

Introduction

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The symposium INSIDEOUT was held in Melbourne Australia from 22 to 24 April 2005. Its focus was to encourage new thinking, research and teaching between interior and landscape discourse and practice. Papers by national and international academics, practitioners and postgraduate students in the disciplines of interior design, landscape architecture, art and design were presented and published in this issue of IDEA Journal. All papers – except the invited papers by Elizabeth Grosz and Ross Gibson – have been refereed in accordance with the IDEA Journal refereeing process. The symposium was supported by IDEA (Interior Design/Interior Architecture Educators Association), RMIT School of Architecture and Design, The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. In keeping with the concept of bringing two sides together – insides and outsides – this introduction is composed of two views.

Composing forces

Suzie Attiwill

This publication of papers on matters of interior design/interior architecture and landscape architecture, and insides and outsides, is another manifestation of INSIDEOUT, a symposium held in April 2005 at Domain House in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. The idea of holding a symposium where landscape and interior were brought together emerged during a conversation at SAHANZ, Brisbane, 2002. I remember feeling a sense of mischievous glee at the idea of holding a conference where what is usually so dominant in the fields of landscape and interior and, in a literal sense, the middle bit between them – architecture – would be absent. I wondered what kinds of conversation might be had without a dominant voice and referent.

The title for the symposium was initially in[side]out. As a lens for the symposium, this bracketing had for me the effect of heightening the 'side' and hence siding of the disciplines and practices. This changed to INSIDEOUT when we developed the graphics for the symposium. As a lens, the possibilities of turning something inside out came into focus, with the invitation to presenters/authors to 'address the coincidences between interior and landscape disciplines and practices'. The symposium took place 'to encourage new thinking,

research and teaching into the possible relations between interior and landscape discourse and practice'.¹

Thinking about it now, a number of decisions were made which were critical in terms of the symposium. The first was that there was no stated theme, aside from bringing the two disciplines together, nor a series of thematic threads which preceded the submissions of abstracts. We wanted to see what would be produced through the call for abstracts outlined above. To do otherwise would have been a contradiction of sorts – in that we were encouraging 'new thinking, research and teaching' and for the new to emerge, the possibility of not knowing in advance of the symposium was vital. Another important force was the site. While this is not surprising given the nature of the disciplines involved, the choice of a venue is often made according to quantitative requirements and audiovisual technical facilities. For us, however, the selection of the site for the symposium was inspired by qualities of inside and outside. INSIDEOUT took place inside a building that was once a house surrounded by grass and a courtyard, adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens and The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. The house was built for the first Government astronomer (someone whose practice was the observation of outer space!). It later became a gallery for contemporary art and its current life is as a venue attached to the education program of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Elizabeth Grosz was invited as the symposium's keynote speaker. Her writings, in particular her text 'Architecture from the Outside', foregrounds thinking and its relation to doing and making. In her opening paragraphs, Grosz poses the question 'How to *think* architecture differently? How to think *in* architecture, or *of* architecture, without conforming to the standard assumptions, the doxa, the apparent naturalness, or rather the evolutionary fit assumed to hold between being and building ... to think while making or rather while doing: to think as doing' (Grosz, 2001, p. 59). The invitation as the keynote to INSIDEOUT was an invitation to ply her thinking to the disciplines and practices of landscape and interior design, and to encourage thinking and experimentation with ideas during the symposium.

Another important composing force was Ross Gibson. Invited also as a guest of the symposium, his brief was 'to listen and collect emerging threads and errant ideas to be raised during dedicated discussion times'. This collection coalesced into what Gibson referred to as 'an endnote paper' – which he presented at the end of the symposium. His sensitive analysis of John Ford's film *The Searchers* which he filtered through a reading that highlighted the dynamic relation of insides and outsides expressed on the surface of the screen was a powerful and moving moment of closure to the three days of the symposium. The publication

of his paper 'Changescapes' in the journal as an endnote paper has a similar effect in that it offers up another collation of composing forces from the symposium as both reflection and a point of departure.

In publishing the papers in the IDEA Journal, we felt it was important to keep these composing forces in movement. The grouping of papers in the journal therefore reiterates the symposium structure and does not cohere to IDEA's convention of alphabetic listing. It must be noted however that this shift to publication has also brought changes – three papers presented at the symposium are not included here.² This in turn has atrophied some trajectories. With the publication of the papers, the journal becomes an archive, continuing a past event which also becomes mobile as a vehicle and continues the symposium's potential.

Thinking about the symposium as we prepare the journal, the concept of the frame continues to resonate for me as a powerful idea. Grosz in her paper for the symposium spoke/writes of the outside as chaos and that art (inclusive of design) is a process of producing frames – as a process of composing chaos. 'The frame is what establishes territory from out of the chaos that is the earth. ... the constitution of territory is the fabrication of the space in which sensations may emerge, from which a rhythm, a tone, colouring, weight, texture may be extracted' (Grosz, 2005, p. 19). This is a poignant concept in relation to interior design as it focuses a process of interiorisation. This reinvigorates design (all arts) as a process of composition – an act of framing which produces a territory (an interior) which is composed, in a sense ordered as distinct from chaos, and where sensations become apparent. Re-reading each paper and engaging with this concept makes apparent the creative aspect of practice as one of extracting sensations through a dynamic relation between inside and outside.

There is also a link to the mischievous glee I experienced – over three years ago – at the thought of taking out the middle bit, taking architecture out of the composition. In the first session of the symposium, Grosz raised the question as to the very possibility and desirability of taking architecture out of the equation. Her point was that in a sense the frame is architectural and without it, there is no frame and hence no inside/outside. This provoked me to rethink – and I realised that it was not architecture per se that was problematic but its associated concepts of permanency and, in particular, from an interior design point of view, its already thereness. Architecture in relation to interior design is a structure that exists in advance; a schema, something supplementary to the process. In relation to the symposium, I was interested in thinking about insides and outsides, where this relation is dynamic and not determined in advance – a relation which can then also afford a turning inside out.

The symposium was composed in this way – without a schema or set of themes in advance of it happening. The groupings of papers were organised by a gut feeling about potential connections; and like any curatorial arrangement the action of arranging produced connections, repetitions and differences. The motivation was experimentation with an approach which privileges the encounter as distinct from the pre-existing where inside and outside are in continual process of production.

It was, in many ways, like the Australian rainforest bird's performance referred to by Grosz, with reference to Deleuze's writing (Grosz, 2005, footnote 8, p. 27). The bird turns leaves over on the forest floor, 'so that the paler internal side contrasts with the earth'; it then goes to an overhead branch and 'sings a complex song'. The leaves below become a stage for performance. The symposium was a similar event in that the papers were a collection of leaves turned inside out which were then arranged and composed a stage from which a number of refrains were performed.

Through the privileging of thinking as distinct from knowing and providing a vehicle for thinking differently, and the generosity of the presenters/authors – a unique collection of upside-down leaves has been produced. The discussion panel at the end of second day observed that the dominant refrain was process and a distinction between process and product. The question was posed as to forms of inventiveness and how one can move away from the immutability of the product. Spatial and temporal dimensions were highlighted as composing forces, these forces are vital to interiors and landscape, insides and outsides. In a sense, it is not surprising that they were such dominant forces yet the presence of architecture may have had the effect of organising these forces into minor and peripheral zones. During INSIDEOUT (and now here in the journal), with the middle bit taken out, an opportunity was and is provided for insideout forces to compose and other refrains to be performed.

A topographical reflection

Gini Lee

In 2003, on a drizzly spring Adelaide afternoon, the Surface Colloquium³ was in its closing stages. I had been scheduled to present the final paper, and we had all left the University lecture rooms for the soft space of Angela and Hossein Valamanesh's garden. It is a rambling suburban space; both a location for being in a gardened place and also a moment where homely domesticity and creative studio practices intersect and coincide. This middle space intervenes between the artists' studios that grow out of the side and rear boundaries and the house, firmly sited in the middle of the block.

My reflection on the INSIDEOUT Symposium is positioned around this afternoon spent in the Valamanesh garden. While it is an account of the various qualities and activities in this particular garden, it also implicitly refers to the ideas raised by the contributors to INSIDEOUT, located in another house and garden nearly eighteen months later, in an event that invited speculations from other academics and designers across different spaces and times. Yet the coincidences abound; spaces of living and working and the thresholds between; discourses across disciplinary boundaries and practices, cross-infection of knowledge and ideas; and this journal as a medium for publication and dissemination.

At the end of an intellectually and sensorially challenging few days, it seemed to me that what could be offered to the Surface Colloquium was to situate the garden as a possible site for collaboration; a moment to reflect upon those ideas/discussions that had been provoked by the gathering together of artists, architects, designers, makers, musicians, poets, writers and so on. So, an invitation was made to the assembled gathering to walk and record the garden as a reflection upon 'surface'. The torn and marked pages from my notebook were worked on by the group and I subsequently placed them on the wall as an exhibition piece at INSIDEOUT, with the accompanying text:

While walking (in the garden) you may notice

Responding to an invitation to record the Valamanesh garden over the course of a Spring afternoon some artists, writers & designers, participants in the Colloquium: Surface, marked the surface of paper torn from a notebook to react materially, immaterially, literally and laterally, to the garden.⁴

The resulting works, collections of drawings, markings and material remains, while seemingly slight and ephemeral, express something of the coincidences of thought between inside and outside and between interior and landscape that also surfaced from our INSIDEOUT invitation to speculate on new and other connections and to re-look at conceptual spaces through the involvement of many disciplines (Figure 1).

Making : locating

In his INSIDEOUT symposium end-note conversation, Ross Gibson offered the garden as a site of performance and collaboration, where, in etymological terms, 'garden' refers to a place where a making and crafting process is possible through a physical and intellectual enclosing.⁶ This allows the garden to be situated as a conceptual and metaphorical site where relationships are worked out and dualities and/or oppositions are blurred.

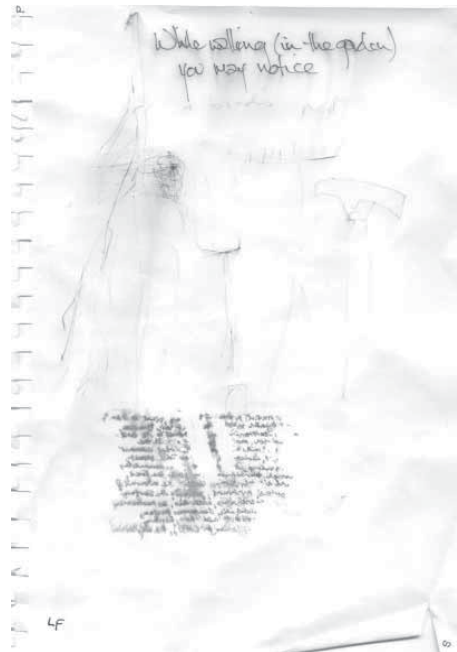
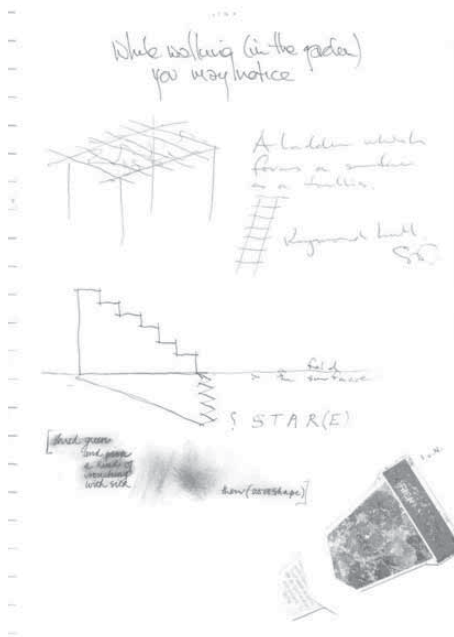
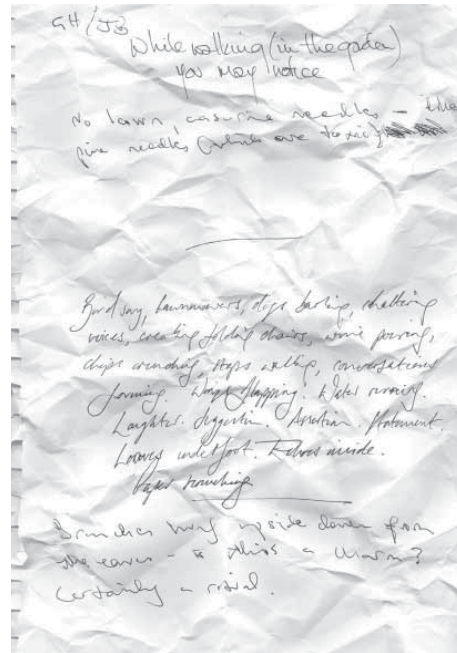
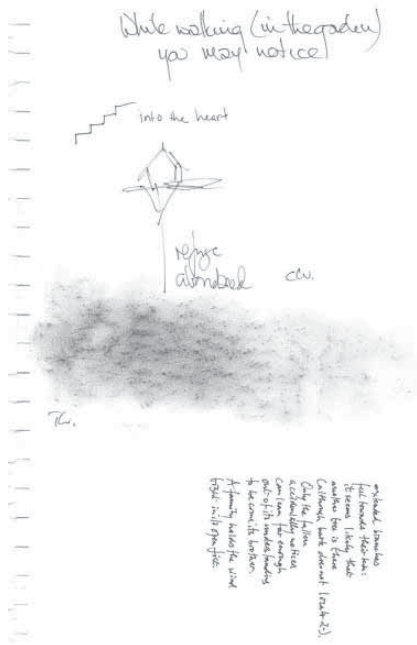


Figure 1: Four Valamanesh garden recordings (various authors)⁵

Elsewhere, I have written about Gibson's thoughts:

For him, the concept of the garden, in forms both expansive and miniature, expressed in both realised and more conceptual ways, as an identified entity and as a philosophy of making and of exchange, pervaded the weekend. The garden is a definitive place that is at once cultural and ecological, theoretical and practised, inside and outside, a situation where both interior and landscape coincide, was memorably described during one presentation as being contained within the interiority of the collection of objects on the mantelpiece (Lee, 2005, pp. 5–6).

Many terms that arise through examining the concerns of the contributors to INSIDEOUT are pertinent here: enclosure, porosity, incompleteness, framing/not framing, travelling, transformations at boundaries, instability and mutability are concepts that are layered through many writings and infer the qualities of changescaping, a term and a condition introduced by Gibson in this journal. In essence, the garden is conceptualised as a changescape based upon the notion of landscapes that resonate with 'transformations [that occur at] boundaries, at the limits between the inside and the outside of their systems', as a place where relationships rather than finished works are created and where contemplative engagement is facilitated (Gibson, 2005, p.195).

Michel Foucault describes gardens in his third principle of heterotopia and the contradictory location. For him the garden is a place of superimposed meaning. 'The garden is the smallest fragment of the world and, at the same time, represents its totality...' (Foucault in Leach, 1997, p. 354).

This superimposition of scale and locus is evident in many of the spatial practices described during INSIDEOUT that dealt with meaning and making within prescribed sites. Often these concerns encompassed locating oneself within a landscape or interior space, real and/or imagined and as a site for experimentation. Processes of making and unmaking, transforming and expanding points of view, framed by deeply held convictions regarding site specific experiences, are here located in spaces as diverse as the domestic back yard and interior renovation, the New Zealand bach, Uluṛu-Kata Tjuṛa, the Coorong and the condition of being nowhere.

Coinciding : positioning

Drawing upon Plato's choric space in the *Timaeus*, Elizabeth Grosz has asked us to consider 'what does it mean to reflect upon a position, a relation, a place related to other places but with no place of its own: the position of the in-between' – the space that 'falls between

the ideal and the material' (Grosz, 2001, p. 91). She suggests that the in-between, despite lacking an identity and a form, '... it is that which facilitates, allows into being, all identities, all matter, all substance' (Grosz, p. 91).

The Valamanesh garden is in many ways an in-between space; physically it provides the locus between home and studio, between creative living (the domestic) and creative making (work). It facilitates the work and yet sits beside the work as a place of respite and of another making; that of gardening and responding to site and the circumstances of such elements as weather and visitors, in many guises. Yet while physically positioned as an in-between space, this garden is where much thinking coincides, and in the space of that Spring afternoon, these coincidences were made material through the marking of paper as a record of conversations engaged upon while walking.

Conversations sponsored across people and across practices can also happen where invitations to propose and present current and speculative research and practice, act to transform disciplinary and spatial boundaries. Throughout the symposium we learnt of experimentations between the personal and domestic realm and the sometimes discomfiting relationships that evolve between the architecture (built and practised) and the other inhabited spaces (interior and landscape imagined) inside and outside the walls (framing). Ways of overcoming such distractions are demonstrated in visual, virtual, sonic and sensory realms in the writings contributed. In reflecting upon our disciplinary concerns it seemed there emerged many navigatory approaches towards operating in ill-defined space, while at the same time siding with approaches that are realised through paying close attention to material and surface qualities.

Collaborating : collapsing

My reflections upon INSIDEOUT, as an event that might be judged as a topographical process through collapsing geographical and conceptual concerns, have been informed by Nikos Papastergiadis' recent work on writing as a creative practice (Papastergiadis, 2004). He relates the site specific experiences that occur in everyday settings (in relation to art practices) to an expanded concept of topography. Papastergiadis makes the useful distinction between the Greek *topos*, the place in which events occur and *tropos*, the method by which events occur, as dual affects of the collaborative process (Papastergiadis, p.160). For him, an engagement in the topography of a site or an event involves a number of actions that may include observation, detailed analysis, mapping, storytelling, and the excavation of material layers. Such is the work of the designer, the educator, the theorist, the maker, and these works were the stuff of INSIDEOUT, the event, and have resurfaced again in this journal.

In the garden, the notebook pages torn from my exercise book became the medium for collaboration between maker and site and maker and maker, simultaneously. The acts of marking the sheet, passing it on, then reworking and re-noticing through the act of walking around and around, expanded the garden as both a practised and imagined place. The processes that engage the conditions in which we operate and the environments with which we interact and transform, are also facilitated by collaborative occasions; such as the afternoon's work in the Valamanesh garden and the performative operations that took place within the constraints and opportunities of the INSIDEOUT symposium.

The invitation to contribute is also a provocation to exchange ideas and enable transformations of initial readings and opinions about and of a place. When I attempt a review of the notebook pages, the multiple voices are obvious, yet those voices fade as the authors' initials become obscured or were absent from the start. Authorship is not the primary concern here, where simple marking, collecting, rubbing, writing and watering result in postcards of an afternoon, in a place, of a time to be remembered fleetingly. This is both collaboration with place and also a place of exchange across disciplinary boundaries, and transcends familiarity with location and co-author. And when I recall the conversations and responses to the papers at INSIDEOUT, I am also struck by the open-ended and inclusive sharing of ideas across unfamiliar territory.

Papastergiadis suggests that '...communication does not proceed when the boundaries of exchange have been predetermined by either party' (Papastergiadis, p. 162). Working across the boundaries of exchange is evident in the emerging languages of INSIDEOUT that deal with the textual and visual tactics that position, frame, transition, filter, shift and travel across disciplines and practices. As demonstrated in the accompanying exhibition, (through such representational media as soundworks, installations and performance works), experimental forms arise, particularly where means of exchange traverse disciplinary boundaries and techniques.

The INSIDEOUT symposium achieved an exchange of writings, presentations, exhibitions and discussions in the interactive spaces of the symposium program. Beyond the event, the topographical process is verified in furthering these exchanges; through editing the markings that make up this issue of the IDEA journal; through our subsequent conversations with the participants across geographical and conceptual landscapes and ultimately through our ongoing collaborations and discourses that travel across design communities.⁷

References

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Endnotes

¹ These quotes and any further quotes relating to the symposium which are not referenced are taken from text written by Gini Lee and myself, and used in the symposium program.

² These papers were:

Dr Jenny Lowe 'The Forming and IN-forming of Space Itself'.

Julian Raxworthy 'Labour, Tactics: Inside and Out'.

Yael Reisner 'Emotional Environments, spatial depth and beauty'.

³ Surface Colloquium, A Visual Art and Design Research Group, UniSA, Project, October 24-26, 2003.
http://ensemble.va.com.au/surface_col/program.html

⁴ The verbal invitation that later appeared in the INSIDEOUT exhibition

⁵ There were multiple authors for these works. My thanks to John Barbour, Paul Carter, Loene Furler, Greg Hainge, Paul Hoban, Teri Hosken, Aldo Iacobelli, Angela Valamanesh, Hossein Valamanesh, Linda Marie Walker, and others.

⁶ Ross Gibson's endnote address on Sunday April 24, 2005.

⁷ My thanks to my co-convenor of the INSIDEOUT Symposium and guest co-editor of this IDEA journal Suzie Attiwill, for her collaboration and her patience.