



WORKAROUND

WOMEN DESIGN ACTION

July 25 — August 11 2018

RMIT Design Hub



LIVE BROADCAST

# PROGRAM

EPISODE 01	SUEANNE WARE <i>FERAL ARCHITECTURES</i> Wednesday July 25, 1PM–3:30PM
EPISODE 02	HELEN NORRIE <i>REGIONAL ROUND UP: BRIGHT IDEAS FROM BEYOND THE BIG CITIES</i> Thursday July 26, 1PM–3:30PM
EPISODE 03	SIMONA CASTRICUM <i>WHAT IF SAFETY BECOMES PERMANENT?</i> Friday July 27, 10AM–6:15PM
EPISODE 04	PIA EDNIE-BROWN <i>THE JANE APPROACH: ONOMATOPOEIA-PLAY-DAY</i> Saturday July 28, 12PM–5PM
EPISODE 05	OOPLA <i>SENSORY CITY</i> Sunday July 29, 12:30PM–4PM
EPISODE 06	GUEST, RIGGS <i>HASTY WORK</i> Tuesday July 31, 10AM–4PM
EPISODE 07	PIPPA DICKSON <i>POST POKIES APOCALYPSE</i> Wednesday August 01, 10AM–4PM
EPISODE 08	XYX LAB <i>SHEcity</i> Thursday August 02, 10AM–5PM
EPISODE 09	MARY FEATHERSTON <i>WONDER-FUL SCHOOLS?</i> Friday August 03, 12:30PM–4PM
EPISODE 10	AMY LEARMONTH <i>SERIOUS PLAY</i> Saturday August 04, 10:30AM–4PM
BREAK IN OUR USUAL TRANSMISSION	CURATORIUM: KATE RHODES, FLEUR WATSON, NAOMI STEAD <i>WORKAROUND: SOME LEADING QUESTIONS ON WOMEN, DESIGN, ACTION AND ACTIVISM</i> Tuesday August 07, 1PM–3PM
EPISODE 11	HARRIET EDQUIST <i>TRANSITION: VOICES FROM THE ARCHIVE</i> Wednesday August 08, 10AM–4PM
EPISODE 12	ESTHER CHARLESWORTH <i>A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECT</i> Thursday August 09, 10AM–3:30PM
EPISODE 13	SAM SPURR <i>A SPATIAL CONVERSATION MACHINE</i> Friday August 10, 10AM–4PM
EPISODE 14	PARLOUR <i>PARLOUR SUPER SALON: WITH ARCHITECTURE + WOMEN • NZ</i> Saturday August 11, 12PM–2PM
	WORKAROUND CLOSING PARTY Saturday August 11, 2PM–5PM

# INTRODUCTION

WORKAROUND engages with a movement of women focused on advocacy and activism within an expanded field of architecture. Each of these practitioners works towards positive change in the built environment and its surrounding cultures. Motivated by the increasing urgency of the challenges we all now face — environmental, social and professional — these women work around existing conventions, systems and structures.

Such practitioners share some common characteristics. They demonstrate agency, strategic opportunism and values-based leadership. Also, they can be defined by what they are not — they are not conventional practitioners, and they are (generally) not producing objects or working within the traditional structure of the design office. These practitioners are agile and each has developed workarounds to critically negotiate and rethink systemic limitations; circumventing entrenched professional hierarchies; managing working life and family demands, and extending the bounds of architecture and design.

Within the diverse practices of these women, gender and feminist politics play varying roles: sometimes a direct and explicit driver, sometimes an implicit and understated context.

WORKAROUND is an online broadcast and a program of live events. Across fourteen daily episodes, fourteen Australian practitioners each present a critique, conversation, interview, workshop or performance that articulates their strategies and workarounds and reflects on their activist practice. In addition, the curators will present a fifteenth episode exploring design activism. Each of the episodes can be watched in real time as it occurs from the set at RMIT Design Hub, or viewed online via the Design Hub website.

For WORKAROUND, our curatorial intention is clear — it is to identify, assemble, create a platform for, and find new connections between a burgeoning movement of women focused on advocacy and activism within an expanded field of architecture. These fourteen broadcast episodes bring to light ways of working within, without and beside architecture as it has previously been conceived. WORKAROUND is our opportunity to learn how this extraordinary group of women articulate their particular workarounds — both personal and professional — that are necessary to effect change.

## CURATORIUM

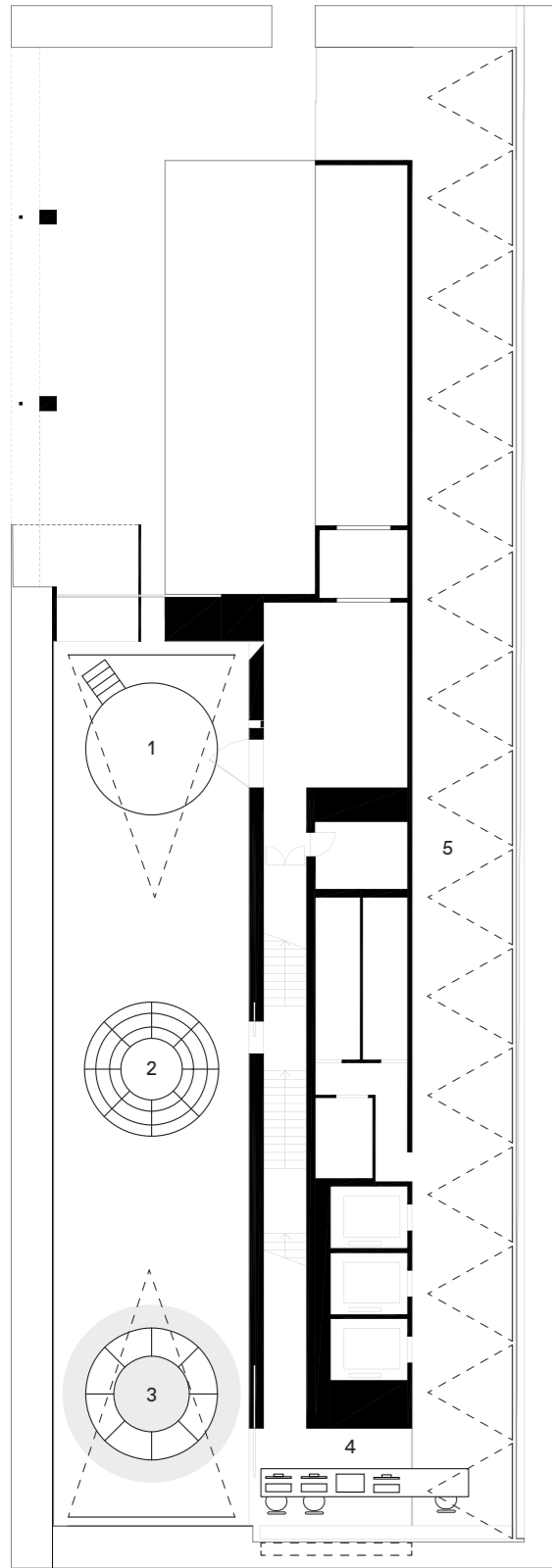
Kate Rhodes and Fleur Watson (RMIT University),  
Naomi Stead (Monash University).

## PRACTITIONERS

Simona Castricum; Esther Charlesworth; Pippa Dickson; Pia Ednie-Brown; Harriet Edquist; Mary Featherston; Guest, Riggs (Stephanie Guest and Kate Riggs); Amy Learmonth; Helen Norrie; OoPLA (Tania Davidge and Christine Phillips); Parlour; Sam Spurr; SueAnne Ware; and XYX Lab (led by Director Dr Nicole Kalms and the combined strengths of core members — Dr Gene Bawden, Dr Pamela Salen, Allison Edwards, Hannah Korsmeyer, and Zoe Condliffe).

# FLOORPLAN

1. STAGE
2. CONVERSATION ZONE
3. ACTIVITY SPACE
4. EDITING SUITE & RECEPTION
5. MANIFESTOS & VIDEO DOCUMENTATION



## 'WORKAROUND: SOME LEADING QUESTIONS ON WOMEN, DESIGN, ACTION, AND ACTIVISM'

NAOMI STEAD

WORKAROUND brings together a community of individuals, and individuals working in collectives, who have decided to *act* (in small ways or large ones, personal ways or public) towards change. They have acted to make the world better — more fair, more equitable, more inclusive, more aware, more truthful, more questioning, more safe, more bearable, more playful, more fun. For some, the way they 'normally' work is itself a form of demonstration. Some enact a gentle form of activism, while others are more forthright in their agitation. Some are just beginning on a course of action, while others have built up a series of actions over the course of an entire career.

Their causes are wildly diverse, as are their methods and approaches. But they also have things in common: they each work in and around the spheres of design, architecture, and spatial practice. Many of these women bring along collaborators and comrades who identify as men — just as we would hope and expect. But WORKAROUND is also, explicitly, about the ways in which women work, and the ways in which they take action, and the ways in which this work and action is conditioned by gender.

So to everyone who works in the expanded fields of design and architecture, this is a call to action. But of course: you have already begun.

[BREAK]

What, for you, is design activism, or action in the sphere of design and architecture? Does it really have any effect? Does it have as much effect as activism in other spheres? How is it different? Is it a dilettante practice? Is it powerful? What can it, uniquely, contribute? Have we got our objects right, our priorities right, our causes right? Are we re-arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic? What can we actually do?

What is your work? How do you work? What are the works that you produce? What prevents your work, stops you from working as you would wish to work? How do you overcome these impediments? How do you stumble over these blocks? What are your workarounds?

Have you observed that your sex or gender or gender identity has affected your work? Has it affected your opportunities? Has this been positive or negative, or both? What is the positive? What is the negative? Has your gender led to particular ways or methods of types of working? Have you pursued particular jobs, techniques, ideas, specialisations, communities, cultures, because of your gender identity? Is this because you were running away from something, or running towards something? Or both? How has gender identity intersected with other aspects of your sense of self

and subjectivity — your class or race or sexuality or something else? Has the compounding of this, the intersection, been surprising to you? How do you work around gender?

[BREAK]

When was it that you first took action? When did you decide you had to intervene? Did it feel like a choice, or a necessity? Were you afraid? Did you weigh the possible risks to yourself, your career prospects, your reputation, your safety? Did you wonder whether it was a foolish thing to do, who would help you, who would protect you, who would join you in solidarity? Did your action spring from a slow-growing idea or a sudden sharp realisation?

Why did you shift from thought to act, from passive to active? Why did it happen at that moment, and not another? Did you think at all, or just act? Did you think the action would be a once-off? Was it a once off? If it happened again, why? Was there a series of actions? When did it start to feel like a campaign? Do you think of yourself as an activist?

Before you acted, were you satisfied with the status quo? How did that feel? Did it feel comfortable? Why did it cease to be comfortable? Did it feel like a prickle or an irritant, a stone in your shoe? Had it been bothering you for a while: was it something you couldn't stand anymore? You couldn't stand by, stand aside, stand back any more? What is it that you stand for? Where do you stand?

[BREAK]

Have you been radicalised? At what point did you say: I'm mad as hell and I'm not gonna take it any more? Have you not said that yet? Why not? Do you think of yourself as having agency? What does agency mean to you? What does conviction mean to you? Do you feel that you have a stance? Are you a rebel? Do you have a cause?

Does your action spring from a moral position? An ethical one? A political one? An ideological one? From a set of personal values and beliefs? How did you decide what your actions should be? Did you settle on the things that you might have some hope of changing? Or did you aim impossibly high? Did you bring your friends? How important are your friends in this? How important are your enemies? How many enemies do you have? Should you have more? Are you afraid of having enemies? Are you trying too hard to be liked?

Does there have to be something at stake to be an activist? Where is the tethered goat? Does there have to be a degree of personal risk? Do you have to have skin in the game? If you're risking nothing then are you only indulging yourself? Are you on your high horse? Is activism sometimes condescending? Do you prefer to enact your actions from within a system, or outside it? Or do you strategically move between the inner and outer realms?

What are the systems you work within? What are the barriers you work around? What are the differences between actions you can enact on the inside, within the system, and actions from without? Is it a matter of subtlety? Of subterfuge? Are you a double agent? Are you playing both sides off against the middle? Who do you work for, anyway? What is your Trojan horse, how do you smuggle your ideas inside, and then how do you let them out?

Are you only ever a real activist once you've been arrested? Do you have a Sea Shephard t-shirt? How come so many academics have activist practices on the side? What is the relationship between activism and advocacy? Is it true that the road to hell is paved with good intentions? Does hope really spring eternal in the human breast?

What makes you angry? Do you see anger as a positive emotion? Are you afraid of your anger? What is there to be angry about? What is there to be afraid of?

Why is it that you want to change the world? What makes you think you can? What makes you think you can't? What are you waiting for?

# ‘NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF THE WORKAROUND’

NAOMI STEAD

To work around is to circumvent: to bypass an obstacle or problem, to find another way. A workaround is a solution, a creative and dextrous, context-specific way of getting around an impediment, of keeping things moving. Those who invent workarounds refuse to be deterred, they are tenacious. Often, they have no choice. The workaround is a means of coping. It becomes a skill, it can be practiced and refined, it is possible to become an expert at working around.

What do women work around? Well, the patriarchy for starters. The systemic and utterly pervasive yet encultured-to-the-point-of-being-invisible privileging of male ideas, perspectives, contributions, attributes, bodies, feelings; and the concomitant, systemic and utterly demoralising devaluation of the contributions of women. The older you get the more you can see it, hiding in the light — women are always already working around their difference from the culturally-encoded ideal, the norm, the ‘proper’ human qualities, which are always already masculine.

When it comes to negotiating within and around the work *place*, there are some further gendered effects to be observed. In architecture, for example, women are under-represented at the highest and most influential and most visible levels of the profession. At the same time, and speaking broadly, there are insufficient opportunities to work part time or flexibly, there is often a lack of clarity around promotion, the hours are long, the pay is low, and perhaps as a result of all of this, women have a tendency to step sideways into ‘unconventional’ or alternative patterns of work.<sup>1</sup> They are, in other words, engaging in workarounds — working around the architecture profession itself.

But far from being solely a bad thing, in WORKAROUND we look to the positive and emancipatory effects of such workarounds — for the individuals involved and for others as well, and potentially also for expanding conceptions of architecture, its practice and its boundaries.

The story is different in other professions, other disciplines, other spatial practices — but not that different. Workers in every field have their own workarounds.

Women of colour, women of working class background, non-cis-gendered women, women with different gender identities — they have their own particular barriers to circumnavigate, sometimes many at a time. The point here is that workarounds which may be necessitated by a particular set of circumstances could, perhaps, lead to other kinds of workarounds as well: different ways of working, different ways of practicing, different conceptions of the discipline or field, different ways of taking action to change circumstances for oneself and for others.

So women work around the patriarchy, and its everyday workplace effects, on a daily basis: acknowledging (to varying degrees) its existence, acknowledging its blunt power, and proceeding anyway, finding ways past and through

and under. Perhaps this produces a certain inventiveness, litheness, lightfootedness. Or perhaps not. But I say: necessity is the mother of the workaround. A workaround is makeshift, but in a productive way. It literally avoids the problem, it says: whatever works. A workaround is the skinny path that snakes up and around that boulder which blocks the track. It appears fragile, next to that obdurate stone. But still, it is powerful, because it speaks of a method, and a sensibility, which is the exact opposite of ‘crash or crash through’. Also, that path shows a way for others, to follow, to also get past and continue on.

A workaround is hasty, impromptu, often once-off. It knows it is not a permanent solution, it makes things work *despite* the problem. A workaround is not ‘proper’ and would never presume to be. A workaround is definitely not perfect, it is often awkward and inelegant, but that doesn’t matter. It is fleeting and finite and it will do for the moment, until it fails or until things change again. A workaround is situational, pragmatic. It is responsive, and agile, to use those piteously over-worked words. It ducks and weaves, it dodges and dives. It works both within and outside existing systems, working around the edges.

A workaround need not be oppositional or defiant or belligerent or combative (though it can be). It doesn’t attempt to destroy the blockage (or not directly, or not straight away) — often because that would be a fools’ game, the barrier is too large or powerful, it’s not a battle worth fighting, or not right now, when you’ve got work to do. A workaround acknowledges the obstacle, then finds a way to sidestep it. A workaround says: I don’t have time for this shit. A workaround can be subversive. It can be fun. It says: fuck it, I’m doing my work anyway. It finds a way. A workaround can be playful and humorous, it can be a feint, a dance.

Those who know workarounds know a way of working, a practice, a method, an attitude — a way of looking askance and doing things differently. Who knows what comes first, the gender identity or the workaround; the actor, the act, or the activism. But either way: many such people are women (whether cis-gendered or gender non-conforming). Certainly some are also men. But many are women: this is not incidental.

1. Naomi Stead, ‘The state of gender equity in architecture in Australia: The research is in,’ *Architecture Australia* Vol. 103 No. 5 (September/October 2014), see <https://architectureau.com/articles/the-state-of-gender-equality/>.

# ‘FERAL ARCHITECTURES’

BIOGRAPHY

SueAnne Ware is Professor of Landscape Architecture and the Head of the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the University of Newcastle, Australia. She is a co-founder of out(fit), an all-female collective of design practitioners and a self-confessed design activist. She believes that landscape architects share a responsibility for exploring political, social and environmental agendas in public spaces.

SueAnne’s projects reflect her commitment to society’s marginalised communities and an exploration of issues such as drug addiction, ‘illegal’ refugee policies and domestic violence. She creates spaces that generate friction, where protests are permitted and possible, where attention is drawn to some of society’s most pervasive issues, and passers-by may discover insight into what SueAnne hopes is a more humanitarian and compassionate approach. Her design projects have won national and international awards; including The SIEV X memorial, the Road as Shrine, and the Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose Victims.

EPISODE SYNOPSIS

In *Feral Architectures*, SueAnne Ware explores physical catalysts for social and political change or, more simply, design activism. She aims to incite action by using counter-narratives to an unsustainable status quo. This episode adopts a Q&A style format where the panel, the audience and the host will discuss design activism. SueAnne reflects upon her 20-some-years of practice through a set of critical lenses and discursive questions centring on: contesting the public realm, conflating intersectionality, provoking social engagement and embracing radical hope. In the spirit of its title, this session hopes to embody notions of *feral*; resulting in a wild, unrestrained or uncultivated state.

1PM–3:30PM

PANEL DISCUSSION

with Paola Balla, Grace McQuilten, Andrea Nield, Katrina Simon and Naomi Stead

“MY STYLE CAN’T BE DUPLICATED OR RECYCLED, THIS CHICK IS A SICK INDIVIDUAL, IT DON’T MATTER WHERE YOU FROM IT’S WHERE YOU AT, AND IF YOU CAME TO FREAK-A-LEAK YOU BETTER BRING YOUR HAT.”

‘WE RUN THIS’,  
THE COOKBOOK [2005],  
MISSY ELLIOT.

SUEANNE WARE

EPISODE 01

Wednesday, July 25

1PM — 3:30PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'REGIONAL ROUND UP: BRIGHT IDEAS FROM BEYOND THE BIG CITIES'

## BIOGRAPHY

The Regional Urban Studies Laboratory (RUSL — pronounced 'rustle') is a collaborative urban design research project that engages directly with local councils and communities to examine urban spatial, temporal and social issues in small towns and cities. Both analytical and speculative projects investigate social, cultural and development issues for regional areas, working with a broad range of council departments, including City Infrastructure, City Planning, Parks and Amenity, and Community Development to investigate key issues that affect regional settlements. RUSL was founded by Dr Helen Norrie from the School of Technology Environments & Design at the University of Tasmania and draws on expertise from architecture, design, planning, economic development, arts and culture.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

Regional towns and cities have historically been the backbone of Australia, yet they currently represent a blindspot in urban thinking. While policy development focuses on the continual growth of the five cities with more than a million people (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide), beyond the major metropolitan centres different issues are at stake. Many regional towns and cities are experiencing rapid change due to inward migration, economic shifts and increasing growth pressures, while others struggle with challenges presented by low population and geographical dislocation. Around Australia, many regional communities are developing new ways of working together to create connections between places and people, creating innovative ways of fostering positive change. This episode draws together case studies from across Australia, focussing on innovative projects lead by women — mayors, architects, urban designers and design champions — that highlight the role regional cities can play in Australia's future development.

1PM-1:30PM	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
2PM-3:30PM	INTERACTIVE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION with invited guests

# IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO MAKE A CITY.

HELEN NORRIE  
EPISODE 02  
Thursday, July 26  
1PM — 3:30PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'WHAT IF SAFETY BECOMES PERMANENT?'

## BIOGRAPHY

Simona Castricum's music and architecture research explores the borderline spaces between euphoria, desolation and aggression — tied together by narratives of gender non-conformity and queer cities. Simona is a PhD candidate in architecture at the University of Melbourne, a DJ/broadcaster on Melbourne community radio station PBS and has written and produced six albums over a 20-year career in music. She has published in *The Guardian*, *Vice*, *i-D*, *Archer* and *The Lifted Brow*. Her essays feature in Routledge's *Architecture & Culture* journal, ARM Architecture's monograph *Mongrel Rapture* and in the *Women of Letters* series.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

Simona Castricum tackles how open urban spaces regularly manifest as hostile environments for gender diverse people. Through an exploration of her own experiences of vulnerability, Simona uncovers just how architecture normalises marginalisation through its professional practices and built outcomes. This episode critiques the normative frameworks of gender through which architecture and the city is viewed, created and policed. It asks how architecture can instead become a transformative practice in social justice that positively affects opportunities for those on the margins through safety, inclusion, belonging and pleasure. The episode features live performances and critiques showcasing Simona's PhD research in architecture at the University of Melbourne and her wider practice in music and performance. The participation of non-binary voices in this episode interrogate the limitations in feminist discourse that focus solely on cisgender exceptionalism as the lens through which to view gender inequality and violence.

## PERFORMERS

Evelyn Ida Morris, best known as Pikelet, is a gifted musician, celebrated for their dexterity across multiple instruments and for songwriting that is complex and structurally adventurous. Evelyn uses they/them pronouns and does not identify as female or male.

Mossy 333 is a multi-disciplinary artist focused on painting, music and performance. Her stage work evokes insight to the subjectivity of her trans feminine experiences regarding body and movement, casting a critical gaze on heteronormative cisgender conditioning.

10AM-12PM	WORKSHOP
12PM-12:30PM	PERFORMANCE
1PM-1:30PM	PERFORMANCE with Mossy 333
1:30PM-2PM	PERFORMANCE with Evelyn Ida Morris
3PM-4PM	CRITIQUE with Karen Burns and Hannah McCann
4PM-5PM	WORKSHOP
5PM-5:30PM	PERFORMANCE
5:30PM-6:15PM	AUDIENCE Q&A

# HOW DOES ARCHITECTURE UPHOLD STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE THROUGH TRANSPHOBIA AND CISNORMATIVITY?

SHITTING IN A PUBLIC TOILET IS  
NEITHER A POLITICAL STATEMENT  
NOR A CRIMINAL OFFENCE.  
TRANS BODIES ARE NOT A  
BATTLEGROUND FOR MORAL PANIC.  
HOW CAN ARCHITECTURE HOLD  
SPACE FOR EMOTION —  
A PLACE FOR CATHARSIS?  
HOW DO FEMINIST FRAMEWORKS  
ERASE NON-BINARY FUTURES?  
WHAT IF SAFETY  
BECOMES PERMANENT?

SIMONA CASTRICUM  
EPISODE 03  
Friday, July 27  
10AM — 6:15PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'THE JANE APPROACH: ONOMATOPOEIA- PLAY-DAY'

## BIOGRAPHY

Pia Ednie-Brown directs Onomatopoeia (onomatopoeia.com.au), a creative research practice concerned with revealing habitual oversights and unacknowledged agency, animating the inanimate and exploring the edges of life. Onomatopoeia stages creative experiments through small architectural projects, workshops, events, installations, objects, film and writing. Pia has been an educator and researcher at RMIT University for over 20 years, and will take up a Professor of Architecture role at the University of Newcastle in 2019. Her research has creatively explored and re-theorised ethics, innovation, emergence and new technologies, particularly in terms of creative practice research methodologies. Her creative works and writing have been published widely in international contexts and she has edited two books: *Plastic Green: designing for environmental transformation* (RMIT Press, 2009) and *The Innovation Imperative: Architectures of Vitality* (AD, Wiley, 2013).

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

In this episode Onomatopoeia will work with an ensemble of invited guests to explore and develop a design ethos, *The Jane Approach*. Drawing on inspirational affinities between Jane Jacobs, Jane Goodall and Jane Bennett, *The Jane Approach* strives to alleviate the destructive tendencies of anthropocentrism. Each of these Janes draw attention to the idiosyncratic presence and agency of things and non-human animals such as chimpanzees, cities and trash. Along related lines, *The Jane Approach* aims to magnify the co-creation implicit within all imaginative activity, and to find ways of amplifying the ecological powers of design. Initially explored through the design transformation of Avery Green (a house-person), this WORKAROUND episode builds upon that work through story-telling, music, and drawing/making, playing with the power of personification as a way to engage more intimately with buildings, places and things.

Invited guests/co-curators include: Annie Bolitho, Fiona Harrisson, Jondi Keane, Gina Moore, Francesca Mountfort, Peta Murray, Caitlyn Parry, Mattie Sempert and others.

## [PART OF OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE]

12PM-12:30PM	MAKING-TIME Becoming Janely and setting the scene
12:45PM-2:15PM	STORY-TIME Sharing stories about house-persons
2:30PM-3:15PM	PLAY-TIME Co-creating Jane School
3:30PM-4PM	BUILDING-TIME A Janely Wonder-Walk
4PM-5PM	OPEN-TIME Party-time, talking-time, next-time...



# LIVE BROADCAST

**HUMANS ARE NOT  
THE CENTRE OF THE  
WORLD AND DESIGN  
MUST BECOME  
MORE-THAN-HUMAN.  
BY LEARNING TO  
WORK-AND-PLAY  
WITH THE ACTIVE  
PERSON-POWER OF  
PLACES AND THINGS,  
WE HOLD THE FUTURE  
OPEN TO VIBRANT  
ECOLOGIES OF PERSONS.**

**PIA EDNIE-BROWN  
EPISODE 04  
Saturday, July 28  
12PM — 5PM**

# 'SENSORY CITY'

## BIOGRAPHY

Tania Davidge and Christine Phillips collaborate as OoPLA (formerly OpenHAUS). They are architects, activists, artists, writers and educators. OoPLA's practice plays out: on the streets and boat ramps of St Kilda; across the pavements of Elwood; under the trees, next to the beach for the Lorne Sculpture Biennale; online for Frankston's White Street Project; in a paddock in South Australia; in a gallery at the University of Melbourne's School of Design; at the Surry Hills Library and Community Centre; at Federation Square; in text, across the pages of architectural magazines; in OMA's MPavilion; on the laneway walls in the city of Melbourne; and in the indoor and outdoor spaces of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).

In 2012 OoPLA was exhibited as part of the Australian exhibition *Formations: New Practices in Australian Architecture* for the Venice Architecture Biennale, and Christine was a participant in one of the five showcased formations as a presenter for the RRR radio show *The Architects*. OoPLA curated the *Advertisements for Architecture* exhibitions held at Federation Square in 2009 and the Surry Hills Library in 2010. The exhibition was awarded the Bates Smart Award for Architecture in the Media: State by the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

Although founded by architects, OoPLA (formerly OpenHAUS) is not a practice about buildings but rather a practice interested in a broader understanding of architecture — it is a practice interested in the culture of architecture rather than the business of architecture. As architects, Christine Phillips and Tania Davidge are interested in the potential that our urban environments hold, and in using this potential to engage people in conversations about their communities and everyday surroundings. This episode opens with a discussion about OoPLA's urban activist practice and will be followed by a tour of RMIT's New Academic Street (NAS), in collaboration with Jessica Timmons from Vision Australia. The tour contemplates the ways we navigate the city, explores the sensory qualities of space and attempts to understand the experience of architecture from the perspective of people who are blind or have low vision.

## [PART OF OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE]

12:30PM-1:20PM	PRESENTATION AND CONVERSATION with invited guests
1:20PM-1:35PM	AUDIENCE QUESTIONS
2:30PM-4PM	TOUR Sensory City tour of New Academic Street (NAS) at RMIT with Jessica Timmons from Vision Australia



# LIVE BROADCAST

**PROVOKING PUBLIC  
CONVERSATIONS ABOUT  
ARCHITECTURE AND  
THE URBAN REALM.**

**OOPLA  
EPISODE 05  
Sunday, July 29  
12:30PM — 4PM**

# 'HASTY WORK'

## BIOGRAPHY

Guest, Riggs is Stephanie Guest and Kate Riggs. Stephanie studied literature at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney, and is currently studying architecture at University of Melbourne. Kate studied architecture at RMIT and is currently based in London. The pair met in Year 11 at Narrabundah College in Canberra.

In 2017, Guest, Riggs won *The Lifted Brow* & RMIT non-fiction Lab Prize for Experimental Non-fiction. You can read their piece, 'An Architecture of Early Motherhood (and Independence)', in Issue 35 of *The Lifted Brow*. In 2017/18, they ran a series of events at MPavilion about the architecture of new parenthood, and exhibited as part of National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Design Week in 2018.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

A real live working day: messy, interrupted, incomplete. Working around everything, always, including this exhibition. Hasty work: chatty; informal; generous. Work around the exhibition space, around the baby (hope she has a long nap), around our own doubts. Work with new collaborators, old friends, friends of friends. All welcome: independent; with dependents. Exquisite corpse, architecture x literature. A hasty publication; a launch.

10AM-1:30PM	<b>WORKshop</b> Panel discussion on Hasty Work; participatory literature-architecture exchange with Jane Hall and Audrey Thomas-Hayes (Assemble), Ellen Davies and Alice Heyward, and other invited guests
1:30PM-4PM	<b>friendWORK / netWORK</b> Edit of findings from the day, debrief, 'publication' launch

**[KATE\_RIGGS]:**  
**I'VE ADDED A FEW COMMENTS**  
**INTO THE DOC —**  
**CAN PULL IT ALL TOGETHER**  
**THIS EVENING AFTER WORK...**

**[STEPHANIE GUEST]:**  
**OK COOL, I'LL HAVE ANOTHER GO**  
**ONCE MABEL IS ASLEEP TONIGHT.**  
**JUST FINISHED CLASS.**

**[KATE\_RIGGS]:**  
**THIS TIME DIFFERENCE SUCKS.**  
**THINKING THE MANIFESTO COULD**  
**JUST BE AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN US?**

**GUEST, RIGGS**  
**EPISODE 06**

**Tuesday, July 31**  
**10AM — 4PM**



**LIVE BROADCAST**

# 'POST POKIES APOCALYPSE'

## BIOGRAPHY

Pippa Dickson imagines, creates and directs a range of creative and socially conscious projects. She has been directly working to increase the value of community, arts and culture in Australia for over 15 years. Pippa founded Design Island for Arts Tasmania in 2002 and was the founding CEO of the Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park (GASP!). She has been responsible for developing and implementing strategic priorities and raising significant investment from all tiers of government and the private sector for public community infrastructure and major international art projects.

Pippa has a PhD in Fine Arts, Furniture Design, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She has furniture designs held in collections including Design Tasmania, The Henry Jones Art Hotel and the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). Pippa Co-Chaired the National Craft Initiative (2013-2016) as a Director of the National Association for Visual Artists (NAVA) and is currently Chair of Design Tasmania. Pippa is also a proud co-owner of a Pokies Free pub in Hobart, The Salty Dog Hotel and is the Director of consultancy, Expecting Good Weather.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

It's the post pokie-pub apocalypse. The landscape has been re-shaped and what's next? In this episode our task is to move the conversation to imagining pubs and clubs in our suburbs and cities without poker machines. How did we get here and what does it look like now? Have venues closed? Have jobs been lost? What has replaced the pokie den? *Post Pokies Apocalypse* taps into Pippa Dickson's interest in design, community and cultural development and social justice through physical spaces and governance structures that enable vibrant economies, community cohesion and social activity.

10AM-10:30AM	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
10:40AM-11:30AM	<b>SCREENING</b> <i>Ka-Ching! Pokie Nation</i> (2015)
11:30AM-12:15PM	<b>DISCUSSION</b> Post film conversation with Mitzi Goldman (CEO, Documentary Australia Foundation) and other invited guests
1:15PM-2:45PM	<b>Q&amp;A PANEL</b> <b>POST POKIES FUTURE</b> with visionaries from Tasmania and Victoria including Kirsha Kaechele (MONA), Berry Liberman (Impact Investment Group), Simon McPherson (Global South), Cr Susan Rennie and other invited guests
3PM-4PM	<b>RIPPLES</b> Brainstorming and campaign workshop with Meg Webb (Social Action Research Centre, Tasmania) and Gordon Young (Ethilological Consulting)

**A POKIES FREE FUTURE**  
**IS POSSIBLE...**  
**AND BEAUTIFUL.**

**PIPPA DICKSON**  
**EPISODE 07**

**Wednesday, August 01**  
**10AM — 4PM**



**LIVE BROADCAST**

# WORKAROUND CLOSING PARTY

Saturday, August 11

2PM — 5PM

[ALL ARE WELCOME]



# 'SHEcity'

## BIOGRAPHY

XYX Lab is a team of experienced design researchers exploring gender-sensitive design practices and theory. Their work operates at the intersection of gender, identity, urban space and advocacy. Through both research and practice, the Lab brings together planners, policy makers, local government and stakeholders to make tangible the experiences of under-represented communities in urban space and planning.

XYX Lab's *SHEcity* project is grounded in a feminist approach and activated through real-world projects. Equal parts qualitative and quantitative research, the Lab regularly collects and analyses data and experiences in order to generate deeper understanding and support its design projects. Building equity into urban life requires long-term vision and a strategic — often radical — approach to the design process. XYX do not seek quick-fix design solutions, but rather seek to offer insights and create moments that contribute towards a larger movement for change. The Lab and *SHEcity* is led by Director Dr Nicole Kalms and the combined strengths of members — Dr Gene Bawden, Dr Pamela Salen, Allison Edwards, Hannah Korsmeyer, and Zoe Condliffe. XYX collaborator Ella Mitchell produced and directed the *SHEcity* video content.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

*The walkway is terrifying at all hours of the day, but especially at night. I was accosted here once but I have to use this route most days.*

Women and girls work around the existing built environment every day. When areas of the city and suburbs feel unsafe, women change their behaviour, self-limit their access to urban life and sometimes don't go into urban spaces at all. *SHEcity* is an inclusive episode for everyone. With the support of the Monash University XYX Lab team, participants will think about spaces, places and experiences from the perspective of young women. Using gender-mainstreaming approaches, participants will work around the inequity faced by women and girls in cities everywhere to re-design city spaces where women and girls ARE the experts.

\* *In this episode the term 'women and girls' is inclusive of cis-women, trans-women and intersex women. The workshop is all genders and for persons aged 15+.*

10AM-5PM SCREENING STAGE  
*SHEcity* stories and recording new stories

10AM-12:30PM WORKSHOP #1  
2PM-4:30PM WORKSHOP #2  
Two workshops will respond to four typological 'hotspots' in cities where women and girls feel unsafe. Participants will engage in *SHEcity* co-design to re-imagine these places as safe spaces for women and girls.

[REGISTRATION REQUIRED. EACH WORKSHOP LIMITED TO 32 PARTICIPANTS]

10AM-5PM NETWORKING STAGE  
A drop-in *SHEcity* participatory activity (15mins). A place for networking, eating, refuelling, dropping-in. All ages.

# 'SHEcity' CREATES A SHARED FUTURE VISION WHERE WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE AGENTS IN THE DESIGN OF CITIES.

## XYX LAB

## EPISODE 08

## Thursday, August 02

## 10AM — 5PM



# LIVE BROADCAST

# 'WONDER-FUL SCHOOLS?'

## BIOGRAPHY

Mary Featherston is an interior designer specialising in the design of physical environments for learning in schools and cultural institutions. The focus of her research and practice is the relationship between contemporary progressive pedagogy and design of the physical environment. In 1965, Mary formed a partnership with Australian designer Grant Featherston (1922-1995). Their collaborative design work resulted in a number of awards and them being inaugural inductees into the Design Institute of Australia's Hall of Fame.

In 1967, Mary and Grant commissioned a house and studio by architect Robin Boyd — Featherston House — which she shares with her family today. Her work has been awarded and published nationally and internationally. Mary helped to establish Community Child Care in 1973, Melbourne Children's Museum in 1985 and the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange in 1995. She is a Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne and an emeritus director of the Robin Boyd Foundation.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

This episode — led by designer and activist Mary Featherston with teaching staff from Princes Hill Primary School — seeks to convey the essence of the 'collective inquiry' educational approach. Working with a filmmaker, students travel to Mary's atelier and garden where they will undertake a studio-based learning experience. The children are invited to explore Mary's life-long collection of natural objects — her personal 'cabinet of curiosities'. On returning to Design Hub, the children discuss and unfold their experiences. Children and adults gather around Design Hub's purpose-designed 'round table' to discuss what this experience has meant to them, what sparked their sense of wonder and curiosity, what *they* find interesting and what are their passions. They explore how they pursue their own interests and how they can entice others to explore with them. In this way, the episode seeks to reveal how people like to learn.

12:30PM-2:30PM ROUND TABLE  
with Esme Capp, Mary Featherston, Hannah Rother-Gelder and Princes Hill Primary School students

3PM-4PM REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION  
Envisaging new paradigms for education with Suzie Attiwill, Esme Capp, Mary Featherston, Natalie Robinson, Hannah Rother-Gelder and Fleur Watson

# CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS FROM BIRTH AND HAVE A POWERFUL DRIVE TO MAKE MEANING OF THEIR WORLD. THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO A SCHOOL EDUCATION THAT RESPONDS TO THEIR INTERESTS AND CAPABILITIES.

## MARY FEATHERSTON

## EPISODE 09

## Friday, August 03

## 12:30PM — 4PM



# LIVE BROADCAST

# 'SERIOUS PLAY'

## BIOGRAPHY

Amy Learmonth is a registered architect practising in Brisbane and a co-founder of Unqualified Design Studio (UDS), a collective working in the space between public art, architecture and spectacle performance. UDS' work has been featured at festivals around Australia, including Vivid Sydney. Amy is passionate about public design discourse, and regularly speaks about architecture at community events. She graduated from the Master of Architecture at the University of Queensland in 2014 with the Australian Institute of Architects QIA Memorial Medallion.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

With design collective Unqualified Design Studio, Amy Learmonth designs interactive and participatory experiences that aim to make everyday citizens (cultural) producers, rather than consumers of public space. Drawing on the concept of 'serious play', her goal is to generate meaningful social interactions in the public realm through spatial interventions, physical installations, performances, spectacles, community workshops and games. These playful interactions address issues of spatial justice in the built environment with varying levels of explicitness.

*Serious Play* suggests it is time for a new kind of activism — one that is more inclusive, welcoming and non-judgmental. In this episode, Amy and her collaborators re-imagine the format and the boundaries of protest and action by occupying public space in radical, fun and subtly transgressive ways. They blur the distinction between 'spectator' and 'performer' and invite people to realise their own power and agency through the medium of play.

## COLLABORATORS

**MARISA GEORGIU** Artist, co-founder of Unqualified Design Studio, co-founder of people+artist+place.

**AMANDA HAWORTH** Performing artist, applied theatre practitioner.

**MEGAN KEENE** Photographer, publisher and photo-editor.

**FIONA MCALPINE** Architectural engagement strategist, founding member of the ProVibers — Catalysts for Connection in our Community.

**ALEEA MONSOUR** Creative producer, theatre maker, community theatre facilitator.

**NATALIE OSBORNE** Founding member of The Right to the City Brisbane, co-curator of Brisbane Free University, co-contributor to Radio Reversal, lecturer at Griffith University.

10:30AM-12PM **PERFORMANCE**  
A participatory performance at Federation Square

2PM-4PM **DISCUSSION**  
A dinner table-style conversation and introduction to *Serious Play*

# 'SERIOUS PLAY' RE-IMAGINES THE BOUNDARIES OF PROTEST BY OCCUPYING PUBLIC SPACE IN RADICAL, FUN AND SUBTLY TRANSGRESSIVE WAYS.

AMY LEARMONTH  
EPISODE 10  
Saturday, August 04  
10:30AM — 4PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'WORKAROUND: SOME LEADING QUESTIONS ON WOMEN, DESIGN, ACTION AND ACTIVISM'

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

This episode is a chance to ask out loud some of the questions that Naomi Stead poses in her writing for *WORKAROUND*. These questions and the exhibition itself spring, in part, from the idea that (after Hannah Arendt) if one key purpose of life and work is to engage, to speak, to connect, to make change, then action is the best means we have to achieve that.

To explore these ideas we have assembled a group of artists and designers working towards positive social change, and we will examine examples of their work as case studies. We will ask, amongst other questions: what is design activism, or action in the sphere of design, architecture and spatial practice? Does it really have an appreciable effect? Does it have as much effect as activism in other spheres? Do its proponents think of themselves as activists? Does there have to be something at stake to take action in this sphere? Does there have to be a degree of personal risk? Do you have to have skin in the game? What are the systems such individuals work within? What are the barriers they work around? Is it actually possible to engage in activist practices from within institutional settings? What is the relationship between action and advocacy? Is it true that the road to hell is paved with good intentions? Can you be a 'real' activist if you have a salary and a permanent job? Have we got our objects right, our priorities right, our causes right? What can we actually do?

1PM-3PM **A CONVERSATION. QUESTIONS  
AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS**  
Lead by Kate Rhodes and Fleur Watson  
(RMIT University) and Naomi Stead  
(Monash University)

with Simona Castricum (musician,  
academic), Jane Caught (Sibling  
Architecture), Eugenia Lim (artist),  
Sarah Lynn Rees (Plangermaireener  
| Trawlwoolway, IADV Indigenous  
design) and Louise Wright  
(Barraco+Wright Architects)

---BREAK IN OUR USUAL  
TRANSMISSION---  
Tuesday, August 07  
1PM — 3PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'TRANSITION: VOICES FROM THE ARCHIVE'

## BIOGRAPHY

Harriet Edquist is Professor of Architectural History in the School of Architecture and Urban Design at RMIT University and the Director of the RMIT Design Archives. She has published extensively on Australian architecture, art and design with a particular focus on the 20th century and has pioneered studies on émigré architects in Melbourne and the Australian Arts and Crafts movement.

From 1987 to 1991 Harriet co-edited *Transition: Discourse on Architecture*, an influential architectural journal published by RMIT's Department of Architecture. She edited the special issue of *Transition* on Robin Boyd in 1992. Harriet is also a curator and has presented major innovative exhibitions on diverse subjects, ranging from the cultural landscape of the Western District of Victoria to Australian car design. Her current research includes the ARC funded project: *Bauhaus Diaspora: Transforming Education in Art, Architecture and Design*.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

In 1989 *Transition* hosted an event to celebrate its 10th anniversary. This multi-pronged affair comprised of a conference at Pharmacy College on Victoria Parade, an exhibition at the State Library of Victoria and a keynote lecture and opening celebration in the Great Hall at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). The focus of the celebration was Robin Boyd and his role as a critic and public activist in the cause of Australian architecture. In 1992 the conference papers were published in a special issue of *Transition*. In this episode, Harriet Edquist uses archival traces of this event as prompts to reflect, thirty years later, on its legacy and the role a journal might assume as provocateur and activist in the public realm.

10AM-12PM	ARCHIVE MATERIAL ON VIEW
12PM-2PM	DISCUSSION with Vanessa Bird, Karen Burns, Dean Cass, Harriet Edquist, Philip Goad, Conrad Hamann, Christine Phillips and Helen Stuckey
2PM-4PM	ARCHIVE MATERIAL ON VIEW

**"ONE OF THE PRIMARY LAUNCH PADS FOR THE HISTORIAN'S TIME TRAVEL IS THE ARCHIVE.**

**HISTORY IS SOMETIMES DEPICTED AS A STATIC, HIDEBOUND PACKAGE OF DATES AND FACTS, ALREADY GIVEN THAT MUST BE LEARNED. ANYONE WHO RESEARCHES AND WRITES HISTORY, HOWEVER, DISCOVERS THAT THE PAST IS ALIVE AND SHIFTING. IT IS BOTH ELUSIVE AND MALLEABLE. ITS CHAMELEON QUALITY IS DISTURBING AND RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY... IT IS A LIFETIME COMMITMENT. AND IT IS COMPLETELY COLLABORATIVE AND COLLEGIAL, FOR EVERY INSIGHT DEPENDS UPON OTHERS."**

**THE ART OF TIME TRAVEL:  
HISTORIANS AND THEIR CRAFT [2016],  
TOM GRIFFITHS.**

**HARRIET EDQUIST  
EPISODE 11  
Wednesday, August 08  
10AM — 4PM**



**LIVE BROADCAST**

# 'A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECT'

## BIOGRAPHY

Esther Charlesworth is a Professor in the School of Architecture and Urban Design at RMIT University and Director of the Humanitarian Architecture Research Lab (HARB). She is the founding Director of Architects without Frontiers (AWF). Since 2002, AWF has undertaken over 42 health, education and social infrastructure projects in 12 countries for vulnerable communities, and has been described by ABC radio broadcaster Phillip Adams as 'destined to develop into one of the greater forces of good on this battered planet'.

At RMIT, Charlesworth is the Academic Director of Master of Disaster, Design and Development degree (MoDDD). Since 1990 she has worked in the public and private sectors of architecture and urban design in Melbourne, Sydney, New York and Boston and has published seven books on the theme of social justice and architecture, including: *Divided Cities* (2009), *Humanitarian Architecture* (2014) and *Sustainable Housing Reconstruction* (2015).

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

The fundamental purpose of architecture is to provide shelter, but in a world obsessed by novelty, development and acquisition this purpose is often subverted and obscured. Concerned with the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities, Humanitarian Architects utilise their problem-solving capacities to address complex shelter and infrastructure challenges in vulnerable communities, at both micro and macro scales.

The work of Humanitarian Architects spans across often divergent spatial and political geographies. From Maningrida to Kabul, *A Day in the Life of the Humanitarian Architect* explores the practice and projects of a wide group of individuals dedicated to improving human welfare through designing shelter and infrastructure in complex post-disaster and socially marginalised communities. This episode begins with RMIT students joining Yasmeen Lari (Pakistan's first female architect) for a bamboo structure-building workshop, followed by forum on related work by invited humanitarian practitioners from Australia and around the world.

10AM-12:30PM	BAMBOO SHELTER WORKSHOP Yasmeen Lari with RMIT students
1PM-1:30PM	ARRIVALS/ WELCOME TO EPISODE
1:30PM-3:30PM	PRESENTATIONS with Eric J Cesal, Esther Charlesworth, Shaneen Fantin, Jane Johnson, Yasmeen Lari, Leeanne Marshall, Nicole Mechkaroff, David O'Brien, Fabian Prideaux and Robert Watson

# HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECTURE TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH DESIGN.

**ESTHER CHARLESWORTH  
EPISODE 12  
Thursday, August 09  
10AM — 3:30PM**



**LIVE BROADCAST**

# 'A SPATIAL CONVERSATION MACHINE'

## BIOGRAPHY

Sam Spurr is a spatial practitioner who uses conversation as a key thinking-making technique in the formation of her projects. Sam is an academic who works across writing, curation, event and symposium direction. Her projects are rarely solo endeavours but rely on collaborative partnerships.

Conversations are understood as collaborative mechanisms in the production of novelty, and activism as the mobilisation of new collectives, bringing together often disparate stakeholders into productive conversations. Particular to architectural practice is to see the conversation both diagrammatically and spatially. In this way, the opinions of individuals shift to an exploration of what happens in between two or more bodies, a turn from humanist value to a post-human, ecological one. She is interested in architecture as the material evidence of political, ecological and sociological relations. For this reason, architectural conversations are necessarily enmeshed with other disciplines.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

*A Spatial Conversation Machine* is part academic discussion, part intimate conversation, part performance art and part book club. In this episode, Sam Spurr uses the conversation as a thinking-making technique and investigates how the spatial arrangement of chairs, tables and audience members also rearrange and recalibrate the kinds of conversations we have. In this way, the episode can be viewed as a diagram aimed at creating the setting for improvisational thinking.

Conversation topics will include the formation of the collective political subject, feminism, political ecologies, critical spatial practices and fossil fuel ideologies. To create this episode, Sam collaborated with artist Diana Baker Smith and architect-artist Eduardo Kairuz. Audience members are invited to engage with the reading list and curated online lectures series beforehand via the Design Hub website.

10AM-11AM	ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION with Eduardo Kairuz and other invited guests
12PM-1PM	ONE ON ONE CONVERSATION with invited guests
3PM-4PM	DISTRIBUTED CONVERSATION with invited guests

# SURRENDER TO THE DIAGRAM!

SAM SPURR  
EPISODE 13

Friday, August 10  
10AM — 4PM



LIVE BROADCAST

# 'PARLOUR SUPER SALON: A CONVERSATION WITH ARCHITECTURE + WOMEN • NEW ZEALAND'

## BIOGRAPHY

Parlour is a research-based advocacy organisation working for gender equity in architecture and the built environment, which provides a 'space to speak'. Parlour provides places for active exchange and discussion, online and off. It seeks to expand the spaces and opportunities available to women while also revealing the many women who already contribute in diverse ways.

Architecture + Women • NZ (A+W • NZ) has two core aims. First, visibility: to help make visible the hard work of women in architecture. Second, inclusiveness: to remove or reduce as many barriers as possible (including those springing from class, religion, culture, sexual orientation). A+W • NZ works from the strong platform of gender, for the benefit of all those who work in architecture.

Founded in 2011 and 2012 respectively, A+W • NZ and Parlour are among the earliest of the current wave of international organisations acting for greater gender equity in architecture.

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

*The Super Salon* episode brings Australia's Parlour and Architecture + Women • NZ together in a public conversation. Key representatives of the two groups will reflect on five years of intense action, and will project forward to future plans. With an emphasis on sharing ideas, experience, strategies and tactics, the loosely structured conversation will expand out into interactive engagement with the audience.

12PM-2PM	CONVERSATION with Justine Clark, Gill Matthewson, Divya Purushotham, Lynda Simmons and Naomi Stead
2PM-5PM	WORKAROUND CLOSING PARTY:  <i>FILM SCREENING</i> Selected video rushes from the WORKAROUND episodes  <i>CLOSING REMARKS</i> Curatorial reflections on WORKAROUND with Kate Rhodes, Fleur Watson and Naomi Stead

PARLOUR  
EPISODE 14

Saturday, August 11  
12PM — 2PM



LIVE BROADCAST

ONGOING ACTION ON  
GENDER EQUITY IS  
ESSENTIAL TO THE  
FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE  
— A MORE INCLUSIVE  
PROFESSION IS A MORE  
ROBUST PROFESSION.  
GENDER EQUITY IS THE  
RESPONSIBILITY OF  
EVERYONE: WOMEN AND  
MEN, INDIVIDUALS AND  
PRACTICES, INSTITUTIONS  
AND THE INDUSTRY.  
IT'S TIME TO STEP UP.

# 'HANNAH ARENDT: ACTION AND THE HUMAN CONDITION'

NAOMI STEAD

Unlike many philosophers before and since, Hannah Arendt conceived the true purpose of human existence to be not the contemplative life, of quiet thought and reflection, but instead the active life: the *vita activa*. This is described in her book *The Human Condition* (1958). This is a life of actors, acting, actions and interaction, of intervention and engagement: with the world and its denizens. 'A life without speech and without action... is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men.'<sup>1</sup> Arendt, writing in the 1950s, was of course using the word 'man' to stand for 'humankind'.

To act is to be human, she argues, to make things happen, to have initiative, and to initiate an unpredictable sequence of events, to produce genuine novelty — in this sense, as Arendt contends, action is 'the one miracle-working faculty of man'.<sup>2</sup> The plurality of humans, their difference and distinction from one another, is revealed in their *interactions* through speech, and manifest in their actions. 'The fact that man is capable of action,' she writes, 'means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable.'<sup>3</sup>

This *vita activa* has three parts: labour, work, and action, in ascending order of significance. *Labour* is that which meets our animal needs, keeps us alive and maintained, but is futile in its endlessness and incompleteness — no sooner have you eaten than you are hungry again, no sooner are you clean than besmirched. As an aside labour has historically, and not incidentally, been the taken-for-granted and subordinated work of women. The next most privileged term in the triad, *Work*, is that process which produces durable, meaningful things — works, even — of art or craft or other endeavours of *homo faber*, things that outlive the individual and leave a trace beyond death. But even work is still instrumental in its *working towards* the production of things, and it is thus still based in a means-end logic, and hence limited and enclosed in its scope.

Arendt finds the highest manifestation of the human condition in *action* — the uniquely human ability to engage politically and collectively in the world, as a person. She writes: 'In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world... This disclosure of "who" in contradistinction to "what" somebody is — his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide — is implicit in everything somebody says and does.'<sup>4</sup>

Human action also, uniquely, brings the possibility of *changing* the world: 'To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin (as the Greek word *archein*, "to begin," "to lead," and eventually "to rule," indicates), to set something into motion (which is the original meaning of the Latin *agere*).'<sup>5</sup>

If we argue, with Arendt, that the purpose of all human striving, in our short and separate lives, is to engage, to speak, to connect, to make change, then action is the best and only means we have to achieve that. The last word must be left to her: 'The smallest act in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same boundlessness, because one deed, and sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation.'<sup>6</sup>

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Second edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013 (1958): 176.
2. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 246.
3. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178.
4. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179.
5. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177.
6. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.

## CREDITS

CURATORIUM	Kate Rhodes (RMIT University) Fleur Watson (RMIT University) Naomi Stead (Monash University)
EXHIBITION DESIGN	Sibling Architecture
GRAPHIC DESIGN	Studio Round
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GALLERY ASSISTANTS	Ian Bunyi, Luke Garrett, Siofra Lyons, Luke Pingipas
VOLUNTEERS	Leanne Choi, Ana Davila Veytia, Majed Fayad, Chloe Gleeson, Isabel McCrann, Audrey Ng, Linlu Pan, Xanthea Riordan, Tammy Rowe, Gerard Snowdon, Felix Taylor, Jiarui Tian (Ophelia), Jobelle Villanueva, Xiaoxiao Wang

## CREDITS

RMIT DESIGN HUB

RMIT Design Hub is a progressive educational environment. It houses a community of architects, designers, curators and students for collaborative, inter-disciplinary design research and education within a purpose-built, 10-storey building that also includes RMIT University's School of Architecture & Urban Design and the RMIT Design Archives.

The Project Rooms at Design Hub exhibit creative, practice-led research and are open to everyone. Exhibitions at Design Hub visualise, perform and share research ideas and make new research connections.

RMIT University acknowledges the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the University stands. The University respectfully recognises Elders both past, present and emerging. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of lands across Australia where it conducts its business, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures and heritage.

LOCATION	Cnr Victoria St and Swanston St, Carlton, 3053
OPENING HOURS	Tuesday–Friday, 10AM–5PM Saturday, 12PM–5PM  Closed Sunday, Monday and Public Holidays  Please note that WORKAROUND will be open on Saturday 28 July and Sunday 29 July as part of Open House Melbourne.  While there will be no scheduled episodes, WORKAROUND will be open to prospective students as part of RMIT's Open Day on Sunday 12 August.

[ADMISSION IS FREE]



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SUEANNE WARE  
HELEN NORRIE  
SIMONA CASTRICUM  
PIA EDNIE-BROWN  
OOPLA  
GUEST, RIGGS  
PIPPA DICKSON  
XYX LAB  
MARY FEATHERSTON  
AMY LEARMONTH  
ESTHER CHARLESWORTH  
HARRIET EDQUIST  
SAM SPURR  
PARLOUR

WORKAROUND  
WOMEN DESIGN ACTION  
July 25 — August 11 2018  
RMIT Design Hub



LIVE BROADCAST