

# Introduction

## Expat: Places/Spaces/Baggage

Julia Gatley and Carl Douglas

In 2005, the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) celebrated its centenary and convened a conference titled *Taking Stock*, which featured as keynote speakers a series of New Zealand-educated architects who practise overseas. The conference sought to gain a perspective on New Zealand architecture from expatriate eyes. In the same vein, another expat New Zealander, Helene Furján, now working at the University of Pennsylvania, suggested the expat theme for *Interstices 09*.

Expatriates take up residence away from home. In a present marked by intense human displacement and global hyper-connection, expatriatism is no longer an exceptional state but a commonplace, perhaps even typical, condition. For some, refugees and fugitives, nomadism is enforced, temporarily at least. For others, the adoption of nomadism is made possible by the ubiquity and pervasiveness of electronic communications and high-speed travel. Many disciplines have been transformed by the hybridities of expertise brought about by expanded networks: international alliances and multi-national practices are unexceptional.

The expatriate is sometimes seen as a figure of divided loyalties. Julia Kristeva describes the exile as a “melancholy lover of a vanished space” (1991: 9). But is the expat necessarily nostalgic? Perhaps instead of being an exile, a homeless stranger, the expat is at home everywhere. The question could even be asked: is home an outmoded ideal, a sedentary concept with dubious applicability to a nomad world? Paraphrasing part of Deleuze and Guattari’s famous account of nomadism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto suggest that the nomad is in fact the one standing still: “The nomad on the steppes stays still relative to the greening of the landscape, by moving at the speed of annual climatic fluctuation” (2006: 52). The nomad finds stasis in perpetual motion.

*Interstices 09* called for papers that examine the spaces and structures of the expatriate and the consequences for architecture and urbanism of a world defined by flows, circulation and temporary alliances. What kind of view is gained by being an expat? What problems face the expat? How are ideas and practices transformed by being displaced from one cultural location to another? What new architectural forms are produced by the contemporary culture of mobility?

Many of the contributors to this issue of *Interstices* themselves write from the perspective of being, or having been, an expat. Some write of this experience, while others present case studies of expats and expat spaces. The issue opens with David Beynon’s “Refusal of Home? Architecture *Ex-Patriota*”. Beynon proffers a series of scenarios in which home is refused. These range from a portable ‘Slinky House’, which he and others designed some ten years ago, to ‘Wallpaper\* people’ in Singaporean wine bars, international students in noodles bars and bubble tea-houses in Melbourne, the homeless, global nomads and the inten-

sity and state of flux of particular East Asian capitals and large cities. Beynon associates the refusal of home with the active engagement with impermanence and change.

Linked to the previous paper by references to Japanese Metabolism, Tom Daniell's "From Far East to Middle East", opens and closes with discussions of the Tokyo architect Arata Isozaki's Qatar National Library, designed in 2000-2 with evident reference to Isozaki's earlier Clusters in the Air project (1960-62) and under construction at the present time. Daniell makes reference to Clusters in the Air, and to Isozaki's utopian Mirage City project (1996-97), to critique the Doha building, arguing that while it might be Metabolist in form, it is "diametrically opposed" to it in intent: in particular, it was not designed to accommodate the growth and change so fundamental to Metabolist thinking. Daniell suggests that Mirage City is more Metabolist in its intent, presupposing "a population of global nomads" and thus perpetual change.

*Interstices 09* then moves from East to West. Deane Simpson, in "Nomadic Urbanism: The Senior Full-time Recreational Vehicle Community", pursues American grey nomads, the huge number of retirees who choose to live life on the road, in their RVs. He discusses the appeal of the RV lifestyle and characterizes the behaviours common to many RVers. The huge and increasing number of people who choose to live this way demonstrates that this comparatively new form of nomadism is significant and thus deserving of greater scholarly attention.

The final two papers in the refereed section are concerned with New Zealand material. Michael Findlay's "So High You Can't Get Over It: Neo-classicism, Modernism and Colonial Practice in the Forming of a Twentieth-century Architectural Landmark" analyzes the Amyas Connell-designed house High and Over at Amersham, Buckinghamshire, without doubt one of the best-known buildings produced by an expat New Zealand architect. Findlay gives unprecedented attention to Connell's New Zealand background and experience and to the design of the High and Over landscape. Robin Skinner's paper, "Further Investigations into an Authorship: Reassessing the Dixon Street Flats Archive", retraces conflicting memories and research regarding the authorship of Wellington's Dixon Street Flats and presents new evidence in support of émigré architect Ernst Plischke's involvement in its design, even while archival sources remain inconclusive.

We open the non-refereed section with a beautiful drawing by Ruth Watson, titled "Pattern Recognition". The pattern reflects Watson's ongoing interest in the history and art of maps and alternative mappings. In "Serendipity: Between Making a Magazine and Writing History", Justine Clark reflects on the role of contingency in the formation of architectural history, based on her experiences of both co-writing *Looking for the Local* (Clark & Walker, 2000) and editing *Architecture Australia*. From one editor to another, John Walsh, in "Places, Spaces, Baggage", argues that our criticism and appreciation of architecture are heavily coloured by undeclared critical baggage. Two essays examine specific historical instances of displaced architectural practice. In "Czechoslovakian Crystal in Pavlova Paradise: Vladimir Čačala, 1926-2007", Linda Tyler traces the life and career of this Czech émigré architect, resident in New Zealand from 1952; and in "An Architectural History of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation", Gay Sweely records the overlooked architecture of an expat community in New Zealand's South Island. "Transnational World: Imagining an Afterspace", by

Rowan Fraser, postulates the spatiality of an instantaneous, real-time world: subjected to the dominance of time, space is reduced to a thin, contingent, ad-hoc 'afterspace'. This is followed by the winning entry and finalists for The University of Auckland's inaugural Simon Devitt Prize for Photography.

We have been spoilt for choice in selecting books to review in this issue, with Patrick Reynolds and John Walsh's *New New Zealand Houses* having appeared at the very end of 2007, and a steady stream of new books in 2008: Tony van Raat's *Trenta Case = Thirty Houses in New Zealand*; Johann Bernhardt's *A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand*; Stephen Stratford's *Architecture Workshop, Architecture +, Studio Pacific Architecture* and Pip Cheshire and Patrick Reynolds' *Architecture Uncooked: The New Zealand Holiday House Through an Architect's Eye*.

Unable to accommodate reviews of all of these, we have selected two books of particular relevance to our expat theme: Tom Daniell's *After the Crash: Scenes from Post-Bubble Japan* and Christoph Schnoor's *La Construction des Villes: Le Corbusiers Erstes Stadtebauliches Traktat von 1910/11*. Daniell is an expat New Zealander who has lived and practised architecture in Japan for many years; Schnoor is an expat German who lives in Auckland and teaches architecture at Unitec. In *After the Crash*, Daniell writes about the architecture of his adopted home. It is reviewed by Andrew Barrie, another New Zealander who lived and worked in Japan for many years. Schnoor writes about Le Corbusier's formative experiences and writings made while in Germany. *La Construction des Villes* is reviewed by Tanja Poppelreuter, another expat German now resident in Auckland. Those of us who cannot read Le Corbusier's French or Schnoor's German will have to wait for translation into English before being in a position to make full use of this weighty new tome.

*Interstices 09* includes two exhibition reviews. Sarah Treadwell reviews *Pulp Fictions: The Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* and *Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing*, two exhibitions that were shown concurrently at the Adam Art Gallery at Victoria University of Wellington in 2007. Carl Douglas reviews [*arc/sec*], a recent exhibition of environmentally-responsive architectural systems at AUT University's St. Paul St Gallery.

Following the reviews is Andrew Barrie's interview of Japanese architect Jun Aoki. Aoki visited New Zealand this year in conjunction with the Japan Foundation's travelling exhibition of architectural projects funded through the Kumamoto Artpolis programme.

The issue concludes with Sam Harnett's photographs of *Long Live the Modern*, the exhibition at which *Interstices 09* is launched.

Unsatisfied with generalities and commonplaces, *Interstices* pries into crevices and takes up residence in the in-between. We hope you enjoy these forays into the interstitial spaces of contemporary architectural practice and spatial thinking as much as we have enjoyed assembling them.

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