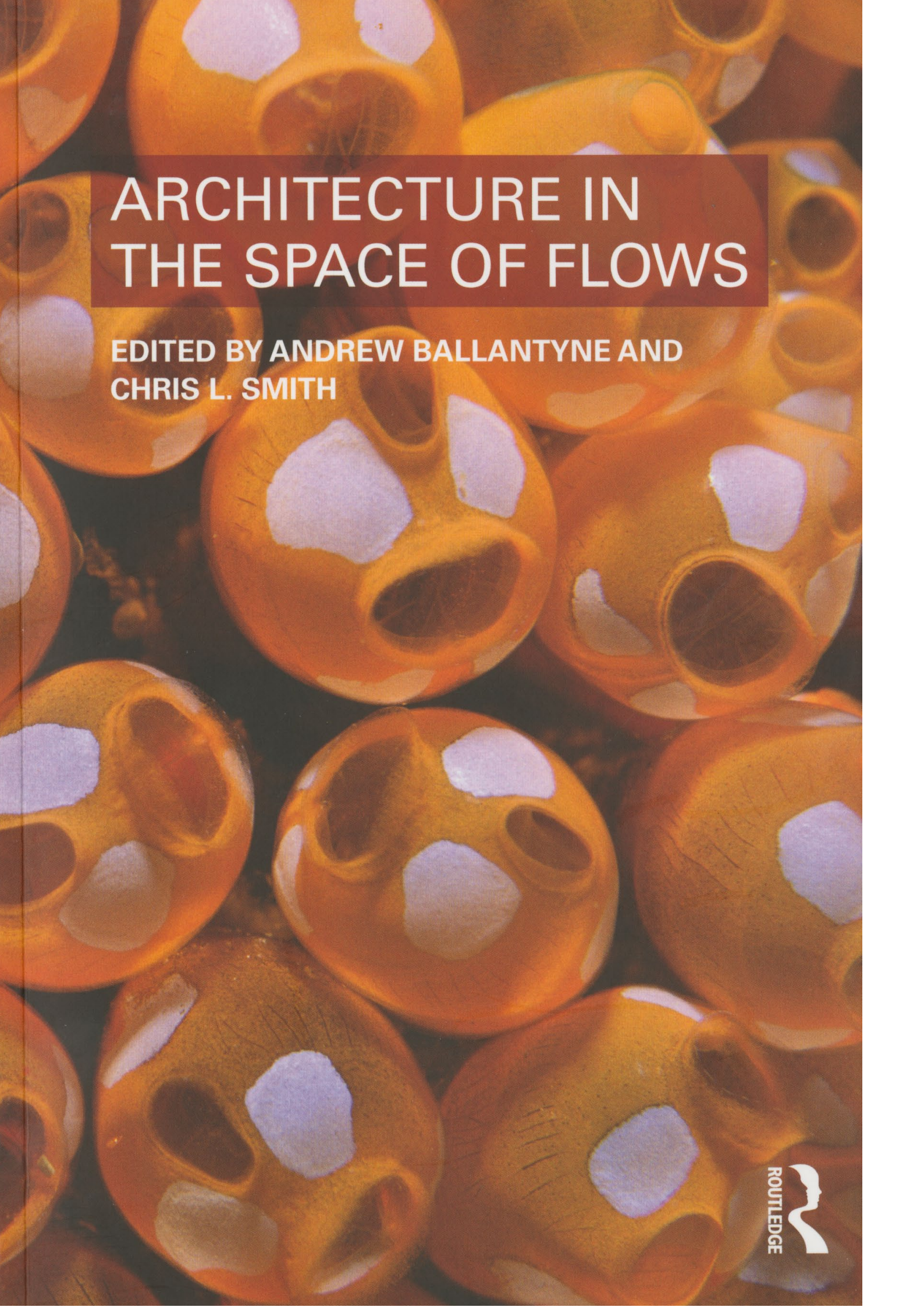


The background of the book cover is a dense, abstract pattern of overlapping spheres in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. Each sphere has irregular white patches on its surface, creating a complex, textured visual effect.

# ARCHITECTURE IN THE SPACE OF FLOWS

EDITED BY ANDREW BALLANTYNE AND  
CHRIS L. SMITH

ROUTLEDGE

The Routledge logo, which consists of a stylized white 'R' shape.

First published 2012

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2012 selection and editorial material,

Andrew Ballantyne and Chris L. Smith; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of the editor to be identified as the author of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Architecture in the space of flows / edited by Andrew Ballantyne and Chris Smith.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Architecture—Philosophy. 2. Architecture and society. I. Ballantyne, Andrew.

II. Smith, Chris (Chris L.)

NA2500.A7346 2012

720.1—dc22

2011009476

ISBN13: 978-0-415-58541-5 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-58542-2 (pbk)

Typeset in Univers by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon



Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

## Chapter 3

# Oceanic Spaces of Flow

*Amanda Yates*

### Introduction

Proposing space as a phenomenon of time, this chapter frames architecture as an event condition, with interiority or exteriority produced through the performance of inhabitation. Temporal flow is understood here as that state to which all things – space, artefacts, individuals, molecules – are subject to the ceaseless flux of duration: eroding, accreting, deliquescing, everything is in movement, becoming other in the flow of time.<sup>1</sup> Architecture is always in a condition of flow, channelling people, rainwater, breezes, birdsong, energy, while architectural boundaries or material accumulate or abrade, swell or settle, transforming through time – yet architectural discourse remains inflected by its traditional concerns with spatial stability and temporal stasis, with the effect that the time–space relationship remains under-considered. Addressing time's place in architectural discourse and praxis this chapter explores the Oceanic region's customary and contemporary architectures of flow.

'Space is not a ground on which real motion is posited,' said Henri Bergson, 'rather it is real motion that deposits space beneath itself.'<sup>2</sup> In Western culture, architecture, landscape architecture, interior and performance design are understood as a group of distinct and separate spatial disciplines; within this group, though, architecture has a certain primacy through its concerns with structure, form and function, weather resistance, durability and spatial stasis. In redefining space via movement Bergson locates lived space in an explicitly temporal zone. His proposition that space awaits motion or event in order to come into being unsettles architecture's static discursive foundations.

Making architecture that intentionally enacts temporal flow requires an eroding of foundational thought and a liquefying of hermetic boundaries, both spatial and discursive. The architectural artefact that performance theorist Dorita Hannah describes as 'the discrete object of architecture',<sup>3</sup> is formed by its static and enclosing boundary: the space within the figured architectural boundary and the ground without establish interior and exterior as fixed identities rather than conditions dependent upon durational flow. Writing in *Parables for the Virtual*, Brian Massumi proposes that event space is characterized by porous rather than enclosing boundaries.<sup>4</sup> Durational flow is explored in this chapter as spatial flow, where interior and exterior, architectural figure and ground become temporal rather than spatial conditions, and architecture becomes event rather than object. As the

architectural boundary is set into motion, the stable identities and established discursive and physical boundaries of the Western spatial disciplines dissolve, architecture becoming performative, interior becoming landscape, all subject to ongoing flux, becoming other through time.

Inconstant and shifting, the Oceanic region exists in a state of ceaseless flux: small island groups are subject to the vast Pacific Ocean; this liquid site marked by the repetitive rhythms of wave and tide, the fluid dynamics of circling gyres and emergent local turbulences, whether aerial or oceanic. The dual topology of constantly changing sea and sculpted land is reflected in Oceanic architectural typologies – light-weight, open and transient structures merge Pacific architecture with its changing environment while articulated architectural landscapes establish the ground as a fluid and protean space upon and within which to dwell. Western distinctions between figure and ground, architecture and landscape are undermined here as architectural enclosure is eroded and the landscape becomes an earthen architecture which problematizes distinctions between inside and outside. With its permeable and mobile boundaries and fluid distinctions between interior and exterior, customary Pacific architecture offers a model for contemporary spaces of flow.

My architectural work reflects Oceanic architectural typologies in order to open up my architectural practice to cultural and spatial difference. My ongoing project theorizes architecture as a complex and culturally inscribed condition with fluid and discontinuous identities rather than as hermetic discipline or static built form. The work then moves between different cultural practices, making architectural space informed by Oceanic and Western thought and practices, particularly the Oceanic spatio-temporal concept of *wa* (distance, or interval), Bergsonian becomings and Deleuzian formulations of difference and between-ness. The space of the in-between, the space of flow, becomes a primary site for the architectural praxis and an active mode by which the praxis operates.

Architecture is understood here as a way of thinking, a thinking as doing, rather than as a representation of thought or a semiotic text in the Derridean sense. Such a position builds from a Deleuzian model in which thinking itself is understood as active and generative. This cognitive and critical model establishes a fluid ground for an architectural praxis that is open to shifting alignments, to difference, and to becoming other than itself. Rather than engaging in the problematic application of theory to architecture the built work employs theories of between-ness and becoming as architectural praxis. This praxis has no codified aesthetic but is rather an active mode by which to generate space. The term praxis, rather than practice, is engaged for its etymological origins: praxis, or 'doing', sources from the Greek *pratein* or 'do' and is itself already an action, already in flow.

This text addresses concepts of flow through its subject matter and also through its composition: it describes fluid architectures but also seeks to enact flow in passages of text that describe spatial experience as a continuous, fluent sequence. An experiential text is interposed then between an analytical exegesis, these repeating sequentially, in waves.<sup>5</sup> The analytical text moves from a discussion of Western philosophies of flow, to a study of Oceanic spatial thought and practice, and finally to a close analysis of three built works by the author: Ground House, sited

on an inlet in the lower North Island of New Zealand; the Sounds House, located in the Marlborough Sounds in the South Island; and Tokatea, situated on the Coromandel Peninsula, in the North Island. The experiential text explores spatio-temporal shifts in the course of a single day in the house Tokatea. This text is expressed in sense impression mode, a type of stream of consciousness writing, and seeks to evoke an experience of inhabitation and the temporal flow that is the living of the house.

### ***Early morning, Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula (figure 3.1)***

*Morning mist hangs heavy on the sea, different densities of fluid particles in suspension. The bulk of the headland to the east, with its sheltered bay, is shadowed, hazy. Liquid notes of tui sound, dampened by the weighty atmosphere. The sun, haloed, focuses as the mist burns off. Diurnal rhythms begin; runners' footsteps echo from the road beneath; the powerful speedboat sounds in the tight bay below, tracking its way out slowly from its mooring, then tracing a flow line into the smooth surface of the open sea.*

*In the house, blinds roll up, louvre walls open, fresh morning air flooding in; sliding doors move, under pressure, in fluid channels; the recessed concrete*

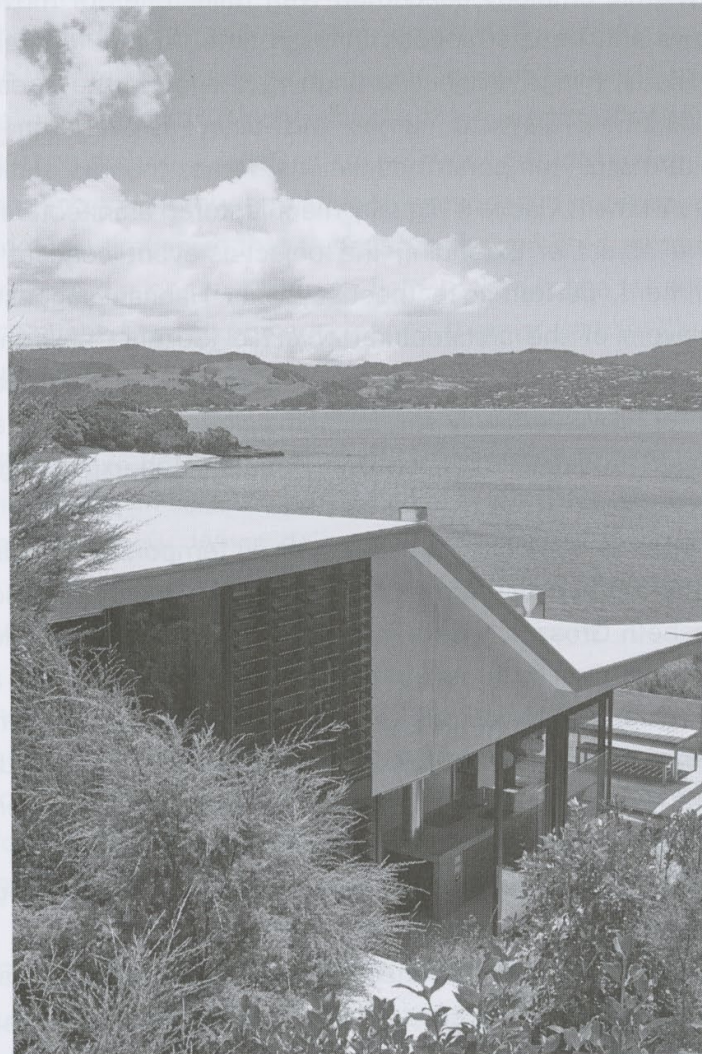


**Figure 3.1** Early morning, Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula: open phase.

*bath fills with stored rainwater, bathroom misting as hot liquid air encounters cooler zones. The enclosing strand-board wall of the bed-bath zone folds as a large panel pivots, opening the channel to the main vessel; lines of movement generate around and along the central island kitchen as drawers slide open, plates and cutlery are laid on the island table, vessels of liquid pool and circle on the stove, and the kettle steams, releasing fluid particles into the morning-cool atmosphere. Sliding panels to the outdoor room are opened, forming space in-between.*

## Flow

Bergson establishes temporal flow as that ceaseless force through which life is expressed and evolves: durational flow, or the continuous flux of becoming, enables the ongoing iterations, differentiations and divergences of life and is therefore inherently 'creative'.<sup>6</sup> In Bergson's ontology of becoming this flow is irreducible, real duration characterized by its resistance to stasis or division. The 'vital force' of becoming, as Bergson terms it, streams through all things, whether people, objects, rivers, molecules – all transient, all in vibratile motion, all becoming other through time. This theory establishes 'reality as a perpetual becoming'<sup>7</sup> and space as an ongoing product of temporal flux.

Deleuze's philosophy, influenced by Bergsonian becomings, describes a profoundly dynamic ontology concerned with trajectories of movement, multiple vectors, flows and transformations through time. In this temporal theory the built object is, like all things, subject to ongoing change in the stream of time as an object in transition. Deleuze names this object-as-event an *objectile* and describes it in terms of 'temporal modulations' rather than as static space.<sup>8</sup> Deleuze references Bernard Cache's digitally manufactured architectural elements as examples of the *objectile*. Extending the object-as-event concept to the architectural environment, performance theorist Dorita Hannah suggests that 'within the dilating layers of the architectural *objectile* the built environment can be interpreted as space-in-action'.<sup>9</sup> Architecture is in this sense intrinsically performative and 'no matter how seemingly still, is itself a slow performance: a spatial thing in perpetual motion – heating and cooling, contracting and expanding, eroding and accruing'.<sup>10</sup>

The framing of architectural artefacts as temporal events and performative objects rather than spatial forms challenges an architectural discourse which philosopher Elizabeth Grosz suggests 'has thought time, with notable exceptions, through history rather than through duration, as that to be preserved, as that which somehow or provisionally overcomes time by transcending or freezing it'.<sup>11</sup> Architecture's resistance to the notion of durational flow runs counter to much modernist discourse, which Hannah writes, 'revealed space as a temporal event, undermining the discrete object of architecture'.<sup>12</sup> Despite this Hannah notes that 'modern architecture has continued to rely on an ontology of stasis'<sup>13</sup> generating architecture figured by a 'timeless passivity of form'.<sup>14</sup>

Proposing a shift from architecture as form to architecture as time-based field, Sanford Kwinter in *Architectures of Time* asserts that architecture should be understood as a part of the

system of forces that give shape and rhythm to the everyday life of the body. Thus the object – be it a building, a compound site, or an entire urban matrix . . . would be defined now *not by how it appears, but rather by practices*: those it partakes of and those that take place within it.<sup>15</sup>

Critiquing architectural convention, Bernard Tschumi asks '[c]an one attempt to make a contribution to architectural discourse by relentlessly stating there is no space without event, no architecture without programme?'<sup>16</sup> Proposing architecture as 'the discourse of events as much as the discourse of spaces',<sup>17</sup> Tschumi defines architecture as being a simultaneous combination of 'spaces, events, and movements'.<sup>18</sup> Tschumi's architectural practice is distinguished by its concern with programme, displaying a particular interest in how when architecture enacts the event it 'ceases to be a backdrop for actions, becoming action itself'.<sup>19</sup> In *Architecture from the Outside* Grosz too proposes the temporalization of space as a means of opening architecture up to its discursive outside.

While architecture's contained discourse resists the flow of time those spatial disciplines outside of architecture actively design in response to temporal flow. Landscape architecture and interior design, sited on either side of the architectural boundary, make space in relation to time's passage. Interior design, held within the architectural boundary, operates at the more temporary and temporal end of the architectural scale and is closely concerned with the embodied event. Landscape architecture, the exterior or ground to architecture's object, exceeds the architectural enclosure and is concerned with processes of vegetal emergence or decay. Landscape architecture plans space over time, designing for the careful phasing and sequencing of growth relative to season, and at times, operating on a monumental geologic timescale that transcends the arrested temporality of architecture. Performance design, an emerging field, makes space for and in relation to the performance event. Describing performance, theorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes that first

*to perform is to do . . . [s]econd, to perform is to behave. This is what Erving Goffman calls the performance in everyday life . . . [t]hird, to perform is to show. When doing and behaving are displayed, when they are shown . . . events move towards the theatrical and more specifically towards the spectacular.*<sup>20</sup>

These disciplines then, operating outside of the architectural boundary, exist also outside of architecture's traditional concerns with temporal stasis. I move now to a consideration of Oceania's temporalized spaces, whose mutable and porous constructions perform changing conditions of interiority and exteriority with little regard to an enclosing and static architectural boundary or to unitary discursive identities.

### ***Morning, Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula***

*The heat of the day builds as the sun climbs, solar waves propagating 150 million kilometres, energizing the mass of the concrete floor, casting dappling shadow. As*

*the heat builds, the land-mass warms, energy gradients form, air shimmering up off concrete and rock, drawing in new air from the constant sea, drawing up the face of the hill, over the fluid contour of the house, displacing, refreshing. Louvre walls fan open as gills, making porous, patterned breathing boundaries which cast prismatic shadows; flow paths form along the glassy boundaries as sliding doors skim over each other until the interior–exterior boundary is eroded and multiplied. The exterior draws in, the interior extends out; fantails spiral through the air; blue-green sea below backgrounds lacy manuka trees; the tui's flight-path tracks the house diagonally from pohutukawa below to kowhai above; the speckled, particulate strand-board wall and ceiling lining mimics the local shell sand partially eroded by fluid force, this lining bleached, whitened, as if by the action of sun and salt; the sloping rock extends in to sloping concrete wall-floor; shelves on this sloping wall-floor offer nooks for books, flowers, reclusive sun-seeking readers; the bench of the wall-floor extends out into the shell beach on the eastern side of the vessel, and to the west into the pebbled courtyard.*

## Oceania

Concepts of motion and event shape the spatial practices of the Pacific. These concepts permeate the Oceanic region, with a generalized notion of space in time or space between, recognizable from the Maori and Hawaiian *wa*, to the Samoan, Tongan and Tahitian *va*, the Marquesan *ava* and the Japanese *ma*.<sup>21</sup> These reference, in subtly shifting ways, an idea of space in relation to time. The word *ma* means “interval” between two (or more) spatial or temporal things and events. Thus it is not only used in compounds to suggest measurement but carries meanings such as gap, opening, space between, time between, and so forth.<sup>22</sup> Japanese architect Arata Isozaki speaks of *ma* space as that which is ‘perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space recognized only in its relation to time flow.’<sup>23</sup> This is space as understood through embodied experience, an idea of spatiality as a profoundly active and shifting condition. This concept of space, like Bergson’s, requires ‘real motion’ in order for a ground to be formed: this is a fluid ground then that is formed only in relation to the temporal event.

Such a conceptualization of space in relation to time mirrors a primary spatial characteristic of Oceania. Oceanic cultures are sited within a vast aqueous body – the Pacific Ocean – that is constantly in motion. Far-flung islands scatter across this extensive ocean. This sea becomes the fluid ‘ground’ of Oceania; a primary site of industry, source of sustenance, and mode for movement between islands. Writer and choreographer Lemi Ponifasio and academic Albert Refiti discuss this fluid element, and the effect the ocean has on the spatial practice of Pacific theatre. They comment that

To be located in and around the Pacific is to confront the undifferentiated abyss that is the ocean. Of all grounds it is the most insubstantial because it has no particular identity, no fixed position(s), and if anything the sea severs the will to identify and tends to multiply and confuse the specificity of location – the oceanscape always pushes you hither

and thither and one literally floats on it. Thus Pacific theatre reflects the disparity of fixed identification and tends to deal with the moment, the temporal environment that is filled with (e)motion.<sup>24</sup>

Ponifasio and Refiti contend that the fluid spatial condition of the ocean strongly inflects spatial practice, engendering fluid identities and performative spatial ephemera.

Oceanic architecture is figured by ephemeral or indeterminate boundaries that enable space to flow and thereby problematize fixed spatial identities of interior or exterior. Oceanic spatial practices encompass a use of the ground itself as a spatial matrix or material within which to form space; and a fibre-based lightweight construction typology that forms a partial or temporary containment. Such spatial constructs inhabit multiple zones at the same time, exhibiting an architectural monumentality, but one that is generated via the landscape and performs as spectacle (in the case of the terraced *pa* landscape) or as a site for performance (as in the *marae*); or forms an architectural enclosure, yet one which is porous and operable, space phasing from partial interior to exterior as mobile screens are deployed, their movements performing environmental or programmatic events. These articulated ground-scapes and porous enclosures are more easily aligned with the concerns and practices of the Western discourses of landscape architecture, interior and performance design than with architecture's contained stasis. Academic Mike Austin suggests that the openness of Oceanic architecture derives from the sea, this being most evident in the *marae*, or open meeting space, which Austin asserts echoes the 'ultimate open space [. . .] the marae roa the vast ocean itself, closed only by the horizon.'<sup>25</sup> Austin posits that this space of openness, which derives from the expansive sea, is a space of *ma*, *wa* or *va*: 'This openness can be compared to the well known *ma* of Japan [. . .] *Ma* is the gap, or the interval, the spacing, the in-between, and in the Pacific it becomes the *wa* or *va*' where space comes into being through the flow of time rather than through enclosure.<sup>26</sup>

Lacking a defined architectural boundary the landscape and the interior flow into each other in customary Oceanic architecture. In this tradition the land itself is utilized as a geo-spatial matrix, as matter within which to inscribe space. Throughout the Pacific, and particularly intensively in New Zealand, the land bears imprints from such interventions as the terracing of *pa* hill settlements to form defensible, habitable zones; the indenting of the interiors of sleeping houses; the recessing of *rua kai* to form storage vessels within the ground; and the inseting of *umu* to form earthen ovens. In this paradigm the relationship between inside and outside is contingent and indefinite as the exterior, or landscape, becomes itself a mode by which to make interiority. In spaces such as those within the partially sunken sleeping house, whose floors and partial walls are contiguous with the earth, inside and outside are in constant flux, interior-becoming-landscape, landscape-becoming-interior. This practice emerges from a notion of ground as a fluid, eroding and sedimenting in order to make pocketed space or elevated ground platforms for inhabitation and event. This ground, like Bergson's, requires 'motion' or event, in order to come into being.

The lightweight construction typology also surfaces from a fluid 'ground', the ocean, and associated spatial concepts and material practices. Austin writes that it is clear that

water and boats affect Oceanic architecture in many ways from structure to construction to detail to ornament. In the Pacific, sails become floor mats (and vice versa), old boats are used as storage structures, and both buildings and boats are held together by a technology of weaving and tying.<sup>27</sup>

This building type is, as Austin notes

thoroughly imbricated with the technologies, mythologies and aesthetics of movement. Furthermore, Pacific Island buildings are constructed in materials that decay rapidly giving the architecture a shifting and transient quality. [. . .] These dimensions of architecture in the Pacific contrast sharply with the fixity associated with Western architecture.<sup>28</sup>

This shifting, transient quality is evident in the temporary nature of these lightweight constructions, but also in the partial and porous character of the space formed. Austin describes this condition as one that allows the building to breathe: 'In Oceanic architecture solid walls are used only to define space that is open to the sky [. . .] Pacific walls breathe and are permeable as fences and screens. Often they are temporary and suspended.'<sup>29</sup> Referencing early colonial representations of the *whare*, or Maori indigenous house, academic Sarah Treadwell writes that 'the woven house is a container that leaks. It allows for the passage of wind [. . .] and denies the external skin as a closed surface.'<sup>30</sup> These spaces, formed from plant-based fibres and constructed with layered or woven technologies, are permeable. Like the articulated ground-scapes, these partial and temporary boundaries form space that blends or hybridizes interior and exterior environments, opening up space to the environment, to wind, to the smell of rain on the earth. This partial exposure to telluric flows is a primary quality of an Oceanic spatial practice characterized by permeability, mobility and responsiveness to weather and event. These spaces exist in a constant state of between-ness, interior-becoming-exterior as mobile screens are rolled up, exterior-becoming-interior as ground spaces are formed, these spatial conditions all in flux.

### **Noon, Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula**

*The island-kitchen exerts strong tidal pulls upon the inhabitants; frequent but uncertain flow lines form here, tentative draws between fridge and bench, pantry and bench, flurries of movement as taps are opened, rainwater pooled, steam issues, fragrant leaves steep; a second high tide occurs as the sun centres in the sky, again generating an intricate criss-crossing of flow lines as plates, cups, cutlery, fridge, milk, hob, bread are sought until the island-table focuses movement. The island-table floats now in a space in between interior and exterior, focusing a point of intense flow between partial enclosure and artificial landscape, reconstituting itself*

*in shifting registers in response to environmental flows of wind, rain, sun and the movement patterns of the inhabitants.*

*After this mid-day tidal pull, flow patterns disperse, then slow to stillness. Moving back through the slip-zone between bed-bath and main vessel small pauses occur; bookshelves lining one side of the slip-way slow flow as books are sought, keys are placed in storage vessels, photographs are viewed. Seeking cooling breezes, sliding doors track fully into their pockets, sliding windows stack over cladding, multiplying and emptying that boundary; the louvre wall offers a pause-space, a site from which to view the expansive sea and compact bay; the fragmented glass ripples as breezes are moderated; yachts rock and sway below, their masts tracing the magnitude of the pulsing waves; passing jetboats send sound tracking up.*

### Praxis

The contemporary praxis explored here is sited in a conceptual field between Oceanic thought and Western philosophies, drawing on the Oceanic spatio-temporal concept of *wa* and the western notions of becoming and its other formulations, between-ness and difference. *Wa* is understood here as space in relation to temporal flow or space or time between, while becoming is framed by Grosz as occurring in the space of the in-between, which is 'the only space of movement, of development or becoming . . . [and] the space of the bounding and undoing of the identities which constitute it'.<sup>31</sup> The space of the in-between becomes a primary site for the architectural praxis and an active mode by which the work is generated through a process of introducing difference, moving between these, enabling a becoming-other of architecture. In this moving between Western theories of duration and Oceanic spatio-temporal concepts the intent is not to conflate meaning, or confer relative status, but rather to move back and forth in a productive, and perhaps slippery, process between these differences. The built spaces are sited in a conceptual and discursive field between landscape, interior, performance and architectural disciplines and again the intent is to establish a spatial continuum within which to work, a space within which discursive identities can be rendered fluid and relational. The buildings exist in a spatial field between interior and exterior, these binarized pairings engaged in an oscillating trajectory, a moving between difference that generates new conditions. The buildings formed in relation to these conditions engage change, passage and movement in varying registers, scales and manners. Space flows under the effects of weather, time and the event.

### Ground House, lower North Island, New Zealand<sup>32</sup>

Sited on a gently sloping terrain in Whitby, in the lower North Island, the Ground House is surrounded on three sides by housing with, to the north, a panoramic view to an inlet. Operating as a terraced, inhabited landscape, the Ground House blurs boundaries between landscape, architectural and interior space. A mutable architectural landscape begins below ground in the recessed winter lounge, which evokes recessed *whare* and *rua kai* in its siting within the earth, then folds up to the dining and then kitchen levels (figure 3.2). The concrete surface extends across the

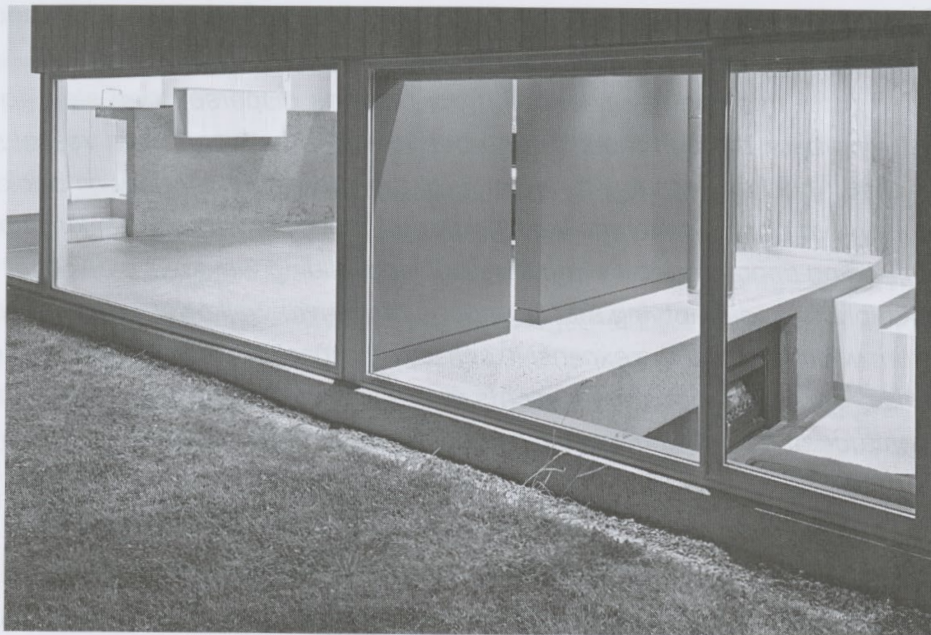


Figure 3.2 Ground House: articulated concrete landscape.

summer lounge, level with the outdoor living spaces on either side. This continuous landscape folds to make and furnish space, remembering as it does the geo-spatial language of Oceania.

The ground plane is problematized in the winter lounge: when seated one is at eye level with the exterior ground plane (figure 3.3). This spatial strategy recalls Oceanic practice in which the ground is utilized as a spatial matrix, the 'natural' profile of the land moulded to form space as in the terraced *pa* landscapes, or



Figure 3.3 Ground House: recessed interior.

the small-scaled ground space of the recessed *whare puni* (sleeping house). Like Tongan 'esi (earthen furniture) this mutable 'ground' furnishes the winter room, recessing 30 mm below the finished slab level to form an indented hearth; folding up to hold the fireplace, recessed within like the *taku-ahi* (recessed fire) and folding horizontal to become the mantelpiece and shelf over the fire, before becoming the ground datum of the adjacent dining space. This ground space is constantly in flux, performing as a recessed and furnished interior while also displaying itself as a spectacular 'landscape'.

In the other two terraces of the house, the undulating concrete 'ground' both defines spatial territories – marking the extent of the dining and kitchen zones through a level change – and furnishes space, as the concrete surface bends horizontally, becoming the kitchen bench. The surface of the bench, like the concrete floor slab, is ground back to expose the cut surfaces of aggregate and shell. Hobs are set into this cut 'ground' plane, the oven positioned below recalling the *hangi*. The grinding process is an erosive one, cutting back through the upper layer, the fines and slurry to expose sectioned spheres of aggregate and particles of shell just as ancient middens are exposed. The summer lounge, with its timber strip-flooring overlay, lies on the same terrace as the kitchen. Beyond the summer room a store area holds garden equipment and laundry. This space, like the service and storage zones of *rua kai*, is submerged within the ground as a kind of earthen vessel.

Extensive and moulded, the ground plane of the Ground House operates, in the manner of the geo-spatial architectures of Oceania, between the interior and the landscape. Space is formed and furnished in the Ground House by this articulated landscape, destabilizing Western distinctions between architecture, landscape architecture and the interior, and between surface and space, inside and outside. Architectural space becomes a complex event here, in flux between interior and exterior, landscape and furniture, geography and object.

### **Sounds House, Marlborough Sounds, South Island, New Zealand<sup>33</sup>**

The Sounds House is sited on a steep bush-clad hill facing the channelled sea. An ambiguous interior–exterior field constitutes the public space of the house (figure 3.4). Inhabitation of this flux space is constituted as an experience of between-ness and of becoming as this space shifts register between exterior timber field and contained interior (figure 3.5). A fluid language is employed, expressed through spatial structures that facilitate movement such as channels, slip-ways and sliding glazing; through programming and the separation of living and sleeping functions, such that one must move outside to move between spaces; and through material selection and detail.

A chamfered folding roof partially encloses a timber platform. The surface, a liquid applied membrane, is continuous, extensive, flowing from wall, to roof, and back down as wall. The enfolding wrap is leaky, open at one end, only partially contained along the length of the timber field. The wrapped roof channels rainwater for domestic use; voided in one zone it folds down to the timber field, drawing water to a concrete vessel, an outdoor bath.

To enter the house one draws through a tight channel, entering into the exterior. The timber field, and sheltering roof, frame an expansive view of bush,



Figure 3.4 Sounds House: interior– exterior field.



Figure 3.5 Sounds House: open phase.

sea, sky. The space formed, between partially enclosing roof and timber landscape, shifts register, phase-changing between open and closed. In its open phase, glassy sliding doors retract into cavities in walls or slide over glass panels; in this mode kitchen, dining and living spaces are partially interior, partially exterior, contiguous with the timber platform, sheltered only by the folding roof (figure 3.6). In closed mode, the timber platform, sheltered by the partial wrapping roof-wall, remains an ambiguous space between inside and out, between interval and event.

### **Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula, North Island, New Zealand<sup>34</sup>**

Tokatea terraces into a steep hill facing a bush-clad headland on the Coromandel Peninsula. A concrete landscape folds over the sloping rock of the site, diverting to

Figure 3.6 Sounds  
House: open  
phase.



form a bench seat, inflecting up as a kitchen bench with inset fire (figure 3.7), deflecting down to form a sunken bath within which water swirls. Partially enclosed by an activated architectural boundary, the articulated landscape modulates over time, becoming landscape when the boundary opens or, when architectural closure is re-established, an interior ground-scape. Overhead a folded roof extends and inflects, functioning as both roof and inhabitable landscape, this open field establishing a circulation space that links the upper and lower terraces of the site.<sup>35</sup>

The flowing roof-scape enfolds a space for living; held between the roof and the main volume of the house is a self-contained studio (figure 3.8). Below the studio, the living space of the main house is lightly defined by a glassy evental boundary. This space is a permeable space of change, modulating between 'interior' and 'exterior' as full-height sliding glass panels shift in response to inhabitation and



Figure 3.7 Tokatea:  
open phase with  
concrete landscape.

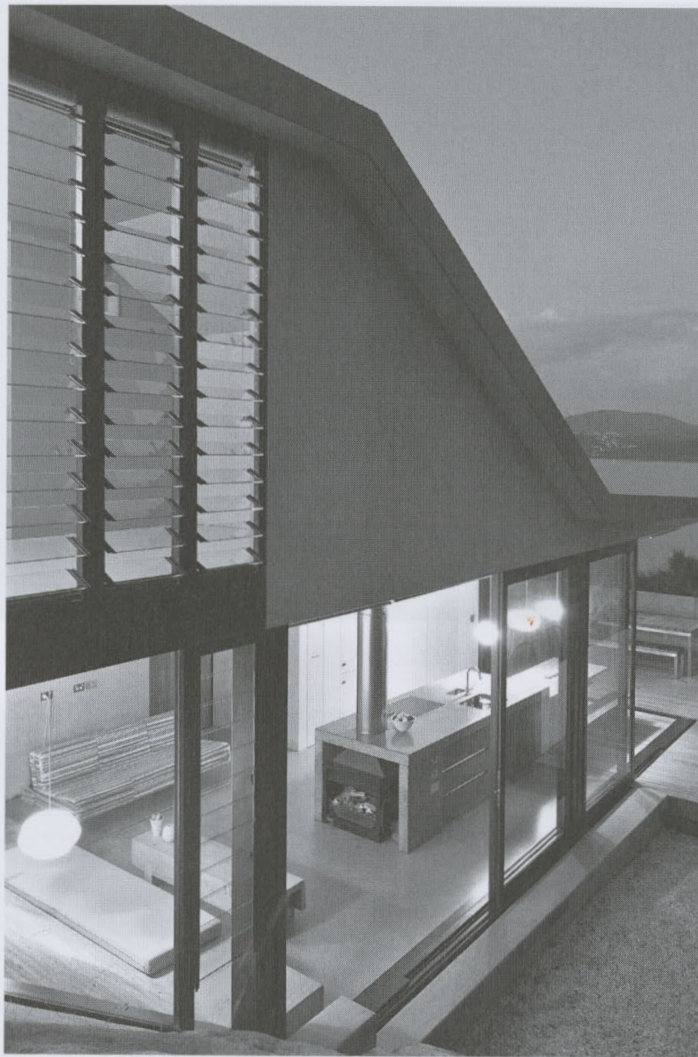


Figure 3.8 Tokatea:  
articulated  
landscape.

elemental event. In open phase the space is 'exterior', enclosed only by a strand-board ceiling and storage wall, the timber floor of the dining zone contiguous with the outdoor timber, forming a space in-between inside and outside (figure 3.9), the rocky landscape extending inside as a concrete sloping wall-floor.

The extensive concrete ground is articulated to furnish the main living space, rendering it suitable for living and working. It forms a bench seat at the base of the angled wall-floor and folds up to form an over-sized concrete kitchen bench. The aggregate for kitchen bench and floor is sourced from the same site, flecked with white and grey stone and shells, reminiscent of middens. Recessed within the elevated surface is the hob; beneath it the oven. *Rua kai* of a sort are held within this extended ground plane, the pullout pantry stocked with cooking essentials – olive oil, tea, salt. Plates, cups, pots and pans are held within this folded 'earthen' vessel, as are pullout rubbish, recycling and compost bins and three different kinds of water vessel, two sinks and a dishdrawer. At the end of the concrete bench is the fire, held in a pocket within the artificial ground.

Overhead the continuous roof extends and, at the seaward end of the building, folds sideways and down to form a partially contained vessel which holds bedroom, bathroom and changing spaces. One moves through the thick storage

Figure 3.9 Tokatea:  
open phase, dining  
zone.



wall to access this space held in a gap in between the enveloping roof. Thin windows slide over the face of the exterior skin, creating full-height slotted openings in the bedroom, changing space and bathroom, rendering these porous and permeable through time. A wall of repeated glass louvres intensifies and dematerializes the bedroom's end wall, which focuses to the ocean below.

Tokatea's performative architectural boundary causes space to phase-change between interior and exterior as large glazed panels slide or louvre walls pivot open. When the eventual boundary is open, the timber dining space blends with the outdoor timber platform, while the angling concrete wall-floor becomes contiguous with the sculpted rock slope, architecture becoming landscape (figure 3.10); when closed the articulated concrete landscape becomes an interior, recalling the recessed earthen interiors of Oceania. These spatio-temporal shifts perform the everyday inhabitation of the house, displaying Tokatea as architectural event and space of flows.

### ***Evening, Tokatea, Coromandel Peninsula***

*A gather forms in the outdoor room, around the table floating at the level of the tree canopy; views extend out to the open sea or glance sideways to the enclosed*



Figure 3.10 Tokatea:  
site and landscape.

bay below, glimpsed through manuka trceries. The fading sun angles, chamfering lozenges of light that extend, sliding sideways off the timber platform. In search of light-waves and a more expansive view, a flow-path draws up the stair, to the middle roof deck until, there too, the light evaporates, moving up into the sky as a generalized glow, until coral, indigo, ultramarine, the sun sets with only rippling clouds signalling its presence as we rotate away.

Slipping back down into the house, the morning routine plays backwards as louvre breathing walls rotate shut; bedroom-bathroom sliding window panels close from their register over the cladding; blinds extend down; and the sliding panels of the main vessel begin to seal in response to the sudden chill. The island generates multiple flow-zones now as the fire at the end of the island is lit, the oven is checked, hobs activated, and the table is set with steaming vessels around which movement coalesces. In time a draw builds, a current back along the length of the island to the fire, emitting a flickering orange light; the inhabitants recline onto the sloping wall-floor, movement slows, pools. The moon casts a line of light over the shifting surface of the sea, a reflected reminder of the next day, and the next, pulsing on in waves.

### Spaces of Flow

Asserting that space is always being produced through time this chapter frames architecture as an interdisciplinary discourse of durational flows. Duration is established here as that most irreducible condition of life, the constant unfolding, differentiation and divergence of the new. To exist in time is to be subject to these ongoing transformations and emergences, subject to the vital forces of life. Like all things, architecture is inflected by temporal flows, yet Western architectural discourse has spent little time reflecting on temporality. Exploring time's effect on space, this essay considers theories and architectures of flow, both customary and current.

Influenced by its constantly changing fluid environment, Oceania both conceptualizes spatio-temporal flow and constructs architectures that perform change. Concepts of *wa*, *va* and *ma* merge space and time, forming these in architecture as intermeshed conditions. Oceanic space is in flow, conditions of interior and exterior intermixed as a result of temporalized or indeterminate boundaries which disrupt spatial containment.

Inflected by Oceanic constructions the contemporary architectures of flow explored here enact change, rendering interior and exterior or site and space as temporal, rather than spatial, conditions. Theory is engaged as generative practice, architecture becoming other, made in a space in between, between Oceania and the West, between landscape architecture, interior and performance design, between inside and outside. Space forms and reforms as and through the event and as architecture performs – activating space, enacting the everyday, or displaying itself as spectacle – it ‘ceases to be a backdrop for actions, becoming action itself’.<sup>36</sup>

Rather than a discrete and enclosed object, architecture becomes an interactive and performative field that responds to its temporal environment. Experimentally and doxically in between, these architectures of flow construct space as an always becoming other. As enclosing boundaries become thresholds, space opens up, sounds and scents drift, inhabitants move, and energies stream as architecture performs the ceaseless flux of life.

## Notes

- 1 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, transl. Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1960).
- 2 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 289.
- 3 Dorita Hannah, ‘Event-space: Theater Architecture and the Historical Avant-Garde’ (unpublished PhD thesis, New York University, 2008), 22.
- 4 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 85.
- 5 Virginia Woolf’s text, *The Waves*, is remembered in this text construction.
- 6 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.
- 7 Henri Bergson, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, transl. T.E. Hulme (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1999), 41.
- 8 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, transl. T. Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 20.
- 9 Hannah, op. cit., 23–4.
- 10 Ibid., 40.
- 11 Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 111.
- 12 Hannah, op. cit., 22.
- 13 Ibid., 25.
- 14 Ibid., 23.
- 15 Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 14.
- 16 Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 139.
- 17 Ibid., 149.
- 18 Ibid., 255.
- 19 Ibid., 22.
- 20 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium’, ed. Richard Gough, *Performance Research: On Cooking*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1999): 1–2.

- 21 wa 1) distance, definite space, interval; 2) an indefinite interval, unenclosed, open country; 3) The time, season or space in time; 4) Hawaiian: a space; *wayan*, time. Va 1) Samoan: a space in between; 2) Tahitian (obs): space in time. Ava Marquesan: space between, space in time; see *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, ed. Edward Robert Tregear (Christchurch: Cadsonbury Publications, 2001).
- 22 Richard B. Pilgrim, 'Intervals ("Ma") in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan' in *History of Religions*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (February 1986), 255.
- 23 Arata Isozaki, cited in Richard Pilgrim, op. cit., 267.
- 24 Lemi Ponifasio and Albert Refiti, 'Sacred Space' in *The Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Theatre*. Catalogue for the 10th International Exhibition of Scenography and Theatre Architecture, Industrial Palace, Exhibition Grounds, Vystaviste, Prague (June 13–29, 2003).
- 25 Mike Austin, 'Pacific building: the construction of tradition' in *Additions to Architectural History: XIXth conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, ed. John Macarthur and Anthony Moulis, 10 (Brisbane: SAHANZ 2002).
- 26 Ibid., 12.
- 27 Mike Austin, 'Pacific Island Migration' in *Drifting: Architecture and Migrancy*, ed. Stephen Cairns (London: Routledge, 2004), 226.
- 28 Ibid., 227.
- 29 Mike Austin, 'Pacific building: the construction of tradition', 13.
- 30 Sarah Treadwell, 'Categorical Weavings: European Representations of the Architecture of Hakari' in *Voyages and Beaches, Pacific Encounters, 1769–1840*, ed. Alex Calder, Jonathan Lamb and Bridget Orr (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 267.
- 31 Ibid., 92–3.
- 32 Ground House: Project leader.
- 33 Sounds House: Project leader with Stephen Bonnington.
- 34 Tokatea: Project leader.
- 35 Phase 2 of the Tokatea project involves the installation of a timber field over the roof, with stairs, enabling the roof to be inhabited as an artificial landscape and used as circulation route down and across the site.
- 36 Tschumi, op. cit., 149.