10 INFLUENCE
VIVIAN MITSOGIANNI

16 'BEST PROJECT FOR WHICH THE STUDENT COMPLETELY IGNORES THE STAFF':
PROFESSOR PETER CORRIGAN AT RMIT
VIVIAN MITSOGIANNI

22 THE LOCAL, THE MARGINAL
AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESIST
MAURO BARACCO

26 ► Athan House photos by JOHN GOLLINGS

30 HUMAN DETAIL
NIGEL BERTRAM &
MARIA NEUSTUPNY

42 IDEAS: PLURAL
PETER BREW

46 ► Chapel of St Joseph photos by JOHN GOLLINGS

50 STRUTTING
EMILY DAVIES

56 EDMOND & CORRIGAN
& THE RMIT DESIGN ARCHIVES
HARRIET EDQUIST

58 TO SCALE THE HEIGHTS OF KNOWLEDGE
FROM HERE TO ETERNITY
PAUL FOX

60 ► Academic Centre, Newman College
and St Mary's College photos by JOHN GOLLINGS

62 EIGHT CHARACTERS:
THE CAST OF THE CORRIGAN STUDIO
SENESIO FRANGOS

66 ARCHITECTURE STORIES
ELI GIANNINI &
CATHERINE RANGER

72 ► KPR, Freedom Club Child Care-Centre
photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
74 AN EVERYDAY NOBILITY:
EDMOND & CORRIGAN'S KAY STREET HOUSES
PHILIP GOAD
78 ➤ Kay Street Housing photos by JOHN GOLLINGS
82 HISTORIANS' ARCHITECTURE:
HISTORY ARGUED AND RECAST
THROUGH BUILDINGS
CONRAD HAMANN
88 ➤ Myers House photos by JOHN GOLLINGS
90 PRISONS OF PERSONALITY
(IF I WERE AN ISLAND)
PAUL VAN HERK
94 ➤ Myers House Interiors photos by JOHN GOLLINGS
98 FIZZING WITH MOXIE
PHILIP HUNTER (by DR VERA MÖLLER)
104 FAITH AND DONUTS
EMMA JACKSON
110 ➤ KPR, Church of the Resurrection
photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
112 'MOST PEOPLE ARE OTHER PEOPLE'
— OSCAR WILDE
IAN MCDougALL
116 THE IDEA OF A CULTURE
VIVIAN Mitsogianni
122 ➤ Building 8, RMIT University photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
124 STRIPES AND FOLDS, DIGRESSIONS
AND DISMISSALS
DR VERA MÖLLER
129 ➤ Niagara Galleries extension photos by JOHN GOLLINGS
134 INAPPROPRIATE ENTHUSIASMS
PAUL MORGAN
140 ➤ Dandenong TAFE photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
142 YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY IDEAS
CHRISTINE PHILLIPS
146 ➤ Through the Looking Glass photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
148 SPEAK WHAT WE FEEL,
NOT WHAT WE OUGHT TO SAY
MARK RAGGATT

150 ➤ King Lear by JOHN GOLLINGS
152 CONNOISSEURSHIP
LEON VAN SCHAIK
156 REASON WITHOUT REASON:
PLAYING THE LONG GAME
WITH PETER CORRIGAN
DAN SCHULZ
160 ➤ VCA School of Drama photos by JOHN GOLLINGS
166 A REBEL'S EXCURSION INTO PARADISE
MICHAEL SPOONER
170 ➤ Oakleigh Fire Station photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
172 DIGNITY WITH A MODESTY OF MEANS
KERSTIN THOMPSON
176 ➤ Oakleigh Fire Station photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
178 EDMOND & CORRIGAN AS AN ARCHITECTURAL DIALECT:
A GENEALOGY FROM MELBOURNE TO ORIGINAL FIELD
OF ARCHITECTURE (OF A) IN OXFORD
ANDREW DAWSON &
IGEA TROIANI
182 (STRUCTURAL) RAKISHNESS IN 5 PARTS
ELEANOR TULLOCK
186 ➤ Threepenny Opera photo by JOHN GOLLINGS
188 GUARDIAN ANGELS INTERVIEW
FR BARRY MORAN, MAGGIE EDMOND
& THE CATHOLIC PARISH BUILDINGS, 1974–84
BY CONRAD HAMANN & CHRISTINE PHILLIPS
196 AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER CORRIGAN (2003)
WITH SIMON DRYSDALE & ROBERT LUXFORD
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ANDREW & IGEA TROIANI

EDMOND & CORRIGAN AS AN ARCHITECTURAL DIALECT: A GENEALOGY FROM MELBOURNE TO ORIGINAL FIELD OF ARCHITECTURE [OFA] IN OXFORD

"The impression of Peter's architecture [...] is of lower middle class suburban domestic imagery, richly coloured, cheaply constructed and matter-of-factly detailed. It has received mixed reactions, and is often seen as vulgar, brash, garish in appearance and arbitrary and fragmented in design. It is also seen as provocative, fresh and widely original and is valued highly for this." (1)

"It is known to be informed by firmly held beliefs about the nature of contemporary Australia and the value in developing a regional culture and an architecture appropriate to it. Nevertheless, there is more to this body of work than suburbia, and more to it than contemporary Australian references." (2)

ANDREW DAWSO. We started our architectural education at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, a strong vernacular school, however we were seeking something more challenging and more exciting architecturally. Both Igea and I left QUT and went to Melbourne, where we tried to enrol in RMIT, and after two [...] application attempts, we were successful.

IGEA TROIANI And who was on the [interview] panel that rejected you, Andrew, the first time?

AD It was Mr Corrigan. He interviewed me. He asked me which architects I was interested in in Melbourne and I said 'Daryl Jackson'. And I didn’t get in. (Giggles.)

Six months later, after doing a bridging history and theory subject, Doug Evans interviewed me and he let me in straightaway. [Pause. Addressing Igea.] Why did you go to Melbourne?

IT I thought architecture could be something more than what I was experiencing.

AD And how did you find RMIT?

IT I found it very, very difficult. RMIT was very competitive; it was extremely demanding but it was also extremely enriching. Why do I think Edmund & Corrigan are important? They started to demand that architecture have more of an ethical, social and political conscience and I don’t think I’d studied somewhere with those kinds of interests.

AD Corrigan was a big figure at RMIT. We were both appallingly and overwhelmed a little bit by RMIT so we didn’t do his studio.

IT The earliest recollection was we walked past the Key Street house, or terrace houses, because we lived around the corner and initially I didn’t really understand them.

AD The other thing about this sort of architecture is it’s never finished into a fixed style. It has a look to it, but it can change.

AD It’s a lot easier having a practice here (in Oxford, UK) than it was in Brisbane and I think a lot of it is done to what I can get away with. In particular, as an Australian, people will allow you to be cross, to say what you think and that sort of translates somewhat into the architecture.

IT The thing about Keble College in Oxford (a project that OFA are currently working on) is that it was

I cannot stress the learning process of colour and line. It is not a world of illustration. It is a world of information.

ANDREA DARSON and IGIA TOLANI. Founded Original Field of Architecture in 1986. They have lived in the United Kingdom since 2005, having formerly worked in practice in Melbourne and Würzburg, Germany and in practice and education in Brisbane and Oxford.

ANDREA DARSON

IT IS NOT A WORLD OF INFORMATION.