

# MONUMENT 51

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ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

## BUILDING ART WOOD MARSH

**NATURAL WONDER**  
KERRIDGE HOUSE

**COMPLEX EQUATIONS**  
TOYO ITO/BALMOND

**DIVINE INTERVENTION**  
HARMER ARCHITECTURE

**HISTORY IN THE MAKING**  
DAWSON BROWN

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAU**  
BRUCE IN THE WEST

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WHO, WHAT, WHERE **DESIGN ATLAS**



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## EVERYTHING BUT THE WALLS

JASPER MORRISON

Reviewed by Fleur Laurence

'IN THE REAL WORLD an object is just an object,' Jasper Morrison says in the easy conversational style that trips across the pages of *Everything But The Walls*. The English designer's anti-*Memphis*, anti-*PoMo* dialectic sounds modernist as it decries decoration, but Morrison isn't striving for purity of form. His language is literally pedestrian, allowing a comfortable dialogue between the reader and his vast catalogue of work.

From upturned terracotta plant pots to wood veneer patterns originally sourced from cheese wrappers and sections of plumbing pipes, Morrison's design can appear at times to be a contemporary relative of Duchamp's 'ready-

made'. He takes ordinary objects and reinvents their use: finding pleasure in everyday things. This is evident throughout this catalogue, from the reinvention of an antique chair that was missing a seat, to the floor light 'Luxmaster' of 2000, which reuses a spiral telephone cord.

*Everything But The Walls* emphasises the Morrison ethos that design is limitless and design is everywhere: 'Somehow the economy of recycling a form seems more rigorous than trying to invent one.'

Morrison touts his work as 'Utilism' and fights a war against 'Uselessness'. He argues against decoration and espouses enjoyment in the

humanity of things, like birdbaths, which humans make for animals. If this sounds fanciful, it is worth remembering that Morrison has been incredibly productive; his extensive body of work for various manufacturers undeniably supports his methodology. Corkscrews, bicycles, ceramic bowls, trams and chairs appear page after page.

This book feels warm and honest, and Morrison's light touch translates well into text. The word never competes with the image, instead appearing like scribble, like thoughts in the margins. Concepts are explained, constraints are admitted, successes are enjoyed and the

designer's unflinching curiosity keeps the book moving as one design affects another and so on.

One also learns that marketing is Morrison's enemy. Marketing makes objects change unnecessarily for economic gain; it creates a false sense of originality while steadfastly remaining the same. For Morrison, creativity is expressed in an object's humanity, not its exclusiveness or shiny newness. Like his designs, this book evokes an appreciation of the things that delight humanity.

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## DIVISION AND MULTIPLICATION: BUILDING AND INHABITATION IN INNER MELBOURNE

KIM HALIK AND NIGEL BERTRAM

Reviewed by Alex Selenitsch

FOR NIGEL BERTRAM and Kim Halik, the city begins with the division of space and continues dividing through land, buildings and interiors. Somewhere in this process, what we normally call architecture comes into existence. The process is an ongoing one, and a study of its effect on the design of buildings could, in theory, be illuminating. In this new book, Bertram and Halik make it so.

Using 15 case studies of existing buildings located in Melbourne's inner suburbs, the authors propose a way of reading the forms, materials and uses which characterise that part of the city. They do this through six concepts:

abstract and concrete boundaries, elasticity, orientation, interval, public mansions and concealed divisions.

The case studies are presented as line drawings, mostly isometrics, and include houses, hotels, restaurants, shops, offices and conglomerates of the above. The drawings show everything and are both familiar and startling. *Case Study 1*, for example, is a drawing of a house that includes the front fence, letterbox and yard, the backyard and clothes hoist, side fences, sheds, TV aerials, (nearly) all the downpipes and the road sign on the footpath next to the house. The drawings show the real texture of city building, where

inconsistent or contrasting values of forms, materials and workmanship are not just mixed together accidentally, but are placed through considered rules. My experience of other Australian cities suggests that Bertram and Halik's analysis would apply there just as well.

The case study drawings also demonstrate that as a city texture divides and fragments, it also regroups. My favourite observation, in this regard, is that the bar in a hotel is a large, often complex object that unifies a number of different rooms or spaces. The process of separation and unification happens at all scales, both inside and outside, and constitutes a kind of urban dialectic

which ensures that in the city of specific sites and individual inhabitants there is little (if any) repetition, and in fact a lot of variety.

This book works equally well as a straightforward guidebook to Melbourne's inner suburbs, as a set of concepts for further analysis and as an inspiration for the pursuit of architecture through its beautiful drawings of the case studies. It's a most useful and delightful tome, and in the context of any discussion about style, a quietly subversive one, too.

Published and distributed by RMIT University Press  
100 pages, RRP\$27.50

## GEDMETRIES OF POWER: IMPERIAL CITIES OF DELHI

CHRIS JOHNSON

Reviewed by Gerard Reinmuth

CHRIS JOHNSON'S *Geometries Of Power* is not so much a book as a travelogue and conversation. This is not surprising, as it was published as a pre-emptive transcript of and companion to a lecture – largely based upon first-hand impressions of Delhi's architecture and planning – given by Johnson at the *University of Sydney* earlier this year. The lecture was an auspicious one, the fourth of the *Wilkinson Lectures* – a series that began in 1969 with Gough Whitlam and continued in recent years with talks by Fumihiko Maki and Harry Seidler.

The lecture was also distinctive for other reasons. Gough Whitlam's previous involvement was recognised in the introduction of proceedings by another former Labor PM and

Lutens fan, Paul Keating. The audience was of note, too, with heavyweights Keating and Johnson bringing out a parade of political players rarely seen at architecture lectures. Given the consequent sense of gravitas, it was amusing to find an enthusiastic group of Indian musicians playing a raga as a form of pre-game entertainment.

The key to understanding this book lies in Johnson's decision to ask the musicians to continue the raga while he actually delivered the fourth *Wilkinson* lecture. After recovering from the shock of this combination, listeners sat back to enjoy Johnson's reflections in the form of a recorded diary, punctuated by anecdotes and stories of places and people encountered along the way. Thus, the lecture itself also took on

something of a raga style – a casual, winding search without climax or resolution.

*Geometries Of Power* is an accurate reflection of this sensibility. It is decidedly non-academic, verging instead on the conversational. It is not so much edited as compiled, using a range of notes and sketches from Johnson's travels. The conclusions he makes are not rigorously researched and definitive but rather intuitively felt and speculative. In these aspects, the book is non-contemporary, but rather recalls the sense of the 19th-century traveller and enthusiast, scouring the nether regions of the globe while writing and collecting as they went. This sensibility is underpinned by Johnson's delightful sketches, which display his ability to gauge the spirit of a situation quickly

and to document it, before moving on to the next subject.

In its easy-to-digest combination of conversational prose and illustrations, and its honest and unpretentious speculations, this book reveals Johnson's finest qualities and those that have led him to become a highly visible *Government Architect* and a conduit between the profession and those in power. For this is not a definitive document, but an open-ended introduction to the subject, punctuated with signposts, sources and suggestions for those who wish to explore further.

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University of Sydney  
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