateful to get a Vernissage Pass to the Biennale as well, which is quite exclusive.

Being in Venice made me consider the scale of buildings nowadays, and how in Australia we've become used to building to large scales, where we think we have infinite space, and demolish a whole series of spaces to make room for something else. And I think we can learn something from the approach in places like Venice, where they have learnt to adapt and build to a smaller scale.

Did the trip overseas influence the direction of your research?

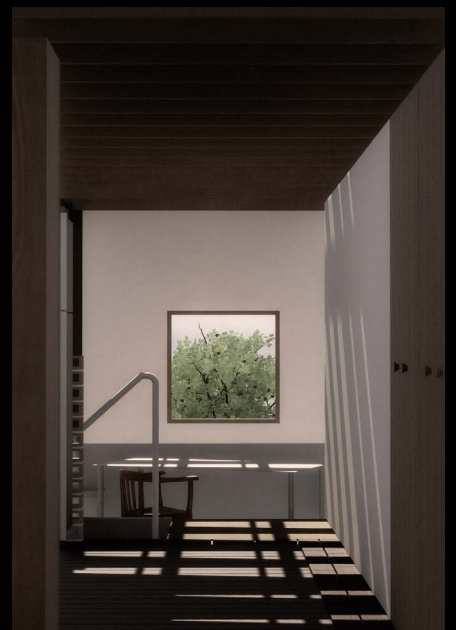
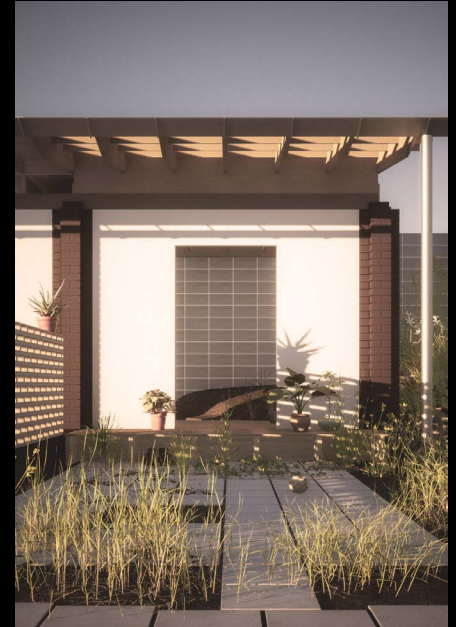
It reinforced how questions of heritage and occupation are really interesting to me. The trip to Venice inspired me to travel later in the year to Slovenia, Croatia and Italy, visiting small towns along the Adriatic Coast that were occupied by Italy at some point in time, or were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I'd like to explore the implications of having imported that history of occupation on immigrant communities in Australia.

And a lot of these places I visited have multiple names, which are both correct: Rijeka is known as Fiume, and Pula is known as Pola, and Capodistria in Slovenia where my father was born is known as Koper. And in Australia the Birrarung is now being accepted as the name of the Yarra River, but I'm sure that communities in different parts of the Birrarung would name it differently depending on how they need to use it. So to me that raises a larger question about the impact that architecture has on the naming of things, and how the decolonisation of the process of naming and zoning will be a big issue in the future.

How have you been influenced by the work of Robin Boyd?

I was influenced by Boyd as someone who was deeply concerned with Australian architecture; an architecture that he believed shouldn't be derived as much from a British or American influence but instead from a deep concern with what it means to build in an Australian context. It's important to consider the broader question of what we are as a nation outside of external cultural influences, and if we can't break away from those then what does it actually mean to be living here with all of our ties to other places? How do we find cohesion amongst communities and who sets the cultural tone?

I also admire that a lot of his buildings aren't necessarily focused on the exterior expression. The *Featherston House* is a great example of that approach. When you look at the outside of the house, it almost has no reference to the interior, and the outside is like a shell to make the interior work. The house is also a great example of his belief in delivering one well-constructed idea from start to finish, and having a strong sense of whatever the future might hold for a project. The Featherston family still lives in the house, four generations strong now. I think that's testament to the careful consideration that Boyd put into designing for the needs of the family.



The universal appeal of a visual language

— SOPHIE HILL

Allira Smith is a first year Bachelor of Design student majoring in Graphic Design. Originally from regional Victoria, she moved to Melbourne for her studies having always been drawn to the subjectivity of graphic design, and the pursuit of designing a product which is both unique yet universally appealing. The Design Access Scholarship played an integral role in enabling Allira to make the shift to Melbourne and to pursue her passion for design.



How did you come to know about the Design Access Scholarship?

I come from a low-socioeconomic family and so sources like my school were quick to inform me about the different access schemes that each of the universities offered. In particular, my older sister, who completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Melbourne in 2020, was very helpful in emphasising the importance of the Access Scholarship when applying for university. Additionally, since my school was very helpful to all students eligible for Special Entry Access Schemes (which included most of our high school's population) there were many supports in place to help us construct our applications correctly, which then led to the university offering me the Design Access Scholarship.

How has receiving the Design Access Scholarship enabled you to undertake your studies?

The Design Access Scholarship provides a sum of money for living which, as someone with no financial support from my family, was extremely important to enable me to move up to Melbourne for university. Since I come from a regional area, I am too far away to reasonably commute to university every day. My options came down to moving to Melbourne or not pursuing university whatsoever, and the only way I could feasibly move to Melbourne for study was through the provision of scholarships like the Access. The Access Scholarship makes up a large part of my ability to undertake my course, despite my disadvantaged circumstances.



LEFT PAGE: CHEESE DADDY VINYL RECORD.

MIDDLE: CHEESE DADDY FLYER.

RIGHT: CHEESE DADDY POSTER.

What do you hope to achieve in your future career?

My ultimate goal for my future career is to work in graphic design. Ideally, I'd like to work freelance, but I'm not necessarily opposed to the challenges of working in a cooperative design firm. In particular, I am interested in working on international or overseas projects and learning more about the societal and cultural differences in visual communication. The aspect of graphic design that is so interesting to me is the subjectivity of it all, and the pursuit of designing a product both as universally agreeable and as unique as possible; a perfect way to explore this effect is through the visible international differences in visual language and design. This is the effect I would most like to explore more in my career.

How have you seen the international and cultural differences in visual language play out in the design world?

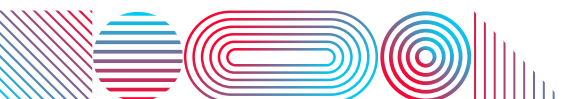
One example of this phenomenon that I always come back to is something as simple as the colour red. In most Western cities and societies, red is associated with things like fire, passion and love, but is otherwise an inoffensive and fairly insignificant colour. However, in lots of East Asian countries, red is heavily associated with prosperity and luck. Something as simple as this could affect the way you decide to utilise red when creating visual communications for either of these environments and I think it's little things like that which change these consumer-bases so drastically and make conventions of international design so interesting.

What has been your favourite experience so far at the University of Melbourne?

My favourite part of my time here so far has been my Graphic Design Studio class. It's the practical prerequisite for my major, and the critique is always tough, but I generally found all the briefs super enjoyable and pleasantly challenging to complete. One of the briefs I completed for my graphic design studio involved creating a custom record cover for an artist. While I could've done an existing artist, I wanted to challenge myself to create something from a unique, fictional identity. This brief was particularly fun for me as I got experience working with mediums that I had not worked with before like photography and modelling.

Did you explore any subjects outside of your major area?

As a breadth, I did Spanish 3 this semester. The best aspect of that class was interacting with other classmates. The challenge of the class came from the fact that we were meant to communicate primarily in Spanish which made it extremely difficult, but towards the end of the semester, I found that it had really pushed my speaking and listening skills into fast improvement.



New technology and unconventional design

— SOPHIE HILL

Suffian Shahabuddin graduated from the Master of Architecture in 2006. He went on to co-found the Malaysia-based 6IX Design Office almost ten years ago, where he still serves as co-director. Since then, 6IX Design Office has made a name for itself as a group of diversly skilled architects, designers, technologists and passionate collaborators working across all scales of projects both locally in Malaysia and internationally.



Efficient resourcing, smart collaboration and future-relevance are at the forefront of 6IX Design Office's thinking, with their early adoption of BIM playing a central role in their ability to develop strategies that not only anticipate the future but possible changes to that future as well.

Can you tell us a little about how 6IX Design Office came to be?

I'm one of the founding directors of 6IX, together with Suhayl Annuar and Wani Khairi. I met Suhayl through our studies at the University of Melbourne, and Wani attended the same university as I did for her first degree in Malaysia and we re-connected once she came to Melbourne to study at RMIT. Together we were in Melbourne for a period of 12 years having studied and worked with various practices such as Cox, BLP and Buro North. We used to work on multiple competitions outside of our work hours to develop an understanding of how we could supplement each other's skill set, but ultimately, we just enjoyed each other's company. It's been almost a decade since we decided to return to Malaysia and set up our design studio 6IX Design Office. Since then, we have adapted the studio to current market demands globally.



LEFT: INTERIOR DESIGN BY 6IXDO FOR FLINT COFFEE & ROASTERY IN KUALA LUMPUR.

RIGHT: DEVELOPMENT RENDER FOR PKNS (RFP) DEVELOPMENT, SHAH ALAM.



6IX Design Office seeks unconventional design and architectural solutions by reflecting the changing needs of the market and harnessing the development of technology. What led you to be passionate about unconventional design?

Whilst we were in Melbourne, the city went through a construction boom. Many offices needed to transform their ways of working to become more efficient and resilient. We benefitted from being in Melbourne throughout this time as many companies were moving into BIM based environments. Back then, it was only known as 3D generated documentation. We were a part of this experimental period of transitioning big offices into different workflows. Projects were becoming more complex, and offices needed to rely on tech to find different ways of producing better outcomes without sacrificing design values. What came out of it is an understanding of producing unconventional solutions to unconventional problems. We are constantly trying to find better and more efficient solutions to design, design processes and project implementation.

As a self-described Architectural Technologist who advocates for the use of BIM, how crucial has the adoption of BIM or other new technology been to your own success?

It's been central to our business. It has also led us to develop niche services within the traditional scope. We help our

collaborators remain lean or build capacity on a project basis. This allows companies to manage resourcing without the long-term commitments. Leaner companies will be able to pivot faster and remain sustainable in the longer run. This will only be further expedited through the introduction of AI and the blockchain, for example. For us, it has always been our culture to embrace change. Especially in a time when issues such as climate change, depleting natural resources and competing for the best talent has become unavoidable. This acceptance of change will help us pivot and help transform the industry into one that is more sustainable for the future.

What would you choose as a stand-out project that you've delivered and why?

The core of our work collaborates with architects from all around the world. Unfortunately, many of these projects are under strict NDA. However, what I can share is that having the opportunity to work collaboratively and remotely means that we are exposed to projects that have high levels of complexities compared to some of the work that we are involved with locally in Malaysia. And some of these projects have won awards in their own respective countries. The ability to deliver BIM based outcomes has been central to this and it has helped many clients develop their designs more accurately. We often say that we build things twice, once virtually and the other physically.

You've worked across 6IX Design Office offices in both Melbourne and Malaysia – and on projects across Australia, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. How does working internationally inform your design thinking?

We've developed a global mindset that encourages us to push the boundaries of our office. What we do today was probably not even possible 5 years ago. But with the development of tech and our involvement in projects across different countries, we are exposed to best practice procedures and benchmark ourselves with international standards. This exposure allows us to constantly incorporate the newest and latest in our delivery strategies in many niche services of design. We are spoilt by being able to work on different types of foreign projects without leaving the comforts of home, particularly the food!

Is there any advice you would give to someone just starting out on their built environment career?

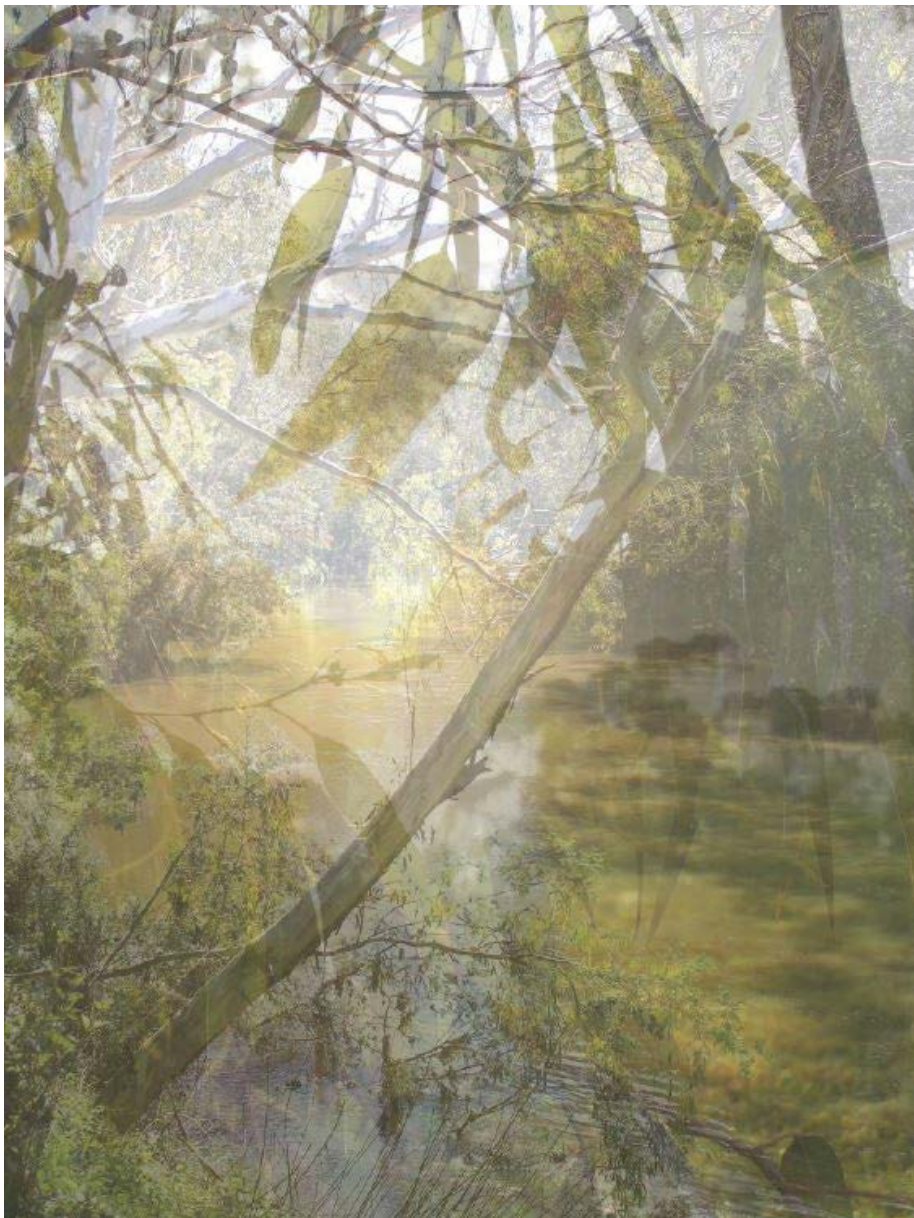
My best piece of advice is to establish industry connections early on. My second piece of advice is to be a Revit ninja. Either one of these will get you one foot in the door.



Preserving waterways to sustain our future

— TIANA STEFANIC

A new strategic planning report shines a light on the importance of the tributary intersections, or confluences of the Birrarung (Yarra River), as a starting point for re-envisioning the Great Birrarung Parklands.



The [Birrarung Confluences Report](#) was developed through discussions with the Birrarung Council and through coursework with Uncle Bill and Uncle Dave from the Wurundjeri woi-Wurrung Aboriginal Heritage Corporation, with confluences having been highlighted by First Nations peoples as significant meeting places and sacred sites.

Led by the team at the [Urban Ecology and Design Lab](#) (UEDLAB) at the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the report received funding support and guidance from the Yarra Riverkeepers Association. The report focuses on three confluences with the Birrarung as case studies, including the Darebin, Merri and Gardiners Creeks.

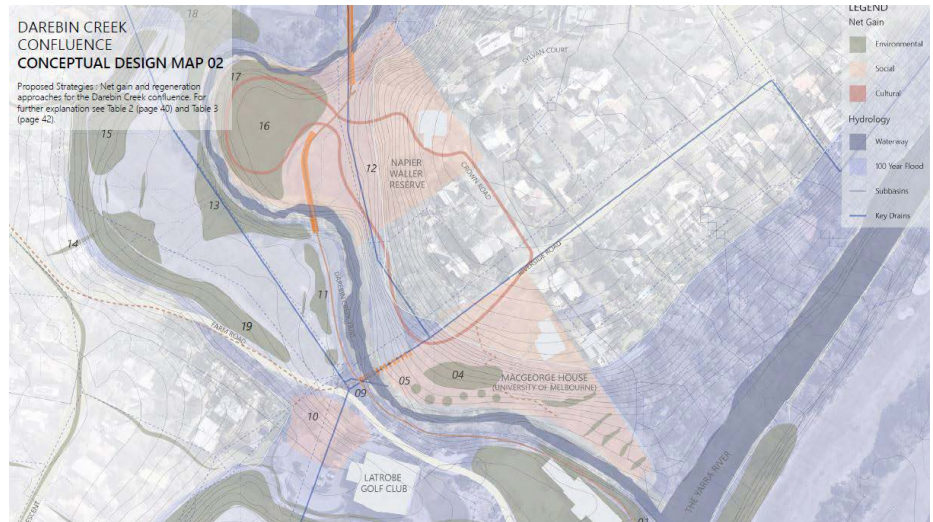
According to project lead Professor Alex Felson, Elisabeth Murdoch Chair of Landscape Architecture for the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the aim of the ongoing research is to establish a set of culturally guided adaptation planning approaches that can support the Birrarung Council in their goal to “re-conceptualise the river as one living and integrated natural entity from source to sea,” as stated in the Yarra River Act (2017).

The report outlines short- and mid-term strategies for improvement of the parklands that can lead to longer term transformations. The hope is that this will be co-led by First Nations representatives on which the land sits and that the outcomes can be incorporated into existing land management documents to inform a more climate resilient, site-specific ecological regeneration.



LEFT: A VIEW OF THE BIRRARUNG. COMPOSITE IMAGE BY GINA DAHL.

RIGHT: 'DAREBIN CREEK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN MAP, NET GAIN AND REGENERATION.' IMAGE BY GINA DAHL.



“By embracing First Nations knowledge and supporting the role of land custodianship, we can inform our near mid- and long-term future goals that consider the impact on past, present and future generations,” Prof Felson said.

“The need to cultivate new narratives and new ways of conceptualising sharing the land and care for Country should inform how we live within our neighbourhoods, as well as our land use practices along the Birrarung and its tributaries. By reconnecting with the ecological dynamics of the river and its catchment area, we can make them more a part of our lives.”

Since the establishment of Melbourne as a colony, the Birrarung’s floodplains, billabongs and tributaries have been heavily developed with industry and urbanisation. Demand for potable water, particularly during drought, led to the construction of dams and diversions for catchment and storage. This heavily reduced water flow reducing water flow into the floodplains.

Culturally and ecologically significant waterways no longer received enough water to support the native ecosystems and wildlife habitats along the Birrarung, such as the Bolin Bolin Billabong Reserve in Bulleen. The reduction in flow has left extensive floodplain mostly inactive and compromised. With strategic water management and habitat regeneration, certain areas, such as billabongs and wetlands can be reactivated and restored. This supports First Nations cultural landscape identity and native wildlife.

The report focuses on land use changes that build cultural heritage and ecological value. Recreational land, for example the golf courses that sit along the River and tributaries, can incorporate water sensitive urban design strategies including wetlands and bioretention as part of the design. Residential properties could also introduce managed ecological habitats for biodiversity and additional water sensitive urban design features.

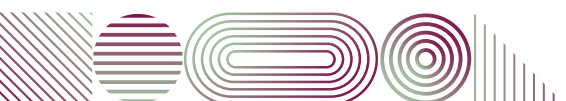
Prof Felson cited the value of, “considering the building rooftops as the top of the watershed, and treating this water through integrated vertical treatment systems, allowing water to be caught from the roof and sent through a set of treatment strategies, down to rain gardens and constructed wetlands before reaching the creeks and river.”

The report highlights social, cultural and economic benefits associated with the strategies. For example, there is a correlation between access to green spaces and parklands and the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

“There is already an affinity for nature and a rich urban ecology in Melbourne. Our hope is that we can reinforce and develop

this further by embracing First Nations perspectives on caring for Country and the integration of this with simple urban design language to communicate these strategies so that residents of these areas can and become invested in their success,” Prof Felson said.

Continued development pressures will exacerbate the existing issues around the health of ecosystems and built environments in Australia – flooding, drought, invasive species, and loss of biodiversity. According to Prof Felson, “the more that we’re able to transition our urban environments into healthier spaces and expand our collective understanding of Country and our ability to serve as custodians of the land, the better it’s going to be for the ecological systems that sustain us and for our own health.”



Inside the faculty

People and news

Dr Karen Burns, together with Lori Brown (Syracuse University), was awarded the [2023 Milka Bliznakov Research Prize](#) by the International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA).

Dr Judy Bush and **Dr Natalie Galea** were both awarded project funding in round 1 of the [ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award 2024](#). Dr Bush secured funding for her project on nature-based solutions for the climate change-biodiversity nexus in cities, and Dr Galea was awarded funding for her project on the resistance to gender equality in the Australian construction sector.

Dr Simona Castricum received the [Chancellor's Prize 2023](#) for her PhD thesis exploring the rights, safety, and relationships gender-nonconforming people experience within the context of architecture and public space.

A/Prof Hemanta Doloi was awarded the [Nelson Mandela Leadership Award - 2023](#) by the [Non-Resident Indian \(NRI\) Welfare Society of India](#) for his efforts to improve Rural Communities through his [Smart Villages](#).

Dr Hannah Robertson and project partners the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation, the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Arup received an [Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation 'Our Country, Our Future' Grant](#) to provide the construction funds needed to build the Stage 2: Ranger Base of the Olkola Cultural Knowledge Centre.

Dr Georgia Warren-Myers was awarded the Lesley Bennett API Women in Property award at the [Australian Property Institute Awards](#). She was also awarded as a fellow of the Australian Property Institute.

A/Prof Ben Cleveland, A/Prof Christhina Candido and **A/Prof Kate Tregloan** received [funding support](#) in the ARC Linkage Projects scheme for their multidisciplinary project to make schools more inclusive for students with disability.

A pavilion prototyped and made in the MSD Fab Lab by **Dr Sofia Colabella, Dr Alberto Pugnale** with students **Jack Halls, Michael Park** and **Michael Mack** won First Prize at the [IASS 2023 Design Competition and Exhibition of Innovative lightweight structures 2023](#).



Events and exhibitions

MSDx Winter 2023

The mid-year celebration of student work across all levels of the Glyn Davis Building once again drew a large and appreciative crowd. Prize winners on the night included Studio DE/02 Common led by Rennie Liffen and Oskar Kazmanli-Liffen for Best Overall Exhibit, and People's Choice awarded to Studio 44 - Art Life + Other Things led by Samuel Hunter.

Victoria's Future Cities, Suburbs and Building Reforms

The Victorian Government has undertaken a program to reform the building system, raising important questions about consumer protection, building industry governance and the role of developers, contractors, architects, and consultants. This panel discussion with key building industry stakeholders explored these issues and how they might be addressed going forward.

► [View the panel discussion here.](#)

Why is real change so hard? Leveraging the city and university connection for impact

This one-day symposium hosted by Melbourne Centre for Cities featured thought-provoking speakers, cutting-edge research and practice, and participatory discussions, to think about opportunities and challenges that arise when universities and cities work together to address important urban issues.

► [Read more here.](#)

South Asian Modernisms: Australian Scholarship and Global Perspectives

This exhibition was part of a series curated by the Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA) & Society of Architectural & Urban Historians of Asia (SAUHA). Hon Lisa Singh, CEO of the Australian India Institute, opened the event, featuring a panel facilitated by Prof Anoma Pieris with talented South Asian women who have pursued diverse pathways in the built environment fields, including ABP's Dr Kelum Palipane, Dr Jyoti Shukla and Dr Naima Iftikar.

Thinking of You: Projects by MGS Architects

This exhibition explored the work of the Melbourne-based practice MGS Architects, founded by University of Melbourne alum Rob McGauran and Mun Soon. It asked the question: 'what happens after a project is turned over to the people who use it?', foregrounding their voices through resident interviews and interactive displays giving visitors an insight into the practice's collaborative, process-driven approach.

► [Find out more.](#)

Dean's Lecture Series: Digital Twin Applications for Buildings and Large Capital Projects

This lecture was presented by Professor Chimay Anumba, Dean of the College of Design, Construction, and Planning at the University of Florida. He spoke about the growth of Digital Twins and the important role they can play in industry transformation.

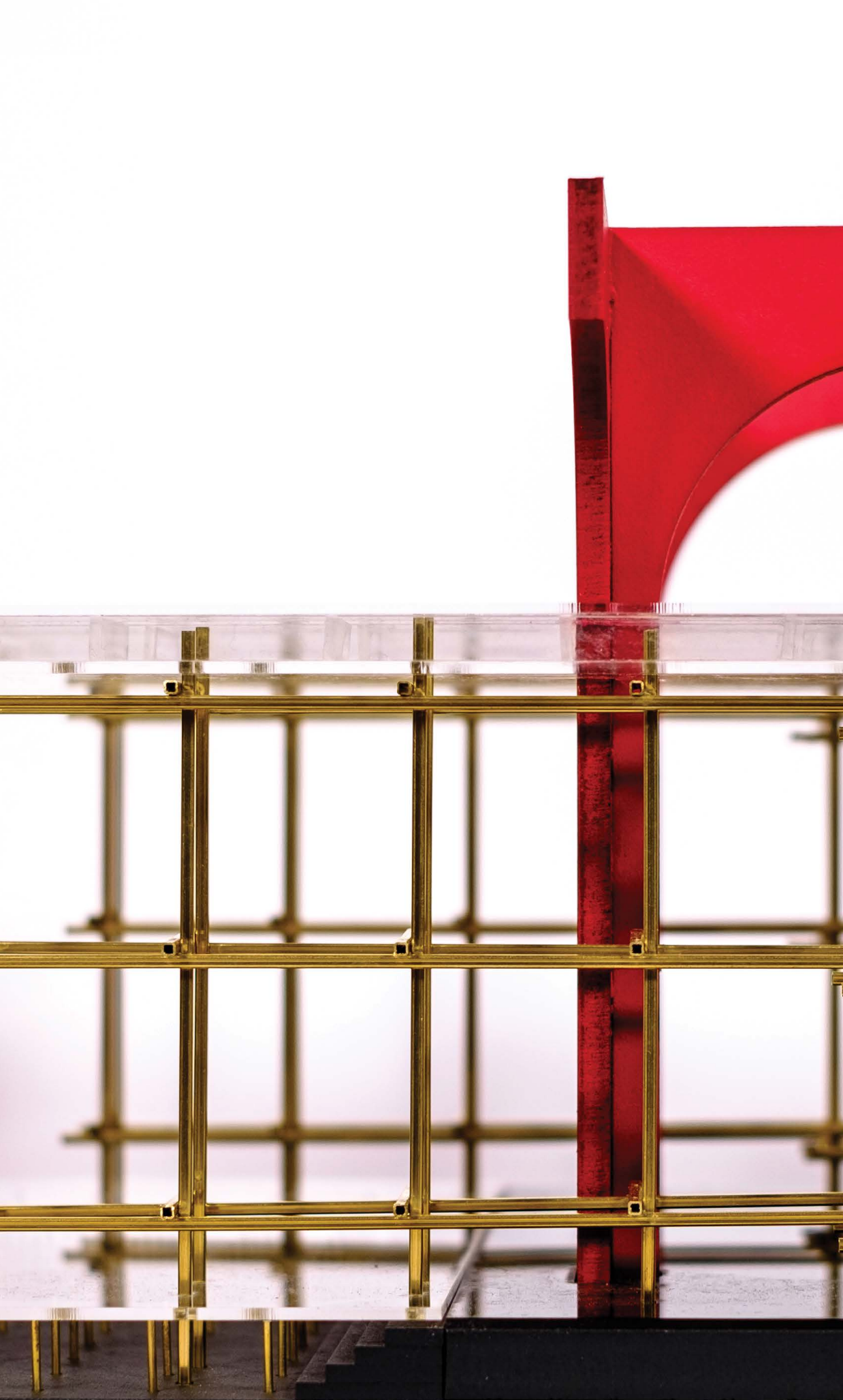
► [View the lecture here.](#)

Dean's Lecture Series: A Sense of Identity: An Exploration of Landscape Architecture in Africa

This lecture was presented by Chloe and Michael Humphreys of The Landscape Studio, a design firm based in Europe and East Africa. They presented key projects in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania that demonstrated their unique approach to landscape architecture, driven by careful observation and an in-depth understanding of a sense of place.

► [View the lecture here.](#)





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