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HISTORIANS, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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Mailing address: *Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning*
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SAHANZ, the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand aims to further the study of architecture and related arts. Members of the Society receive the journal, *Fabrications*, and notifications of conference and associated meetings.

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Editorial

This double issue of *Fabrications* focuses on New Zealand. Themes were inspired by and distilled from the SAHANZ keynote address of 2003, delivered by one of New Zealand's most recognised architectural historians and educators, Professor Mike Austin. In his paper, 'Kiwi Architecture', edited and re-printed here, Austin explores four foundational narratives for examining the New Zealand architectural canon: the Maori meeting house; the land; the house and bach; and local modernism. The papers included in this issue respond to these themes and Austin's body of writing on the place and buildings of New Zealand.

The Maori meeting house, like the bach, is a building type unique to New Zealand. Austin's previous work on the responsibility of non-Maori to respond in a culturally-sensitive manner to the study of meeting houses forms the basis for Bill McKay's paper 'Maori Architecture: Transforming Western Notions of Architecture'. The European intellectual basis for architecture and architectural criticism is interrogated and shown to be wanting, particularly in the elevation of the meeting house in the New Zealand architectural canon and subalternation of much more radical building lineages by religio-political pan-tribal Maori leaders. Michael Linzey's paper 'On the Pointing Signification of the Meeting House' situates the meeting house within a dense context of signifieds involving te reo Maori (language), anthropomorphism, and the land. With respect to the latter, Austin's interpretation of the meeting house within the landscape is critically examined against that suggested by ethnologist Professor Roger Neich.

In New Zealand and Australian scholarship the land is persistently framed as a contested site of indigenous and colonial identity. In her paper 'Mesnard, Michelet and the Blueness of the Bay of Islands', Sarah Treadwell explores the land and its relationship to the sea, through a careful analysis of an 1838 watercolour by Theodore Mesnard and an 1841 lithograph made after his work. European and Maori architectures of the land and sea and their intersection with the natural world, as expressed by the artist and the printmaker, are found to illustrate a complex shifting ground.

Paul Walker explores the more recent ebb and flow of architectural ideas to and from New Zealand. He sees the house, and more particularly the location of the house in nature, as the site of the formation of the architectural canon of New Zealand architecture, and the principle focus of its representation in the international press. In another exploration of the invention of a canon, Justine Clark, in her paper 'Ephemera: The Elusive Canon of New Zealand Architecture', explicitly addresses how we, as architectural historians and critics, make, discuss, critique and revise canonical works and themes.

The two following papers deal with aspects of modernism in New Zealand in quite different ways. Andrew Leach closely follows the career of emigré architect Helmut Einhorn, who came from Berlin to Wellington in 1939. Leach charts Einhorn's involvement in the influential Architectural Research Group in the 1940s, who sought to investigate "a better way of living" through modern planning and housing design, through to his work with various government

agencies in the 1950s and 1960s including the Hydro-electric Design Office and the Environmental Design Section. Through Einhorn, Leach concludes with a questioning of the processes of importing, negotiating and embedding modern thinking in post-World War II New Zealand.

The representation of modern New Zealand through building is further explored in Miles Glendinning's paper '*Una lezione di civiltà*'. Glendinning contrasts the design and construction of the New Zealand High Commission in London (1954-1962) by Robert Matthews, and the British Embassy Chancery in Rome (1959-1971), by Basil Spence. These two buildings expressed, quite differently, transformations in the power of the British Empire in the post-World War II context, via the representation of Britain in Europe, and the waning colonial-imperial ties between Britain and the antipodes. New Zealand's international image, as manifest in the High Commission tower located in the heart of London, was bold and optimistic about New Zealand's potential political and economic stature.

The response to the regional focus of this issue was very strong and we believe that the final selection of papers reflects the depth and breadth of current scholarship on New Zealand architecture. This substantial issue also marks the commencement of Deidre Brown's term as co-editor.

Finally, as an addition to volume 14, we have revived the role of *Fabrications* in offering reviews of new scholarly texts on Australian and New Zealand architecture. We hope this will continue and welcome review submissions.

Hannah Lewi and Deidre Brown

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