

Built, Unbuilt and Imagined Sydney



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Introduction

Built, Unbuilt, and Imagined Sydney presents the expanded field of architecture. It aims to show that the practice of architecture exceeds the work legally defensible under the title of the architect. Besides the design and construction of buildings, the disciplinary field of architecture consists of exhibition and display; discussions and lectures; competitions and visions of new public domains; interactions between art and architecture in the form of installations, performances, and public art; and ideas on new directions for the practice of architecture. The book, therefore, places emphasis on practice as an intellectual activity, in addition to the definition of the term informed by business and legal parameters. It is seen as the meaningful exercise of social, political, and critical knowledge, skills, and mindset in an urban, spatial, and tectonic condition. The practice is also a public act, mediated, legitimated, and made meaningful through its articulation in various institutional, public, and mediatic realms. The book focuses on built and unbuilt works (residential, commercial, interiors, and so on) in Sydney, inclusive of public art, object or furniture design, key invited or public lectures, studios, current projects in making, competitions, collaborations, exhibitions, installations, and outreach work. The focus is on the innovative and the original—not the ordinary or the purely commercial.

Built, Unbuilt, and Imagined Sydney is structured into five chapters: (1) Architecture on Show; (2) Talking Point; (3) Competitions and New Public Domains; (4) Immersive Installations and Public Art; (5) Ideas: Sites, Sights, and Visions. Unlike conventional scholarship on contemporary architecture or a monograph approach which could have focused on a city, a region, an architect, a period in history, the book employs a different literary form. The independent essays within each chapter derive from their origin as blog posts in *World Architecture News*, UK. The significance of this is that it aims to capture the effect of architecture media (print and online) in the new millennium. The speed of information exchange and flow is almost overwhelming to the point that narrative, sequence, and boundaries of knowledge are lost and blurred. The notion of currentness is much more narrowly conceived now, as knowledge is quickly produced as well as made obsolete. As a result, the essays are noticeably episodic as well as topical. The aim is, therefore, to demonstrate the vitality and intensity of architectural thought. Since, no media will satisfy the desire for wholeness or permanence, the book tries to pick

out the critical and creative DNA of the city as well as the desires, affinities, and positions that are shaping the built environment, at least in Sydney.

The collection of essays reveals that all or most architects either adopt as their own or have an interest in an(other) field, such as art, urbanism and landscape, virtual reality and three-dimensional imaging, installation and lighting design, and so on. The collection of essays aims to reveal therefore the multidisciplinary, urban orientations, and fluid forms of practice.

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