

A new initiative from the Institute acknowledges our emerging architects.

Announced on 5 November the inaugural NSW Chapter Emerging Architect Prize was won by Tamara Donnellan, Associate Director of Terroir.

While there are well-established and highly regarded similar prizes in the UK, Europe and the US, and a program has been running in other Australian states for some time, this is the first time the NSW Chapter of the Institute has awarded an Emerging Architect Prize; and DARCH certainly welcomed the initiative, having been involved in promoting and implementing the program, adding to the state prize pool, and running the presentation event.

The Emerging Architect Prize is a national initiative of the Institute in which the winner of each state and territory prize enters the running for the Institute's 2011 National Emerging Architect Prize, to be announced at the Australian Achievement in Architecture Awards in March 2011.

The Emerging Architect Prize is for an overall body of work and, therefore, recognises an outstanding contribution to architectural practice, research or education, to professional bodies and to leadership in the profession, by a registered architect who is also an Institute member and within 10 years of graduation. Short-listed entrants for the 2010 prize were Tom Ferguson of TFAD and Hannah Tribe of

Tribe Studio; both have established successful practices of their own, and contributed to architectural education through tutoring roles.

The 2010 winner, Tamara Donnellan, began her involvement with the Institute as the SONA representative for the University of Adelaide, while gaining her Bachelor of Architecture with First Class Honours in 2000.

She registered with the NSW Architects Registration Board just two years after graduation, while gaining experience in residential and retail projects at Terroir, taking on a high level of project responsibility relatively early in her career.

She worked for RMJM in Edinburgh for two years. She was the Senior Architect for the School of Music, Performing Arts and Media for Newcastle College, an 11,000 square-metre project completed on a fast-track procurement process, and receiving several awards.

She has been a member of the Institute's NSW Chapter Practice Committee since 2007, led the subcommittee on legal and insurance issues, and contributed to DARCH in 2010 by coordinating the first 'Regi-(fru)stration' seminar. She also took on the voluntary role of Festival Champion for the 2010 Sydney Architecture Festival and organised speakers for DARCH Bar. She has been tutoring and lecturing for a number of years at Sydney's University of Technology, and coordinated (with Gerard Reinmuth) the Masters Activism Studio. Tamara also tutors through the Institute's PALS program, and gives generously of her time and expertise.

As project architect with Terroir, she has been responsible for award-winning projects such as the refurbishment of 86-88 George Street, Sydney, the Commonwealth Place Kiosks, Burnie Makers Workshop and the Masonic Hall Residence, Leichhardt, as well

as being involved in management of the practice. The jury considered Tamara an outstanding young architect and exceptional female role model for the profession. ■■

Jacqueline Connor
CplusC Design Construct
Chair, DARCH

Emerging Architects Prize Jury, 2010 NSW Chapter

Brian Zulaikha, NSW Chapter President
David Honeywell Regional Sales Manager (NSW/ACT) of Principal Sponsor Assa Abloy/Lockwood
Eva-Marie Prineas of Architect Prineas
Jacqueline Connor, Chair, DARCH

Prize: \$1,000 from Assa Abloy/Lockwood; a \$200 book voucher from Architect; a coaching session with New Perspectives Business Coaching; and media opportunities.

Emerging Architect Prize eligibility. Entrants must:

- be an Australian Institute of Architects member
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- have graduated from a two-tier or five-year Bachelor of Architecture or Masters course undertaken in Australia up to 10 years ago
- enter in the state in which they are currently residing
- be a registered architect in the state in which they are entering the prize.

State jury

Each state jury consists of at least three of the following:

- the Chapter President or a nominated representative
- chair of the local EmAGN group or a nominated representative
- state sponsor representative
- previous Emerging Architect Prize winner

National jury

The national jury will consist of:

- Institute President or nominated representative
- EmAGN President or nominated representative
- Lockwood representative



Project architect Tamara Donnellan, Terroir: 1. 86-88 George Street, Sydney, for Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. Photo: Brett Boardman. 2. Canberra Kiosks. Photo: Brett Boardman. 3. Tamara Donnellan, recipient of the inaugural NSW Emerging Architect Prize, pictured at the Institute's National Architecture Awards night in October 2010, where she won the lucky door prize, an Apple iPad.

Q & A

Interview: Peter Sallhani



Gerard Reinmuth

Terroir

Who or what had the greatest influence on your work/career?

Michael Viney, an architect in Tasmania who I worked with as a student from age 20 to 24 had a profound influence on me. Everything from his way of looking at architecture and space, to the way cities are made. Not surprisingly, that first work experience is often incredibly formative. I was involved at every level from client meetings to design, so I think I received a well-rounded education in both ideology and experience of practice.

The other influence was deconstruction. I started university in 1989 when people like Zaha Hadid, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry were all being published or republished as part of the idea of a new movement in architecture. These people weren't really part of a movement or group, they were curated into that position by MoMA. What was important was that the 'idea' of deconstruction made the case for looking again at architecture in terms of context and questions and a wider cultural agenda was an influential shift away from Postmodernism's focus on semantics.

What's the most ambitious project you've undertaken?

I'd say starting our office; it's not a building, it's a project, but it was ambitious in the sense that the idea was to start an office with three directors, one of whom is a full-time academic. The office would be directed from three different locations (Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart), and would run as a commercial organisation but spend roughly 40 per cent of its time on non-commercial work and invest enormous amounts of money and time in research. For the office to even survive financially is pretty unusual.

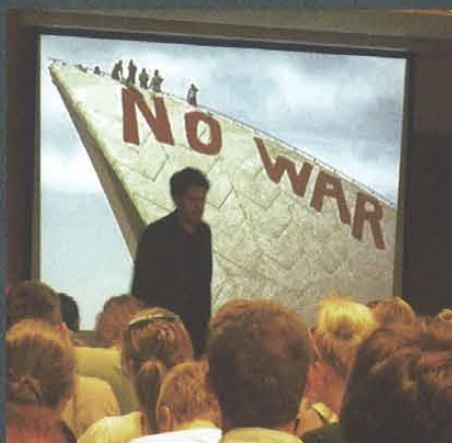
What are you working on at the moment?

Refurbishment of the National Capital Exhibition in Canberra. That's the little building overlooking the lake where school

kids go and stand in this 12-sided room looking out over the lake to learn how Canberra works and why it was built. We're collaborating with Thylacine, an exhibition design company. We're also doing a small residential tower in Aarhus in Denmark, and recently commenced a project as client adviser on the architectural component of a billion-dollar hospital refurbishment in Copenhagen.

What would you most like to design, or redesign?

I'd like to redesign the way buildings are procured in New South Wales, because, as we know, it's a disaster. We're very bad at making our own city. We know this not just because of international examples, but local examples such as Melbourne, and with a new Government Architect in South Australia, I think people will be surprised at what happens there in coming years. My ambition over the next, say, 10 years is to try and make some contribution to redefining how Sydney makes itself, so that it truly can operate as the 'world-class city' it aspires to be.



Architects are said to be a long time 'emerging'; what do you see as arrival?

I'm giving three answers to that, because I really want the next generation of emerging architects to have a better time than we did.

1. New South Wales is basically a graveyard for emerging architects — given the population of around five million people, there's a very low participation by practices run by architects under 50 who are making this city; by international standards, that's fairly unusual. Most of the exciting work we see coming out of Spain or Scandinavia is done by 35 year olds. Then we just look to Victoria where there are numerous practices run by architects in their 30s and 40s who are involved at a very high level in making the city. In New South Wales there tends to be an early flicker of excitement about a younger office, followed by a gradual disappearance. That has to change.



2. We got pretty excited when we were asked to speak at the National Conference in 2005, because an architect we respected (Kerstin Thompson) wanted us to participate in the national discourse about architecture; to some extent that felt like we'd arrived.

3. We'll probably say we're still emerging when we're 70-something because the culture of our practice is to

constantly rethink what architecture practice is, and how we can do it better. At some point though, you have to say you've emerged, otherwise you'll just end up getting bitter and twisted about it all.

What's your big idea or hope for the future?

Spending a lot of time somewhere like Denmark at the moment, makes me worry about the selfish way political discussion happens in Australia. The last Federal election was a disgrace. I'd like to see a political discussion run according to competing ideas about the future of our country and society rather than being limited to a party comparison based on who provides the most short-term gains for our hip pocket. And in that culture I'd like to see people understand that architecture is not just about making buildings, it's an intelligence applied to making and remaking our world. I'd like to see that intelligence more engaged with the people who drive things in the political sphere.

Bio in brief

Graduated 1996, University of Sydney

Worked for

Forward Viney, 1992-1994

DCM Sydney, 1995-1998

Richard Murphy Architects, Scotland, 1998-1999

Established Terroir with Richard Blythe and Scott Balmforth, 1999

Institute involvement

NSW Chapter Councillor since 2007

Student Awards juries

National Awards jury, 2007

Gives and coordinates lectures regularly at Tusculum

Image (top right) from a Terroir design competition entry for a museum of natural history in Denmark. Centre: Gerard Reinmuth lecturing at UTS (March 2010) to students (including 120 from Aarhus School of Architecture) commencing a 10-day workshop on the Sydney Opera House. Portrait (top left): Brett Boardman.

DARCH 2011

As some of its inspired founders have become busier in their practices, DARCH, the emerging architects and graduates committee, has been going through a process of renewal. What hasn't changed are the committee's aims of: providing opportunities for young and emerging architects in New South Wales to contribute to the profession and the culture of architecture; contributing to the public discourse about the profession and the changing environment; supporting its members; and connecting with other design professionals, artists, thinkers and the public.

This year there are some new people in the core organising group: Cammi Tan (BVN Architects); Andre Heng (Perumal Pedavoli); Cherry Williamson (FJMT); Tamara Donnellan (Terroir); David Hart (Fox Johnston); Monique Clarke (JPW); and Clinton Cole (CplusC Design Construct) as well as the involvement of founding members Eva-Marie Prineas, Joe Snell, Marcus Trimble, Adam Haddow and Melonie Bayl-Smith.

The committee has also become more visible, with a Facebook page, Twitter, email and EmAGN newsletters up and running. Event

podcasts and a website are currently underway. Two new events have been added to the DARCH calendar for 2011:

- EmAGN is organising a national competition for emerging architects, which opens early in 2011, and
- The DARCH Horse Awards, to recognise contributors to our architectural successes, including consultants, planners, clients and even developers.

Throughout 2010, the support of the NSW Chapter office has been invaluable, particularly from Roslyn Irons, Dita Svelte and Eleni Ragogo, and the support at a national level through EmAGN and from our sponsors and contributors has also been very much appreciated. DARCH relies on the ideas, enthusiasm and commitment of its members and we're always interested in new ideas and involvement, so if you have something to contribute, contact us on darch@raia.com.au.

Jacqueline Connor
CplusC Design Construct
Chair, DARCH

DARCH events held in 2010

GOLD MEDAL BREAKFAST – APRIL

The Institute's 2010 Gold Medal winners Lindsay and Kerry Clare shared insights into their projects and progression from working in a small firm, to establishing their own firm, then joining the Government Architect's Office, to later founding a large firm, and now their current search for a new mode of practice.

PECHA KUCHA – APRIL

DARCH assisted Marcus Trimble in running Pecha Kucha Volume 15, held in conjunction with the Institute's National Conference in April. More than 200 people in the courtyard outside EuroLuce Light Studio in Surry Hills enjoyed rapid-fire imagery and discussion on everything from urban design in the Middle East, to aid work in the Pacific, and jewellery design in Sydney.

REGISTRATION SEMINAR – JUNE

The first DARCH Regi(fru)stration seminar was a valuable forum for those who have been thinking about registering as a 'real' architect, to learn about the process and ask questions of a panel consisting of Kate Doyle, NSW Architects Registration Board; Tony Kemeny,

from the PALS Course; Melonie Bayl-Smith and David Russell, NSW Architects Registration Board examiners; and Allison Earl.

EXHIBITION – JULY/AUGUST

DARCH began a collaboration with OpenHAUS Exhibitions and presented the 2009 Exhibition from Melbourne at Tusculum for Sydney Design 2010. A call for entries for the Advertisements for Architecture 2010 was marked by a forum on advertising for architecture hosted by Janne Ryan of ABC Radio National. On the panel was John de Manincor of Draw; Jason Ross of CHE Advertising; Rachel Walls, multimedia artist; Justine Clark, Editor of *Architecture Australia*; and photographer Brett Boardman.

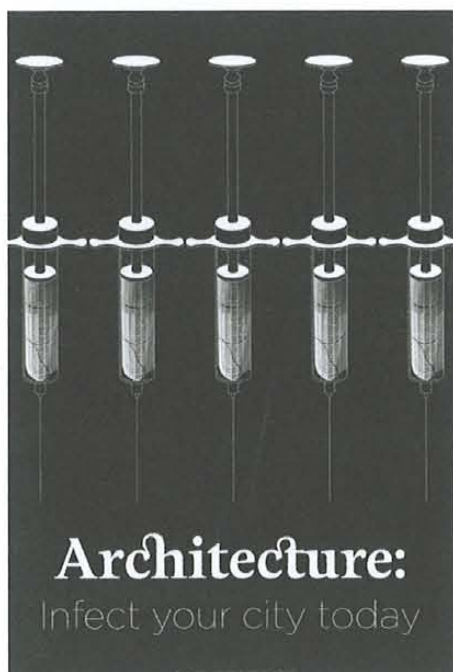
SLIDE NIGHT: DULUX STUDY TOUR SEPTEMBER

Three of the winners of the 2010 Australian Institute of Architects Dulux Study Tour — David Sutherland of Tanner Architects, Tom Ferguson of TFAD and Josephine Hurley of Tribe Studio — gave a slide night of their trip at the EuroLuce Light Studio in Surry Hills, while DARCH helped Newcastle winner Michael McPherson of Suters Architects organise an Emergency Architects event.

SYDNEY ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL – OCTOBER

As part of the 2010 Sydney Architecture Festival, DARCH's joint staging of the Advertisements for Architecture 2010 public exhibition at Surry Hills Library featured some of the entrants presenting their ideas on opening night, and a People's Choice Award. Super Colossal's Marcus Trimble took out both first and third place, while Liquid Architecture was second. The exhibition was accompanied by a panel discussion, led by Tamara Donnellan, about architects and the media. On the panel was Joanne Jakovich from the University of Technology, Sydney; Joe Snell of Snell Architects; Vince Frost of Frost*; and Trish Croaker, the Institute's National Media/PR Adviser.

During the festival, two DARCH Bar dinners were held at Tony Bilson's Number One Wine Bar. For the Architecture & Film dinner, our guests were architectural photographer and filmmaker Murray Fredericks; Michael Tawa, Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney; and architectural writer David Neustein. For the Architecture & Food dinner, guests were restaurateur Tony Bilson; Scott Balmforth of Terroir; and Adam Liaw, the 2010 MasterChef winner. ■■



From the Advertisements for Architecture exhibition, 2010, one of the People's Choice Award winners by Super Colossal.

Emerging architects

Despite talent and years of training, many young



Young architects make exceptional moments in architecture.

I started practice in 2000 with Tai Ropiha after winning the TKTS competition; Steven Figuera joined us in 2003. Ten years on, the practice has grown to a team of 10 people working across residential, public and urban design projects. The journey has been challenging. The initial competition win [TKTS Times Square, New York] gave us significant media exposure, but we still began the same way as most young architects: with residential work and design tutoring at university. Though this was adequate to sustain us, our ambition to do significant public-oriented work remained distant.

Originally, we had hoped the combination of competition wins and our prior experience in a number of award-winning projects would bring public project opportunities. However, we had little success achieving more than the final shortlist in traditional EOI (expressions of interest) and tenders. Instead, our early opportunities for public work and competition invitations — such as Binhai City Master Plan, Ballast Point and Green Square — came through the patronage of fellow architects and landscape architects. Though we now have an increasing number of direct commissions and invitations, we still share the ‘emerging’ frustrations.

We still find that public and corporate clients prefer more established architectural practices. These practices offer experience in the relevant building type, design excellence expressed through peer-recognised awards, and the office capacity to deliver projects. In this context, why would anyone risk commissioning an emerging practice over an established one? What does an emerging practice offer?

Perhaps the past can provide some answers. It has often been relatively young architects that make exceptional moments in architecture. Consider Utzon and the Sydney Opera House, Seidler and Australia Square, Ken Woolley and Fisher Library at the University of Sydney. Internationally, consider Renzo Piano with Richard Rogers and the Pompidou Centre, Norman Foster and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. They all had limited experience in the project type and scale prior to these projects. These groundbreaking projects had tremendous impact on their respective cities, providing lasting cultural and economic value.

Big leaps in innovation often come from emerging practices because their inherent lack of experience frees

them from established norms and client expectations garnered from previous work, so they naturally approach projects with a fresh set of eyes. Those early years of unbuilt designs, research and teaching, combined with passion and hunger are a potent recipe for exceptional outcomes.

Despite this, larger opportunities for emerging architects have become rare, and almost extinct in New South Wales. Public expectations on accountability make it difficult for an institutional client to select an architect based on latent capability over demonstrable experience. In today's climate it is hard to imagine a public project as significant as the Fisher Library being designed by a talented graduate, or Lend Lease taking on the next ‘Seidler’ for Barangaroo's main tower.

While current procurement practices minimise the risk for clients, they reinforce the status quo and limit places for aspiring architects to enter the market. This may be a safe method of delivering competent buildings, but does it push the boundaries of innovation? It's vital to foster a small portion of public projects focused on the mission of ‘innovation’, and give priority to designs by young architects.

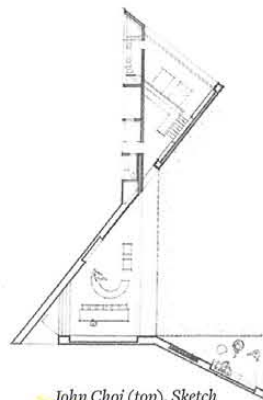
As a cultural investment in our future heritage, I would like to see the city actively pursue emerging practices as a

“All those early years of unbuilt designs, research and teaching, combined with passion and hunger are a potent recipe for exceptional outcomes.”

vital player in the healthy evolution of the city. With fresh ideas not curtailed or tethered to industry norms, emerging practices have the latent intellectual capacity to challenge the built environment and produce work that brings new and, importantly, unexpected layers and dimensions to the city. With this vital shift in thinking, emerging practices can play a part in the making and understanding of our built environment, helping to reinforce youth and vigour within our cultural identity. ■■

John Choi
Choi Ropiha Figuera

John Choi (top). Sketch (above) is a guest studio on a rural property in the Byron Shire hinterland. Sketch in yellow is an early study of the lookout at Port Botany Foreshore, part of the expansion by Aecom for Sydney Ports Corporation.



& public procurement.

architects in NSW are locked out of public projects.

If you haven't done that type of work, you're seen as too great a risk.

Being awarded the NSW Emerging Architect Prize for 2010 is a particularly interesting proposition given the distinct conservatism that exists in regard to the awarding of projects in the public domain, and specifically on government-funded projects in New South Wales.

As with many young architects, I am very interested in working on public projects as therein lies the opportunity to shape, and hopefully improve, the spaces with which so many people will engage. Unfortunately, given the extremely conservative nature of procurement in our state, only practices that have already done multiple iterations of the particular type of project are considered for any significant projects. The result seems to be that if you are working in a smaller or younger practice, even with award-winning credentials, there are limited opportunities to participate in this arena.

I have been very fortunate to work on large-scale public projects in other states and other countries, the smidjeon of public space that I have had any engagement with in Sydney was an external area adjacent to a heritage-listed building in the Rocks for the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. In this particular case it was our relationship with people on the client side who were driving the project that brokered the trust in our abilities, even though Terroir was a young team at the time.

Being keen to work on more of these projects, and as the project architect of an award-winning performing arts educational facility in the UK, I have unsuccessfully spent a number of years attempting to work on a performing arts project here in New South Wales but have been given feedback that even though I have relevant experience, as Terroir hasn't yet done this type of work before, we are seen as 'too great a risk'.

I am hoping that in the future, the opportunity to change this perception occurs and there will be initiatives that offer opportunities to younger emergent practices to engage in the public domain. A new book, *Procuring Innovative Architecture*, by Leon van Schaik, Geoffrey London and Beth George (Taylor & Francis Group, 2010) analyses models used in Australia and overseas by clients who engage young and emerging practices with the intention of getting a more innovative response to the project brief due to the unfamiliarity of the practices with that particular project

type, and offers an alternative approach to the one currently operating in New South Wales. Hopefully the book will be read and considered by the people responsible for commissioning public projects in our state.

"It seems a shame that our expertise is not being used, right here in New South Wales, to improve the quality of our built environment, but is instead being exported."

It is exactly the type of client thinking outlined by van Schaik et al., that has resulted in very exciting news for Terroir: our Danish office has been engaged as client advisers on the redevelopment of the Bispebjerg Hospital in Copenhagen, to provide input on the specific architectural opportunities that might exist in parallel to the healthcare requirements. It seems a shame that our expertise, and that of many other architects of our generation (and those coming after us), is not being used right here in New South Wales, to improve the quality of our built environment, but is instead being exported interstate and overseas. I sincerely hope this situation changes sooner, rather than later.

I would be remiss at this point if I didn't thank the Institute and the sponsor (Lockwood) for the honour of receiving the Emerging Architect Prize for 2010. While I do think that the 10-year period from graduation during which architects are eligible to apply for the award should be extended in line with other international awards for emerging architects, the initiative behind the award is incredibly important and will help to expose the work of this cross-section of the profession.

Optimistically, it may even result in more projects being commissioned from innovative young emerging architects around the country to enrich the spaces we live in. ■■■

Tamara Donnellan
Terroir



Tamara Donnellan and (top) the Burnie Makers Workshop, tourism and artist facility by Terroir for Burnie City Council; project architect, Tamara Donnellan.
Photo: Brett Boardman.

