

## Session 2C

### Abstracts

#### **Ali Mozaffari & Nigel Westbrook**

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#### **Excavating the Past through Public Projects in Iran: Pahlavi engagement with the Past and the Ferdowsi monument by Houshang Seyhoun**

In 1970s Iran, there were notable instances of public architecture intended to reengage with the past and thus to perform a heritage function. In examining such projects, this paper focuses on one seminal project--the Ferdowsi tomb and associated tea house and performance space by Houshang Seyhoun in Tus, near Mashhad, Iran, and compares its design characteristics to other Pahlavi public 'heritage' projects such as the Pasargadae Archaeological site museum by Hossein Amanat. All these edifices retained a post-Revolution life. While the Ferdowsi project was completed in 1968, it was substantially transformed after the Revolution, serving multiple uses before the tea house was transformed into a museum. Commissioned by the Pahlavi government, its function as a tourist heritage site was suspended during the revolution and ensuing Iran-Iraq war, before being revived in the late 1980's and repurposed, the tomb acquiring a more religious character, while the tea house and Shahnameh performance building was repurposed as, firstly, and archaeology museum, then again as a Shahnameh museum, suggesting shifting cultural attitudes. While Houshang Seyhoun, like the other architects of these Pahlavi projects, as a Baha'i and a perceived agent of the despised former regime was forced into exile by the onslaught of the Islamic Revolution, his project, and its spatial and formal expression was apparently, for the most part, congruent with the post-revolutionary architectural taste. This paper will discuss the Ferdowsi project in relation to its projection of what could be described as a national imagination, and to its connection to global architectural shifts toward an engagement with the past.

#### **Azin Saeedi**

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#### **The architectural and urban legacies of Reza Shah, Towards amassed Shi'i mausoleums in current Shiraz**

Within the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1925-41) in Iran, mausoleum making experienced a rupture from the past. While the Qajars (r. 1796-1925) patronized Shi'i mausoleums as their kingship signposts, Reza Shah recast his monarchy with a rigid program of secularization and modernization. In the early years of his kingship, he actively engaged in fabricating a tomb for a non-religious figure. However, he also refashioned the most prominent Shi'i mausoleum- Ali al-Reza shrine in Mashhad- even though in a different way. In line with his urban policies for Iranian cities, this project included a ring-road that encircled the mausoleum, caused large-scale destruction of the centuries-old structures and thus, distanced this building from its surroundings. Interestingly, Muhammad-Reza Shah (r. 1941-79) followed his father's policies and created a large emptiness around and within another Shi'i funerary site- the thirteenth century Ahmad mausoleum in Shiraz. He also revisited the shrine of Mashhad and enlarged the empty space in its vicinity. After the Pahlavis' downfall in 1979, Imami mausoleums became the center of attention. These buildings were highlighted similarly through clearing the neighbouring urban fabric. However, this time the surrounding fabric of Shi'i mausoleums was pulled down to give way for building new ancillary structures. This is visible in Shiraz wherein the Ahmad mausoleum already surrounded by urban open spaces was selected for further changes. Four decades of making and unmaking resulted in an unstable scene with an uncertainty of what happens next for this mausoleum. Within this context, this paper argues that contemporary architectural commissions in the Shiite site of Shiraz arise from Reza Shah's attitude towards the Imami mausoleum of Mashhad. To this end, this paper conducts a historical study and explores how the mausoleum of Ali al-Reza acted as a model for changes in that of Ahmad.

**Brent Greene & Fiona Johnson**

*RMIT University*

### **Millennial Urban Park Design in Melbourne and Wellington: How Divergent Colonial Foundations within the trans-Tasman Bubble Impact Landscape Practice**

Despite their shared colonial origins, trans-Tasman comparisons of landscape architecture practice between Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are rare. An oft-cited critical point of difference is the respective presence (New Zealand) and absence (Australia) of a treaty with indigenous nations of the land at the time of foundation, a scenario that we argue establishes distinct conceptualisations of urban park design during the 1990s and early 2000s. Whereas New Zealand designers are required by the Resource Management Act to respond to the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi, the absence of decolonising legislation limits landscape architects in Australia, where government policy can easily override design aspirations for diverse conceptions of urban parks.

With the benefit of hindsight, this paper explores the implications of this difference on urban park design in the 19th-century cities of Melbourne (1835) and Wellington (1839), notably Birrarung Marr and Waitangi Park. Comparable in size, context and age, the parks offer a critical lens to understand how each city's foundation, along with evolving political, economic and ecological pressures, influence landscape practice from the 1990s onwards. At Birrarung Marr, we suggest the continued privileging of Melbourne's colonial landscape aesthetic – and the transformative economic policy of the Victorian Government in the 1990s – strongly influence the spatial, ecological and programmatic attributes of this urban park. While similarly influenced by economic reform, Waitangi Park marks a divergent approach, blending cultural symbolism, active programming and performative ecology enabled through New Zealand's decolonising policy framework. Nevertheless, in the absence of legislative change in Australia, we speculate that emerging climate scenarios have potential for impacting future counterfactual design outcomes in Melbourne, acknowledging the ongoing evolution of the city's multi-layered cultural and ecological systems.

**Budi Faisal, Widjaja Martokusumo, Nathania Nadia, Huda Nurjanti, & Feysa Poetry**

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### **Ulin as a Distinctive Character of Kalimantan's Cultural Landscape: Using Cultural Landscape as Means of Cultural and Ecological Preservation**

Kalimantan is known for its tropical rain forests with rich variety of woods, which land keeps decreasing over the years, as a consequence of the expansion of mining sites and plantations. Ulin (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*), one of the species grown in these forests, is an endemic Kalimantan wood that is famous for having Class-I quality that is water-resistant, making it suitable to use in wetlands. Ulin, which embodies strong local belief and economic value, has been a part of the Kalimantan people's daily life for ages. Tested through a long experience of local technology and culture, the community uses it for numerous purposes, such as: household appliances, road and bridge structures, and various building elements to the point that it become a city-forming material. This robust usage contributes to distinctive characteristics of the city. Physically, the traits and limitations of ulin as a material shape the local architectural typology and the city's urban morphology. In a more intangible way, ulin also creates unique experiences, e.g. roads built out of ulin make crackling sound when motorized vehicles pass by. These characteristics formed by ulin place the material as an important feature of Kalimantan's cultural landscape. However, despite its significance, ulin is now becoming extremely scarce— not only because it is hard to grow, but also due to deforestation. This research aims to study the role of ulin in the constellation of Kalimantan's community, social system, and physical landscape; how it affects local cultures of dwelling, building, and even more creating unique ambience of the city. It will also seek if ulin as unique feature of cultural landscape will be a great tool for the community to connect themselves to the historic past of their tribe and ancient local wisdom in order to raise awareness on the importance of cultural and ecological preservation.

**Domenic Trimboli**  
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### **Interpretive Urban Cemeteries: *Urban Cemeteries Reinterpreted***

*Cemeteries* – the oldest repositories of architecture and society – have until recently ‘quietly’ been undergoing a technological as well as cultural revolution that is creating new opportunities for interacting not just with memorialisation but history and our built environment as well.

Not since the garden cemetery prefigured the garden city movement or even the invention of industrialised cremation itself (both in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century) has ‘death’ figured into such radical discourse. Today however, there is a burgeoning international industry of services and products for the acts of memorialisation. QR codes for data storage are now a common enough option on cemetery tombstones in some countries. Likewise, Japan has not just verticalized the cemetery model but turned it into an interactively mechanised down-town urban building too. Digital cemeteries now compliment physical ones, and Olson Kundig Architects’ current Recompose project proposal for metropolitan Seattle (USA) is one such example that is squarely aimed at using technology to disrupt the commercial funerary industry.

Closer to home, two recent spotlights have potentials as catalysts in accelerating this movement. Firstly, there is the commercialised sale and development over part of the historical East Perth Cemeteries site in Perth. Second is the public open space proposal to replace Melbourne’s Queen Victoria Market carpark, over what in many ways is still the historical Old Melbourne General Cemetery site. Both sites contain the remains of personal and collective stories tied to the history of their respective city’s and both have mere fragments left of their memorial architecture.

What emerging cemetery design practice is now showing is that these two worlds, the digital historical archive and the physical one (a condition of urban archaeology), are no longer standing apart from one another. Instead, they have the potential to radically benefit the culture of memorialisation as one and the same thing.

**Julian Raxworthy**  
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### **The Story of an Oxbow: a case study in the influence of geomorphology on urban morphology**

Urban morphology provides an account for how changes in infrastructure and land tenure contribute to the current shape of the urban environment. Focused on architecture, however, the influence of geomorphology or ecology on urban morphology is under-considered, despite the former being the literal surface that building occupies. This paper will use a case study adjacent to the Mississippi in Louisiana, USA to demonstrate how fluvial geomorphology affected land tenure and the urban morphology of an area over time. Artist Marie Adrien Persac (1823-1873) documented the “Plantations on the Mississippi River from Natchez to New Orleans” in his famous Norman’s Chart of 1858. One intriguing area in the drawing is an oxbow lake called “False River” that he notes was “cut off in 1722”. Mark Twain called “cut offs”, “dispositions [that] make prodigious jumps by cutting through narrow necks of land, and thus straightening and shortening itself”, thus “play[ing] havoc with boundary lines and jurisdictions [so that, for example] a man is living in the State of Mississippi today, a cut off occurs tonight, and tomorrow the man finds himself and his land over on the other side of the river, within the boundaries and subject to the laws of the State of Louisiana”.

Interrogating a series of different maps and historic French & Spanish title deeds, and comparing these to contemporary conditions found on site, this paper will show how changes to Mississippi River and False River, both natural and engineered, affected land tenure and the subsequent development of nearby towns and suburbs that occupy the space between the river and the oxbow of False River, to create an urban morphology influenced as much by fluvial process as by development history. In doing so, the paper will argue that urban morphology needs to broaden its account to include landscape as a city shaping force, and will provide a revised method for doing so, adapted from those put forward by Karl Kropf in his *Handbook of Urban Morphology*. In turn, this paper will contribute to an account for land tenure in landscape architecture.