

Reconciling History: Inserting an Indigenous Space into the University of Melbourne Campus

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After decades of inaction, reconciliation has entered the Australian political arena. All Australian universities are now required to respond to government strategies to promote internal and external engagement with Indigenous communities. Strategies span the practical and symbolic, including constructing Indigenous centres, increasing Indigenous student and academic presence and acknowledging traditional owners within institutional ceremonies.

This paper focuses on a multi-disciplinary design studio that challenged students to insert an Indigenous space into the campus of the University of Melbourne, one of Australia's earliest universities. It highlights the value of creative mapping practice in disrupting the physical and institutional history of the campus, which is striking in its erasure of an Indigenous presence.

While these mappings proved useful for re-imagining the campus as a place of co-existence, students had major difficulties in conceptualising a future space of reconciliation. Dominant design strategies relied on abstraction and representing Indigenous culture through either symbolism or a political lens informed by post-colonial theory. Neither approach satisfies the ambitions represented by reconciliation, which aims to develop relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Students displayed a reluctance to explore questions of contemporary culture through design practice. This outcome suggests the necessity of two shifts in design education: first, the embedding of an increased understanding of Indigenous culture within design education and, second, the heightening of design techniques and design theory for engaging with contemporary culture, informed by allied disciplines such as architecture, museology and cultural studies.

In settler contexts throughout the world, issues of sovereignty and reconciliation are politically and culturally complex. Canada, New Zealand and South Africa have all been challenged with addressing the injustices of colonisation. Responding to the ambitions of reconciliation is particularly challenging in Australia. The Indigenous people of Australia have occupied the continent and its islands for at least 40,000 years. By comparison, British occupation of the land has been relatively short, beginning in 1770. Within this context, the notion of reconciliation is problematised by Australia's unenviable distinction as the only settler society not to have signed a treaty between colonisers and Indigenous landowners. Instead, the doctrine of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) was applied in 1835, which ignored Aboriginal people's sovereign right to ownership of land.

The history of race relations within Australia has been particularly harsh. For example, social policy, such as the Victorian Aborigines Protection Act 1886, fractured Indigenous families through the sanctioned removal of Aboriginal children from their families (referred to as the Stolen Generations). This practice

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KEY WORDS

*Australian reconciliation policy
Contemporary indigenous culture
Spatial history
Landscape architecture
Design research
Design education
Creative mapping*

REFLECTION

continued until the 1970s. It was not until the 1967 Constitutional Referendum that Indigenous people were included in the census as citizens. Before this, Aboriginal people were governed under the Flora and Fauna Act, under which they were perceived by the Federal Government as legally equivalent to wildlife. They were excluded from laws that applied to all other Australian people. The referendum granted the Federal Government specific powers to make laws regarding Indigenous affairs, opening the door for Aboriginal involvement.¹

Efforts towards change emerged more prominently in the 1970s through the Land Rights movement, of which the Aboriginal Tent Embassy (1972) in Canberra is emblematic.² Legislative change has continued to be slow, with the Racial Discrimination Act passed in 1975, the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act in 1976, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (New South Wales) in 1983 and the landmark Mabo High Court decision to dissolve *terra nullius* in 1992.³ The notion of a treaty came on the national agenda in the 1980s, following the presentation of the Barunga Statement in the bicentenary year of 1988.⁴ Then Prime Minister Bob Hawke promised to develop a treaty by 1990 but this did not eventuate. Australia continues to be shaped by this tension given that 'settler state sovereignty was not legitimately established and Aboriginal sovereignty was, and continues to be, illegitimately ignored' (Short, 2012, p 300).

Despite the absence of a treaty, government has been intent on entering a process of reconciliation. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1987–91) is generally considered as the beginning of a formal reconciliation process. Outcomes from the Royal Commission led to the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991–2000) and, later, Reconciliation Australia (2001 – present).

In 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, on behalf of the Federal Government, made a formal apology to the Stolen Generations. This is considered a major symbolic step within the process of reconciliation, acknowledging the detrimental policies that had been administered by previous Australian governments, and an important step in the healing process.

The previous year, the Federal Government had launched the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) programme. RAPs are business plans that publicly formalise an organisation's commitment to reconciliation by identifying clear and realistic actions, facilitated by Reconciliation Australia. They emphasise generating relationships of respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. According to Reconciliation Australia (2012a, p 1), the RAPs aim at 'embedding cultural change within a whole organisation through building good relationships, respecting the special contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and creating meaningful opportunities'.

Central to reconciliation is an emphasis on generating discussion within contemporary life, as distinct from the memorialising or recording of history. Given Aboriginal people are a marginalised minority in Australia (less than 2.5 of the total population of Australia according to 2011 census data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012)), the reconciliation process 'remains dependent on the mobilization of support of a wider non-Indigenous public' (Short 2012, p 200). Consequently, the mission of Reconciliation Australia is to foster positive relationships – that is: 'To promote and build reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' (Huggins, 2005, p 9). Reconciliation Australia

(2012b) defines reconciliation as a process that is ‘everyone’s business’. The organisation states that:

Reconciliation is about building better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community for the benefit of all Australians.

Designers are implicated within the process and policy implementation of RAPs, either in response to an institutional plan, such as a university RAP, or from within their professional organisations. For example, in September 2010, the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects launched its RAP, detailing steps and priorities to help achieve Indigenous equality (Australian Institute of Architects, 2010).

How designers respond to this desire for reconciliation is, however, uncharted territory. Few designers have experience working with Indigenous communities, let alone the more ambitious aims of reconciliation. The majority of design work has been completed within remote and regional communities, such as the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre (1990) at Halls Gap in Victoria, Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre (1995) at Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory, Big Wiltja Project (1996) at the Walungurru Community, Kintore, in the Northern Territory, Piylarli Yardi Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre (2005) at Canarvon in Western Australia and the Wangka Maya Cultural and Language Centre (2008) at Wangka Maya, South Hedland, in Western Australia.

To date, few precedents from within Australian landscape architecture and urban design explicitly address the aims of reconciliation. For example, the winning entry for a design competition for Reconciliation Place in Canberra (2001) produced a representation of history rather than a space of reconciliation. The first designs to emerge from within landscape architecture that specifically address the demands of reconciliation, such as Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga in Adelaide, have yet to reach the stage of construction.

For designers, the challenge, however, is not limited to the techniques and opportunities of design to respond to reconciliation or to engage with a community. The issue is compounded by the virtual absence of Indigenous people within Australian cities. Their absence is particularly marked in Melbourne, where Indigenous people comprise only 0.45 percent of the total population of the greater metropolitan city (18,024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples). This compares with Sydney, where Indigenous people make up 1.25 percent (54,746) of the population, Brisbane 2 percent (41,904) and Darwin 9.2 percent (11,101) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). As suggested by McGaw et al: ‘A lack of built fabric and general invisibility of Indigenous culture perpetuate the historical dispossession of Indigenous people in contemporary social practice and its architectural and institutional forms’ (2011, p 300). This situation differs dramatically, for example, from the New Zealand context where Māori and Pacific cultures are strongly represented within spaces, architecture, festivals, language and everyday life.

It was against this context that students in the multi-disciplinary design studio were asked to insert an Indigenous space within the contemporary University of Melbourne campus. This proved to be a challenging proposition. Students began with an interrogation of the university’s history, in search of an Indigenous presence.

A textual history of erasure

The University of Melbourne, located in Melbourne, Victoria, is the second-oldest university in Australia, dating back to 1855. The main university campus is located in the inner suburb of Parkville, north of the city's central business district (see Figure 1). The university is highly regarded internationally for its teaching and research.⁵

The most widely circulated history of the University of Melbourne is provided on the 'About Us' page of its website (University of Melbourne, 2003a).⁶ The only evidence of Aboriginality is found under 'Indigenous Apology'. The apology to the Stolen Generations locates the university spatially within the territory of the Kulin Nation. This is an alliance of five central Victorian Indigenous language groups, including the traditional owners and pre-colonial occupants of the Parkville campus area, the Wurundjeri people. This acknowledgement is significant, given that recognition of Indigenous people is generally lacking elsewhere throughout the university's written history. Two contrasting historical narratives are therefore presented: the history offered by the apology, which suggests an Indigenous narrative relevant to the university site, and a history of the university, which erases any acknowledgement of the traditional landowners. This division raises the question as to who actually constitutes *us* in the university's notion of 'About Us'.

The university's dominant narrative refers exclusively to the site post-foundation (University of Melbourne, 2003b).⁷ The university is placed in a colonial chronology, constructed 'less than 20 years' from the arrival of the first European pioneers and the boom of the gold rush (University of Melbourne, 2003b). No reference is made to a prehistory of the land on which the university is built. Instead, the university's origin is intertwined with the establishment of the colony, 'a conscious move by the raw and young community to cloak itself with some of the sophistication of the parent country' (University of Melbourne, 2003b). The history continues as a celebration of important developmental



Figure 1: Map of the University of Melbourne Parkville campus within the city of Melbourne (Fiona Johnson).

moments, such as the laying of the foundation stone, and the many shifts in education that have followed. The short narrative ends suggesting that the early colonial aims of moral and intellectual improvement have become a reality, as 'the University of Melbourne maintains its pre-eminent position among Australian universities and is increasingly international in its outlook and its reputation' (University of Melbourne, 2003b).

This narrative mode aligns the construction of the University of Melbourne with the development of Australia as a modern space. While common in Australia's historical discourse, this framing is highly problematic for incorporating Indigenous people within the nation and its history. This position, states Chris Healy, 'ignores the simple fact that being fully in the time and space of Australia could only be conceived in relation to the place and time of indigenous people in Australia' (2008, p 49).

The published histories of the university campus replicate this grand narrative of colonial progress. This is clearly evident in Philip Goad and George Tibbits's book, *Architecture on Campus: A Guide to the University of Melbourne and its Colleges*, published in 2003. Emerging from celebrations marking the university's 150th year, the book catalogues the university's history through its architecture, moving through a chronology from 1853 to the time of the book's publication. With a focus on the evolution of the physical space of the campus, one could also expect discussion on the physical environment and the traditional landowners before the university's foundation.

While Goad and Tibbits (2003, p vii) do make reference to the site before foundation, it is described as 'largely unencumbered'. Goad and Tibbits describe the pre-foundation landscape as 'an open site, a swampy part of which had probably been a food-gathering area for the local Wurundjeri people' (2003, p 1). The use of the qualifying adverb *probably* reflects a hesitancy in making clear statements in relation to the specific emplacement of Aboriginal people in Australia's urban spaces, particularly when the evidence of such occupation is difficult to discern. The significance of the wetland system that once flowed through the campus to the history and culture of the local Wurundjeri people is unquestionable (Presland, 2008, p 20). However, this hesitancy seems to reflect people's inability to comprehend the physical landscape as cultural evidence from which to interpret history.

If the conceptualisation of colonial history shifted from a focus on progress and events to, instead, an environmental history that emphasises responses to and inhabitation of the environment, Goad and Tibbits could more confidently and accurately discuss a pre-European history of the site. As Gary Presland contends, by 'understanding where stream courses formerly flowed, we are better informed about where people set up camps and the routes that they travelled in their movement about the country' (2008, p 205).

This ambiguity about any preoccupation of the site continues in Goad and Tibbits's narrative. They state (2003, p 1) that:

After being fenced to exclude outsiders, the area became a picturesque landscaped park into which more and more individual buildings were added, with uncoordinated crowding the inevitable outcome.

Who exactly were these outsiders? Were they the *probable* food gatherers who were presumably fenced out, becoming excluded outsiders both physically and discursively from the university's modern landscape? Or were they convicts, bushrangers or other such marginalised subjects of the colony? The acceptance of such an ambiguous site history is surprising, especially given these events occurred only a little over 150 years ago. Goad and Tibbits do not seem to have attempted to augment the site history by consulting directly with Indigenous people, accessing oral history resources or through interpreting the physical environment.

George Tibbits's occasional paper, *The Quadrangle: The First Building at the University of Melbourne*, published in 2005, offers a further contribution to the university's heritage narrative (Figure 2). This account also fails to acknowledge the site's prehistory as both a physical environment and a home-land, although there is an allusion to a wetland system. This reference, however, is not to the wetland as an ecological system or natural landscape but as the transformed and colonised space of the picturesque lake. This constructed water body is framed as a hindrance to progress, existing 'not as the physical entities they once were, but as negative forces, inhibitors to development' (Tibbits, 2005, p 97).

This review of the university's discursive history reveals the narrow focus of academics and heritage professionals in conceiving urban history. These accounts of the campus heritage, which minimise any preoccupation or physicality of the site, are implicated in the collective amnesia of the settler society. The absences are surprising, given that these are contemporary accounts of history, produced during a period when issues of native title and reconciliation have been at the forefront of public and academic discourses. This amnesia reveals the paradox inherent in post-settlement perceptions of Australian urban heritage. That is, as Chris Healy articulates, in the city, 'Aborigines are imagined as absent in the face of a continuing and actual indigenous historical presence' (2008, p 49).

In light of this absence, students were challenged to insert an Indigenous space into the campus. Creative mapping techniques formed the starting point for offering new histories of the campus that, unlike the textual accounts, recast it as a site of co-existence.

Revealing Indigenous narratives

Creative mapping techniques are of course not new, having informed the processes and techniques of landscape architecture since the 1990s. In Australia, however, these techniques are particularly useful in resurfacing an Indigenous presence after tangible evidence of it has been so comprehensively and rapidly erased from the built environment. Significantly, the composite nature of the maps allows students to conceptualise history as a space of co-existence, circumventing the amnesia of the University of Melbourne campus. History is now spatialised, and this space is shared. These maps became a scaffold for layering other multi-modal research techniques implicit in design.

The two maps generated by Master of Landscape Architecture student Jacqui Monie (shown in figures 3 and 4), for example, offer new readings of the university site positioned within a broader physical and cultural environment. The first map locates the campus site as part of a grassy woodland plain positioned on a high point between three water bodies. This map is constructed from text and symbols



Figure 2: Photo of the Old Quadrangle at the University of Melbourne (Fiona Johnson).

taken directly from original maps and offers an understanding of how the landscape was perceived by colonial settlers. An Indigenous presence is limited to the recognition of Burial Hill and the presence of the Yarra Mission further along the Yarra River.

Figure 4 offers a closer investigation of the campus site. The inclusion of contour lines over the early campus plan reveals that the quadrangle was constructed on a prominent ridgeline, adjacent to a major creek, which linked into the swampy area. This mapping also highlights the extreme spatial division of the campus, with the northern edge given over to the non-secular colleges and the subsequent campus development crowded into the southern edge of the site.

While some historians might argue that these maps lack the accuracy and rigour of textual histories, their strength lies in their ability to simultaneously engage with multiple sources of history and uncover new stories, narratives and relationships. The spatialisation of history immediately creates a space of co-existence, addressing Byrne's concern that historians traditionally compose 'a version of the Australian historical landscape, which is a fictional space where races do not interrelate, a space where Aborigines do not even exist' (2003, p 81). Byrne (2003, p 74) argues that the invisibility of Aboriginal people has been affected in two ways: through physical marginalisation and through discursive erasure. He maintains that heritage professionals have been complicit in this discursive process, 'by constructing a heritage landscape in which traces of the post-1788 experience of Aboriginal people were rendered invisible' (Byrne, 2003, p 74).

These representations remind us that history is enacted upon the same space and they encourage us to understand that meaning can be layered. The power of this framing is evident in student explorations of the swampy area of the campus. Although the site was described by Goad and Tibbits as a possible food-gathering area and also an 'inhibitor to development' (2003, p 97), further interrogation through mapping, heightened by archival research, reveals a far more complex history.



Figure 3: Plains grassy woodland, 2010 (Jacqui Monie).

Fiona Johnson's maps, as shown in figures 5 and 6, document the multiple events that have occurred on the swamp site, including: the Crown Surveyor Hodgkinson extending the boundary of the university to encompass two good trees and swamp (1854); transformation of the swamp into a lake (1861); Socialist student Guido Baracchi having been reprimanded for criticising Australia's involvement in World War I, with 200 students forcing him to stand in the lake up to his boot tops (1917); students re-enacting the first contact on the lake with Captain Cook, King Billy and a treaty (1938); and the final erasure of the lake (1939).

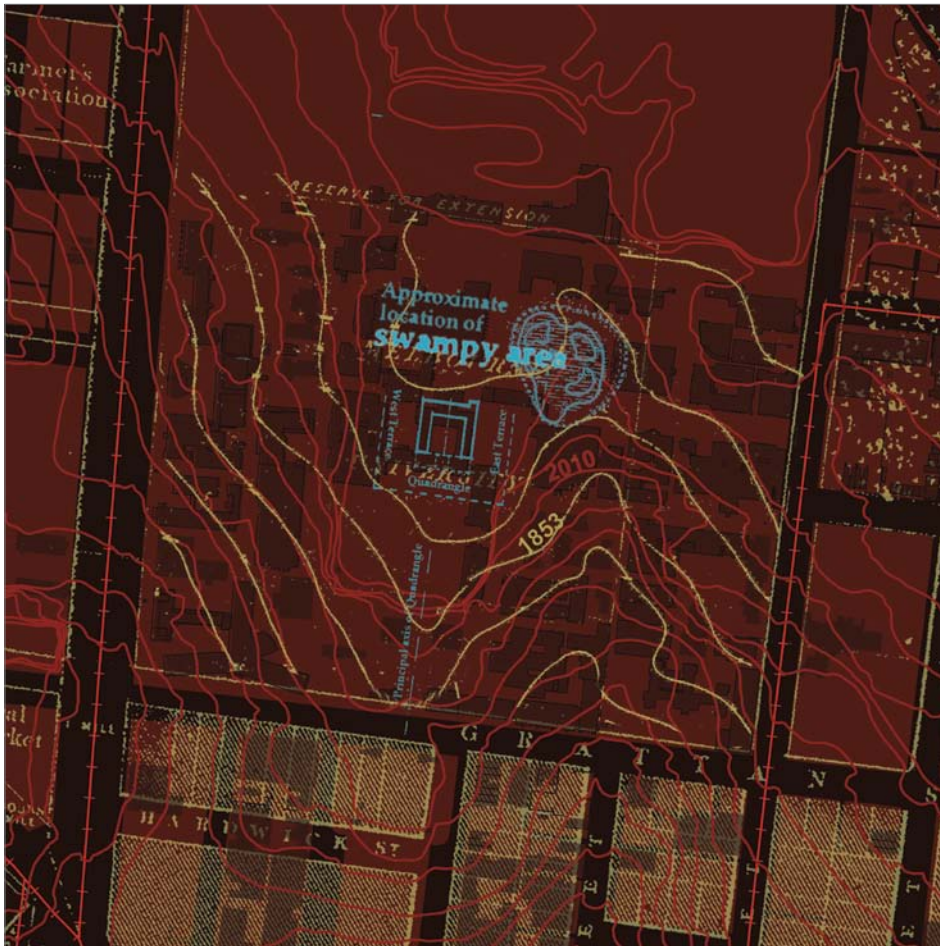
The site today forms part of the Union Court, the *concrete lawn*, which was designed post-May '68 as a riot-proof university campus. Yet hidden beneath this courtyard is a site that has significance for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Further, the exclusion of the histories and stories of events that unfolded in this space from the campus tour and official history of the built environment fails to acknowledge the university as a place of debate and student life.

The richness and complexity of the *concrete lawn* attracted many students to its potential as a site of intervention. The next phase of design exploration proved extremely challenging. While these mappings were useful for re-imagining the history of the campus, students had major difficulty in conceptualising a future space of reconciliation. Design strategies relied predominantly on abstraction, with few engaging directly in imagining a new cultural space aligned with the intent of reconciliation.

Strategies of abstraction

Understanding the complexities of Indigenous culture and the political agendas of Australia was extremely difficult for the international students, who were predominantly from mainland China. This is not surprising, given the low presence of Indigenous people in Melbourne, which is, for many students, their only experience of Australia. Their research into Indigenous Australia inevitably attracted them to art, especially of the more remote desert communities. The

Figure 4: Swampy area, 2010
(Jacqui Monie).

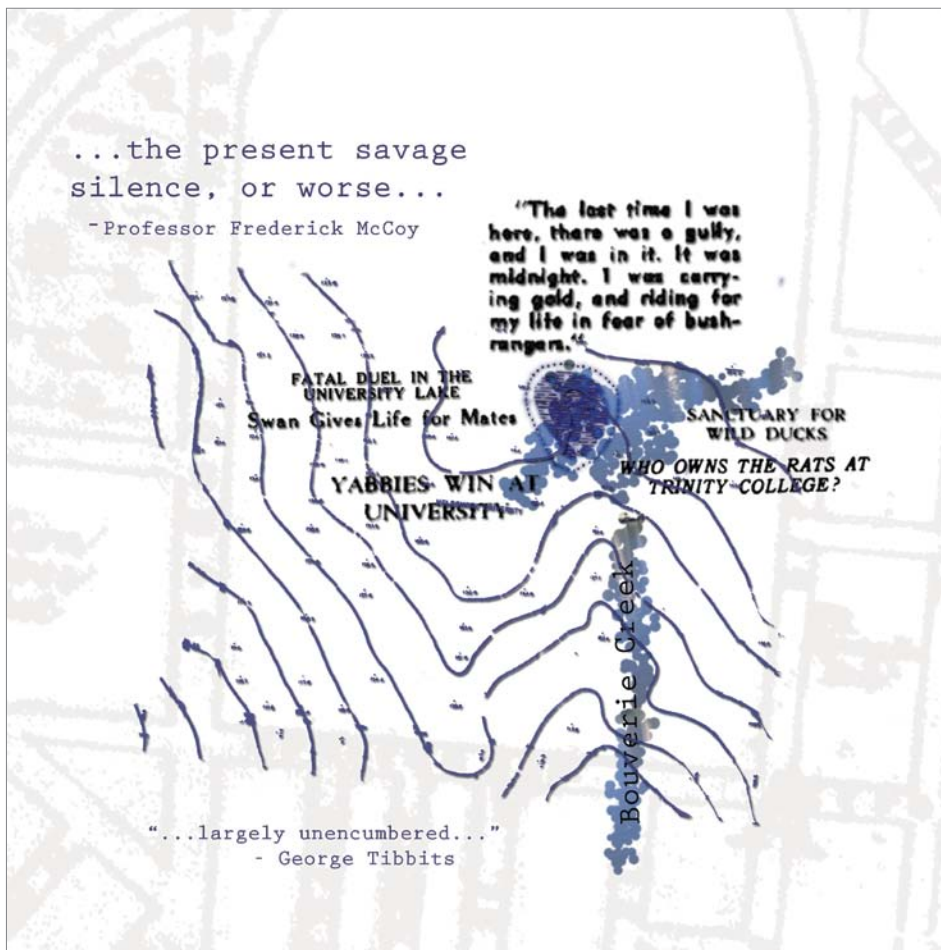


representation of Indigenous culture through forms, colours and symbols informed these students' initial gestures. As many scholars remind us, however, non-Indigenous people tend to read these cultural representations mainly at an aesthetic level, missing their significance as cultural knowledge. Dianne Lancashire (1999, p 318), for example, in her study of Kakadu National Park, claims representations of Aboriginality often 'provoke an aesthetic response, whether the representations take the form of paintings, dances and dramatic plays or "informative" brochures, national parks and cultural centres'.

Adopting cultural symbols is problematic at two levels: the first question concerns cultural appropriation and whether the designer has the right to use these symbols and the second is about the reduction of these complex representations of knowledge and culture to patterns and symbols. Further, the insertion of this symbolism within the University of Melbourne campus inevitably positions Indigenous culture within the problematic binaries of formal/organic, built/unbuilt and progress/historical. This awkward juxtaposition was demonstrated in Shaolin Ji's project, which proposed an alternative entrance into the campus that terminated at the building currently housing Murrup Barak (the Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development).

This new avenue (shown in Figure 7) contrasted with the historic axis that aligned with the southern lawn and terminated in the Tudor Gothic old quad. Initially, Shaolin was drawn to literal interpretations of Aboriginal art but was encouraged to shift her response to a more topographic exploration. These new

Figure 5: *Largely unencumbered*, 2010
(Fiona Johnson).



landforms unsettled the dominance of the imposing architecture that defined the former *concrete lawn* and gave new prominence to the ground plane and smaller Murrup Barak building.

With more awareness of the complexity of cultural appropriation, the Australian students favoured a post-colonial lens for conceiving an Indigenous space. However, the manner in which they applied this theory also resulted in abstraction. Students set out to disrupt the colonial power structures evident within the architecture, spaces, symbolism and hierarchy of the campus. These design responses, though, continued to avoid direct engagement with contemporary Indigenous culture and concepts. Instead, Indigenous culture was assumed into an intellectual critique of hierarchy and power, which deflected from the goal of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Theory replaced cultural knowledge and local communities.

Daniel Morton's scheme, for example, explored the notion of a post-colonial university campus, with an emphasis on the use of vegetation. His scheme unfolded as an exposé about the control and formalisation of space and planting. While interesting, the focus shifted from an engagement with Indigenous culture to the ambition to 'track a new course of design that has an ability to meaningfully engage with our colonial legacy'. A focus on Indigenous plants was deemed to be the link to Indigenous culture. Fiona Johnson's exploration of democratic space also side-stepped a direct engagement with Indigenous culture. Her scheme replaced the rigidity and control of the *concrete lawn* with an ephemeral shifting topography that could accommodate new spatial relationships and practices of protest.

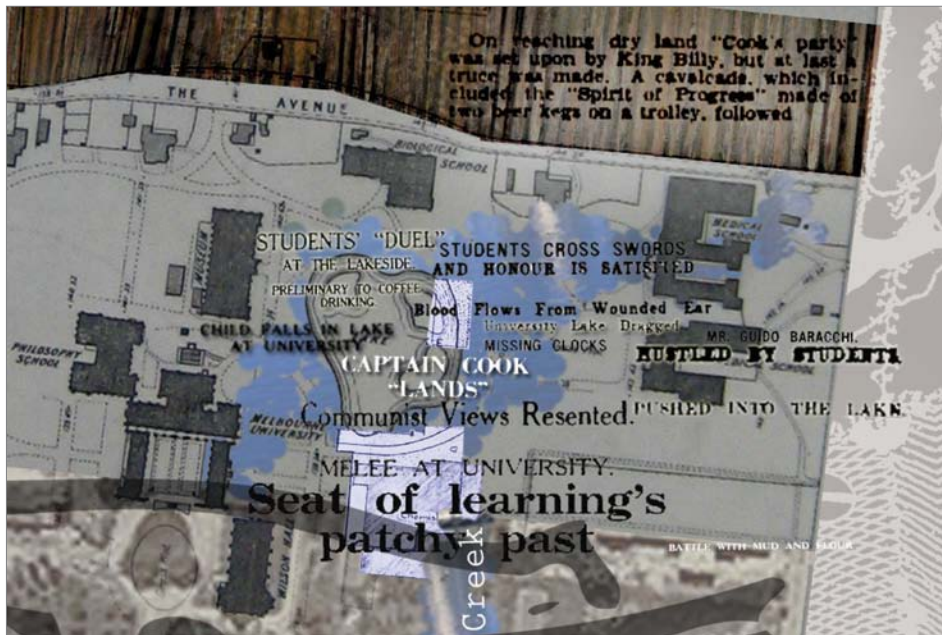


Figure 6: Patchy past, 2010
(Fiona Johnson).

Similar to the symbolic responses, many of these interpretations develop a problematic construction where an Indigenous presence or culture is conflated with nature or the landscape. Any sense of Indigenous Australians having an enduring and contemporary presence is absent in these constructions. This is an extremely fraught framing, revisiting a dominant colonial construction that relegates Aboriginal people to the status of nature, considering them to be as timeless and primitive as the landscape itself.

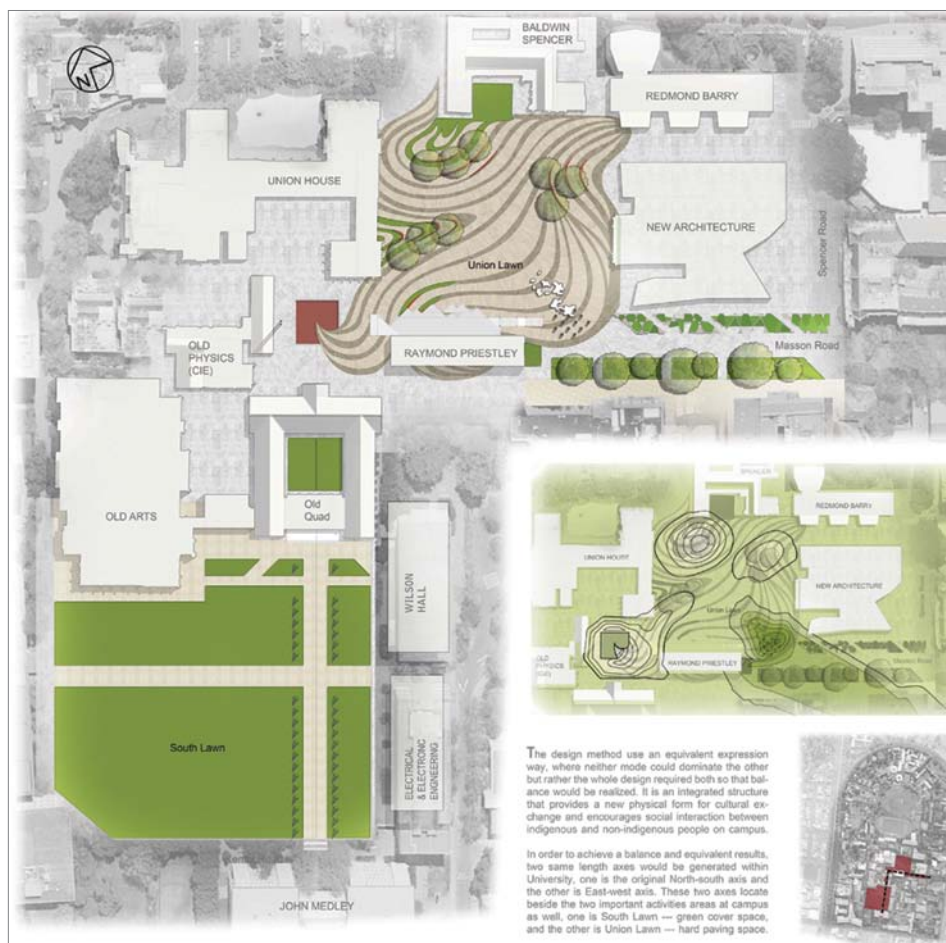
This reliance on strategies of abstraction can be traced to the students' weak knowledge of or lack of confidence with understanding Indigenous culture and history. However, we argue that it also suggests a reluctance to explore questions of contemporary culture through design practice and a hesitancy to engage with allied disciplines that do.

Towards a space of reconciliation

The few students who could conceptualise new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians looked for inspiration and guidance from museology and architecture. These disciplines have far more experience in engaging with questions of cultural representation, politics and identity than landscape architecture. That experience has been heightened by the increase in the number of cultural centres (urban and remote) and new national and state museums constructed in Australia since the early 1990s. While these new cultural spaces have been shaped by a post-colonial lens, they aim to encourage a contemporary and enduring Indigenous presence rather than to memorialise culture. Consequently, their design strategies emphasise performative and programmatic aspects over abstraction.

Jacqui Monie's scheme, shown in figures 8 and 9, proposed a new flow of paths and surfaces that invited 'an evolving Aboriginal authorship of space through habitation, use and expression'. New pathways carved into the ground plan led to a subterranean space and outdoor courtyard that offered multiple canvasses for interactive art, adaptable architecture, new technologies and media.

Figure 7: Developing an alternative axis (Shaolin Ji).



The focus on new technologies challenges old notions of primitivism and, instead, emphasises a continually evolving and highly urbanised Aboriginal culture. The use of technology also facilitates connections beyond the site, provides for the writing of new futures and stories with a strengthened collective voice and can link to a broader audience.

Connecting the diverse and multiple layers of Indigenous culture also formed the basis for architecture student Sarah Delamore's intervention for the student union building shown in figures 10 and 11. Growing up with the cultural hybridity that distinguishes bicultural New Zealand, Sarah found the absence of an Indigenous presence in Melbourne particularly challenging. Through a re-imagined hub of campus activity, she aimed to connect the isolated pockets of Indigenous presence found within the greater university precinct, such as the Melbourne Museum, Murrup Barak, visiting Indigenous academics and the Koori community of Carlton.

Her work was informed by the research and writing of Australian architect Shaneen Fantin (2003, p 86) who advocates for a focus on social practices, rather than the abstraction of Aboriginal semiotic devices into design, arguing for the development of 'identity through occupation first, representation later'. This response shifts from presenting Aboriginal culture as an object to, instead, creating architecture based on daily events, activities, use and occupation. Sarah's strategy involved realigning the architectural fabric to the true cardinal points of east and west (a reference to the tracking of the sun), which provided opportunities for



Figure 8 (left): An undulating ramp leads under the Raymond Priestley building and down to Murrup Barak (Jacqui Monie).

opening up the internal campus structure to surrounding spaces and light. New programmes supporting Indigenous culture were interwoven into the structure, incorporating natural materials, transitional spaces and external programmes.

Sarah's familiarity with culturally hybrid spaces in New Zealand helped her conceptualise a space of dialogue and interaction. Similarly, Jacqui Monie's experience as an exchange student at the University of British Columbia in Canada provided her with a valuable understanding of how Indigenous culture could be embedded within a university campus. For both students, the disciplines of museology and architecture provided valuable guidance for engaging with contemporary Indigenous culture.

This studio presented students with an immense challenge: to engage with a culture that, to many (including Australian students), was extremely foreign. At one level, it can be argued their reliance on design strategies that focused on



Figure 9 (right): A cafe and kitchen opening onto a flexible space for public and private events (Jacqui Monie).



Figure 10 (left): Interweaving new programmes into the existing student union building (Sarah Delamore).

abstraction reflects the absence of an understanding of Indigenous culture within their education and also their everyday life. But we suggest that, even with an increased level of cultural understanding, many students would still struggle to explore questions of contemporary culture through design practice.

While students were comfortable in understanding and exploring the site as a physical and cultural space, their ability to project a future space of reconciliation was limited. We doubt this outcome is restricted to just these students but suggest many landscape architecture students are more comfortable within the realm of analysis than speculation.

Landscape architecture education has made significant inroads in developing more complex understandings of ecology, infrastructure and natural systems. Similarly, our conceptualisation of cultural landscape has shifted the manner

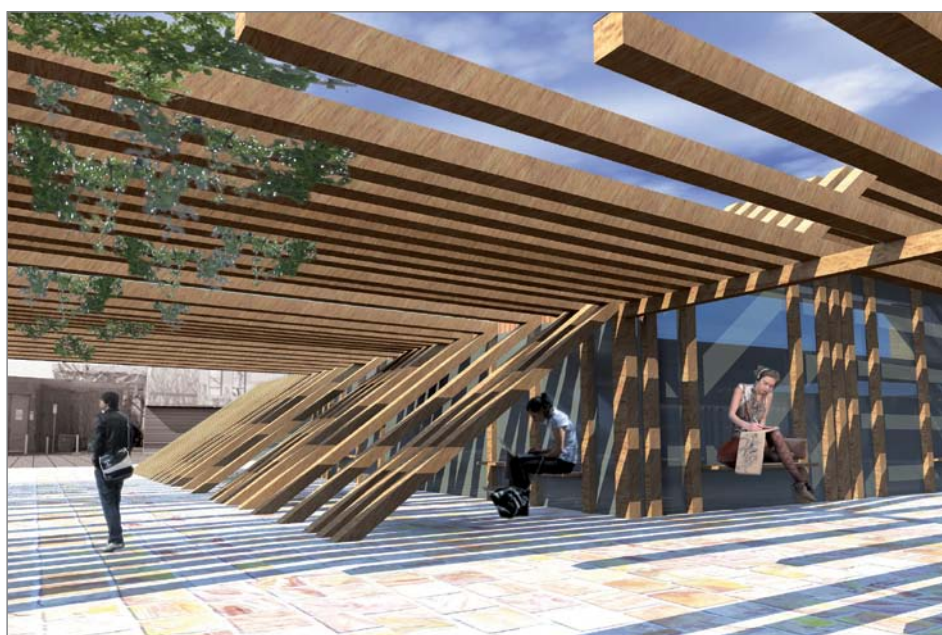


Figure 11 (right): A new relationship between internal and external spaces (Sarah Delamore).

in which heritage is understood. However, there is less evidence of an equally rigorous exploration of cultural production. This is extremely important in the context of Australia where engagement with Indigenous Australia within shared urban spaces is only just beginning.

Conclusion

Reconciliation, understood as a process of constructing new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, presents an important opportunity for contemporary Australian society. Designers will be increasingly asked to engage with the process, as policy materialises into design briefs for new civic and institutional spaces. Much of the urban fabric of Australian cities has erased the presence of Indigenous people. This paper has highlighted the potential for creative mapping techniques to reveal alternative institutional histories, narratives and stories. The identification of such sites and histories is critical to addressing the amnesia relating to Indigenous people and culture that continues to permeate perceptions and constructions of Australian urban heritage.

The new mappings and histories uncovered as part of the studio, for example, have been incorporated into a new walking tour for the campus. The 'Billibellary Walk' offers an understanding of how the Wurundjeri people continue to understand the land on which the university was constructed. The extraordinary history of the swamp, uncovered as part of the studio, will feature as one of the 11 points of interest.

This paper has also raised questions regarding the manner in which landscape architecture engages with culture and design. It highlights the importance of looking beyond landscape architecture to produce successful outcomes supportive of the goals of reconciliation. As this studio experience has demonstrated, allied disciplines – such as architecture, museology and performative practices – offer valuable guidance and support for a future generation of designers to meaningfully engage with not only the possibilities of reconciliation but culture in general.

NOTES

- 1 For a detailed account of the politics of the referendum, refer to Attwood and Markus (2007).
- 2 Installed as an act of protest, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy is located in the forecourt of Old Parliament House in Australia's national capital Canberra. On the night of 25 January 1972, Indigenous activists from Redfern, Sydney, drove to Canberra and erected a beach umbrella in front of the then parliament. The embassy drew on public support for Indigenous land rights, provoked by a series of cases: the Gove land rights case (1971), the Gurindji people's industrial action 'Walk-off' at Wave Hill (1966–75) and a nationwide protest for land rights, Ningla-A-Na (meaning 'hungry for land' in the Arrernte language) which marched in several state capital cities on National Aborigines Day 1972. In 1995, the embassy was added to the Register of the National Estate. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy continues to be a central space for land rights and reconciliation, celebrating its 40th anniversary on 26 January 2012 with 'Corroboree for Sovereignty'. For more information, see Aboriginal Tent Embassy (no date) and Muldoon and Schaap (2012).
- 3 The Mabo High Court decision instigated the legal doctrine of native title into Australian law. In doing so, it overturned *terra nullius*. The action was led by Eddie Mabo, David Passi and James Rice, on behalf of the Meriam people from Murray Island in the Torres Strait. The Mabo decision was formally enacted into legislation by the Australian Parliament through the Native Title Act 1993. For details, see High

- Court of Australia (1992) *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)* ('Mabo case') [1992] HCA 23; (1992) 175 CLR 1 (3 June 1992).
- 4 The Barunga Statement, comprising two bark paintings and text calling for Indigenous rights, was presented to the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke at the 1988 Barunga Festival in the Northern Territory. This statement of national Aboriginal political objectives called for self-determination, a national system of land rights, compensation, respect for Aboriginal identity, the end to racial discrimination and the granting of full civil, economic, social and cultural rights. The full statement can be read on the archive for the Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation (2000).
 - 5 The University of Melbourne is ranked 34th in the world by the Times Higher Education 2013–14 rankings, 54th in the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2013 and No 1 in Australia according to both ranking agencies. See University of Melbourne (2012) Reputation and Rankings, Parkville, Victoria, The University of Melbourne. Accessed 26 June 2014, <http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/explore/why-choose-melbourne/reputation-rankings>
 - 6 Authorised by the university's Director of Information Management, the content was created in 2003 and updated as recently as February 2011.
 - 7 The authorship of the page is unacknowledged but authorised by the Director of Information Management; this narrative is voiced by the official mouthpiece of the university.

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