

## **Editorial**

### **Colonialism and Landscape**

Dr Shaun Murray, ENIAtype

Senior Lecturer at University of Greenwich

Senior Teaching Fellow at Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London

Colonialism and Landscape issue of Design Ecologies explores the contemporary landscapes that are the result of modern-day processes and historical legacies. What all the articles do is try to piece all that together and provide a time dimension. It's like detective work really. You are given information that has been laid down, and then you investigate all the potential reasons why that information is there.

We are working to create a better predictive ability. We have been really concerned about climate changing over the past century or two, but we are dealing with a system that beats to multiple different rhythms in time and space. There are all sorts of patterns and scales that our natural systems behave, respond and operate in. If we can piece together how natural systems change both with and without human intervention, then we can have a better understanding of how things might change into the future.

Providing an ecological window into what our space could become. A kind of predictive engine into opening up the hidden complexities of specific spaces of awareness.

Time is with you, the things around you change as you change. Architecture slips between one space and another at different periods of time. Like an archaeologist discovering a fragment, the physical act of discovery is time stamped from where in space and time it's come privileged over when it was discovered.

In a bootstrap paradox, an object or information from the future is sent back to the past. That creates a never-ending cycle in which the object no longer has any real origin. It exists without ever having been created. Things travelling back in time and finds us before they have been created. Question of origin.

Design Ecologies 9: Colonialism and Landscape unpack a range of forms of colonialism in terms of landscapes we enter into or inhabit.

### **Ecological Design Visions**

Mario Gooden, 'Colonialism, Water and the Black Body' unpacks for the black body, water is a topological condition that has been a medium for European colonialism and the construction of race. Water as a line from coloniality to climate change represents the spectacle of vulnerability within the quotidian condition of black life and its of indigeneity and diasporic formation linked by a vicious history of imperialism and colonization. The topology of water not only refers to geometric properties of water in terms of its liquidity, flows, movement, and its capacity for infinite temporal and morphological containments but also to the cultural landscape of water defined by relationships of power that do not so much change but take up new guises of privilege and subjugation.

Tom Rivard, 'Losing Place: Urban Islands and the Practices of Unsettling on Cockatoo Island' explores how contemporary architectural practice posits the City as an agglomeration of built fabric and its resultant spaces; congruent theories of place attempt to discern opportunities and create methodologies to engage with and inhabit this fabric. These theories of urbanism are reacting to a socio-economic culture that demands precision, rationality and above all clarity, producing a spatial realm increasingly branded, deracinated and politically circumscribed – clearly defined, delineated and described.

### **Notational Design Visions**

Chris L. Smith, 'Colonising Islands' unpacks when Edward Said spoke of an 'imaginative geography', it was both to question the geographic positions adopted as part of colonial accounts and to posit the role of imagination itself in the construction of geographies. This article turns to the imaginative geography of islands and takes three islands as its departure point.

### **Instructional Design Visions**

Patrick W. L. Birch, 'Ground to Crown: Advocating the latent potentials of undervalued fibre composites' explores the contemporary applications of wood act to suppress the value of timber's integrated material composition, treating wood simply as mass to be divided and reassembled into homogeneous building components. Influenced by a series of mechanical

inputs, including self-loading, wind loading and structural damage, wood is actively developed during its growth as a complex structural material whose internal composition serves not only as a tree's metabolic infrastructure but also as its load-bearing structure. In this way, trees adaptively respond to the unique conditions of their environment in a manner that architecture regularly fails to, given the latter's preoccupation with prescribed formalism.

## **Aesthetical Design Visions**

Cathy Smith, 'Tin City: Nomadic Occupation, Colonisation and Resistance in the Sand Dunes of Stockton Bight, Australia' explores nomadic site occupation as a form of planetary colonisation involving both human and non-human agents. Tin City's occupation thus becomes a story of colonisation, and resistance narrated by the earth itself, and a reminder that the production and consumption of architectural forms does not need to be confined to that which is conventionally human.

*Design Ecologies* was set up as a platform for state-of-the-art experiments that link architecture, technology and philosophy. *Design Ecologies* will be the vehicle to traverse it, outlining a way in which we can encounter designing in the world as a system of strange communication that is complex and involving, perched on the edge of tipping points between harmony and dissonance. Dividing its remit between events, exhibitions, seminars and publications, *Design Ecologies* was officially launched with its inaugural journal issue in January 2011. *Design Ecologies* 1.2: The Unprimed Canvas – named after an off-hand remark by Francis Bacon, to the effect that he considered the process of painting to start with priming the canvas, not assuming that it had already been primed – followed later that year, and saw Timothy Morton contribute an ideation on the selection of articles. In *Design Ecologies* 2.1: The Ill-Defined Niche, the ideation was written by the inimitable Nick Land. *Design Ecologies* 2.2: A Sentient Relic encompasses the idea of a double-edged sword theory – one edge through the dominant 'theory chic' of contemporary architecture and the other opening the way for a more dangerous conception of design – a guide, a tool for a cryptic cartography of positioning oneself from within the construction of the design itself. In the last issue, *Design Ecologies* 3.1: Chthonic Deluge, we were honoured to have the ideation article written by the very best hard science fiction writer Peter Watts, who is an author, felon and former marine biologist whose background informs

science fiction on the hard end of the scale (in fact, his novel *Blindsight* [Watts 2006] has been used as a core text for undergraduate courses ranging from 'Philosophy of mind' to 'Introductory neuropsychology'). His work is available in eighteen languages. Also, we have had fantastic contribution from avant-garde architects such as Perry Kulper, Nat Chard, Bryan Cantley and Mark West.

Regular updates at: <http://instagram.com/designecologies>

We invite submissions of articles from any discipline to speculate on the formation of your projects/buildings/performances as a critical practice that activates our understanding of intuition, inventory and discovery in architecture.

The four areas of interest include the following:

1. Ecological design visions
2. Notational design
3. Instructional design visions
4. Aesthetical design visions

We also welcome case studies and project profiles of one to five pages in length.

### **Submissions**

Submissions are welcome from both scholars and practitioners. Contributions may be between 5000 and 7000 words and should be accessible to the non-specialist reader. Articles must be submitted in English.

Please send all submissions to: [shaun@eniatype.com](mailto:shaun@eniatype.com)

Contact:

E-mail: [shaun@eniatype.com](mailto:shaun@eniatype.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4887-1684>

Instagram: [instagram.com/eniatype](https://www.instagram.com/eniatype)