Leaving Las Vegas, Again

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Upon its publication in 1972, *Learning from Las Vegas* quickly became one of the pivotal documents of architectural postmodernism, arguing the need to reconsider the bases of thinking around the city and architecture as a relationship that responded to changes in the tactics and apprehension of media and, especially, around the new scales assumed by advertising in relation to architecture, cities, and landscapes.[1] In short, it took the stance that the interaction between architecture and the city, building and street, had been irrevocably altered by the advent of motorized transport and the concomitant scale shift in the road sign to be apprehendable at speed—hardly the first time advertising had responded to the need for rapid apperception, but an early instance (at least insofar as it registered in architectural theory) of accounting for the widespread ownership of private motorcars.[2]

The book considered for the first time the full implications of the change in the semantic role once held by the façade to the sign—be it the building *as* sign or the sign as the new repository of architecture's urban value. That the neon sign and larger size of roadside advertising were indices, too, of the rise of pop culture and the normalization of a particularly American mode of kitsch made *Learning from Las Vegas* even more pertinent to a broader discussion on America's changing cultural winds—and the changes to which those countries that looked with increased intensity to the American city as a model had likewise embraced (or sustained). In making these claims, the book captured the intersection of a series of methodological, conceptual, and historical phenomena that came together, as Martino Stierli has most recently observed, around the second half of the 1960s in a particularly striking image of Las Vegas as the American city par excellence, paradigmatic in its idiosyncrasies.

Wide Open

The scope and import of *Learning from Las Vegas* has been subject to no mean degree of analysis.[3] Its impact on architectural and urban thinking has, however, been uneven, with the scales favoring a series of broad-stroke analytical images.

As important as *Learning from Las Vegas* immediately became, and as much as it tracked a profound change in the analysis of architecture within architectural culture, much about the project was derivative. A year before taking her students and husband to

Las Vegas, Denise Scott Brown had visited Ed Ruscha in Los Angeles where she had had a chance to witness the relationship between the city as such and its aestheticization in Ruscha's hands. (That Las Vegas was the second stop on the original Research Studio itinerary in 1968 is often overlooked.) A project like *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) had direct consequences for the framing and analysis of Las Vegas in the hands of the Yale group.[4] As did the observations of architectural critic Peter Blake. Just three years before the Las Vegas trip he had published a study of the mundane urban landscapes of Long Island, *God's Own Junkyard*, in which the figure of the "duck"—as a building that says what it does in the least ambiguous terms possible—entered into the vocabulary of architectural theory and criticism.[5] Blake's embrace of his subject might have been on the chilly side, but he defined as mainstream something that had hitherto been marginal in the pages of architectural criticism and offered a position against which Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, and their students could react.

Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour also borrowed from methodological advances in documentary photography and cinematography, rallying them behind conceptual gains that had been put in play in architectural theory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, they enacted a transposition onto the city of the body of theory that had sought to make sense of how one experienced architectural objects in the landscape and the idea, too, of the body with eyes, a capacity for mobile visual apprehension and experience of the city, into the heart of modern architecture. In this, their wide-ranging acknowledgments—specifically to "those who have been the particular intellectual and artistic underpinnings of this project"—while familiar to many, are still telling:

> They are the late Donald Drew Egbert, Herbert J. Gans, J. B. Jackson, Louis Kahn, Arthur Korn, Jean Labatut, Ester McCoy, Robert B. Mitchell, Charles Moore, Lewis Mumford, the Pop artists (particularly Edward Ruscha), Vincent Scully, Charles Seeger, Melvin M. Webber, and Tom Wolfe. With some temerity we acknowledge too the help of Michelangelo, the Italian and English Mannerists, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Patrick Geddes, Frank Lloyd Wright, and the early generation of Heroic Modern architects.[6]

Venturi and Scott Brown understood—and they were hardly alone in having done so—that the speed with which one could, by the 1960s, see the city had demanded new visual relationships in order to maintain the city's principal role as a site of commercial exchange. They understood, too, that this analytical recalibration formed part of an artistic and intellectual tradition. Venturi and Scott Brown, together with their teaching assistant Izenour, brought

all these things together in an approach to the analysis of the city that saw them move through the plan and record those views cinematically, as in the twenty-one-minute film *Las Vegas Deadpan* that documents a silent drive down the strip, or the self-explanatory *Las Vegas Helicopter Ride*. The subject of Las Vegas was ripe for the picking. And the coincidence of the sign in theory and urban experience made Las Vegas more loaded and less a curiosity than it might otherwise have been.

For participants in the Las Vegas Research Studio, however, the city *was* a curiosity, and this comes through in the films and photographs documented in the Museum im Bellpark exhibition Las Vegas Studio (curated by Hilar Stadler and Martino Stierli, 2008): they had a job to do but were reveling in the bad taste of it all.[7] By now, cultured folk had the tools to travel ironically to Las Vegas, as did Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, and their students from the Yale School of Art and Architecture. If Blake had struggled with Long Island, Las Vegas was claimed for a new generation of studies that registered a turn in the analysis of the city as a subject of architectural history and criticism that allowed it to be addressed in its own terms, even as specific sites continued to serve as symptoms of broader cultural and urban changes. On its publication, *Learning from Las Vegas* joined Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971) and was in turn joined by the Venice School study *The American City* (1973; English translation, 1983), and Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York* (1978) as one of a fresh set of readings of the city as something that informed the trajectory of ideas for architecture.[8] The late-modern city was no longer (necessarily) where things could go terribly wrong for culture and the building arts (as it had been for Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford), and it was no longer something that suffered from the awkward split that architecture and planning had sustained in the postwar decades.

That said, between the two editions of *Learning from Las Vegas* that appeared in 1972 and 1977, a struggle clearly occurred between these two modes: the desire to see Las Vegas aestheticized in a moment when that aestheticization was possible; and the intent to subject the city to sustained urbanistic analysis in the mode of the social sciences for which Scott Brown, with her strong interest in urban planning, even today remains an advocate. Had the second, 1977, edition appeared before the first, greatly reducing the number and efficacy of the images for a greater emphasis on the written analysis and privileging the deadpan—a more conceptually and analytically ambitious work—*Learning from Las Vegas* would doubtless have had much less impact than history tells us it did.[9]

As the recent studies on this work have amply demonstrated, a decisive intervention is needed to break the habit of reading

Learning from Las Vegas in the ways it has been read for at least thirty of the last forty years, of looking for ducks and sheds, of asserting that "Billboards are almost alright," and of testing that book against the current realities of Las Vegas as a contemporary city—a test that has not worked since the end of the decade in which *Learning from Las Vegas* first appeared. Contemporary architectural debate is, though, nonetheless prone to reverting to those moves that had critical cachet at the moment of their arrival on the scene. *Learning from Las Vegas* landed at a moment when architecture was hungry for criticism and new conceptual devices for unpacking an expanded concept of architecture itself—a moment for which many are now nostalgic.

The excavation of this episode in architecture's intellectual history, recent as it is, is today obliged to contend with the currency of the images that have formed part of the field's critical vocabulary within the history of architectural theory. For that vocabulary to have any enduring claim on a critical mission, however, the images that build up around the most enduringly important books of these years must be forced apart from the works themselves and the significance of each of these books, duly historicized, held up against the significance of each work in the *history* of its significance. The work undertaken now by historians working through the history of architecture's ideas has started to address the finer grain and check the proliferation of "Cliffs Notes" accounts of books and articles, seeking to invigorate contemporary debate on new terms. *Learning from Las Vegas* is not the only book from this era that tends to be treated independent of its history, but it is an obvious and persistent case.

As a result—or, at least, as one result—of the work of looking for the finer grain, the elisions that remain to be dealt with become either more and more surprising or more and more obscure. This essay invokes a combination of the two, since while little attention has thus far been paid to the state of architectural debate in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s and its import for the contemporary reception of *Learning from Las Vegas* in Australia, this subject offers some fresh material against which to regard matters that have been considered at great length and for many years.

Learning from Las Vegas
The exhibition curated by Hilar Stadler and Martino Stierli for the Museum im Bellpark in Kriens, Switzerland, returned to the documents around the Yale studio, offering the Las Vegas project and its premises a fresh reading by presenting a body of largely unpublished materials concerning methodological tactics as well as the atmosphere of the ten-day field study: correspondence, sketches, films, and photographs. Initially shown in 2008–2009, it subse-

quently toured venues in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States, including Yale itself (2009–2010), and has not yet exhausted its program.[10] Las Vegas Studio was also shown at two Australian venues: the Gold Coast City Gallery (June 29 to August 11, 2013), a regional gallery in Queensland's Surfers Paradise; and in the exhibition spaces of the RMIT University Design Hub in Melbourne (April 1 to May 3, 2014).[11] Excepting Yale, where Venturi's institutional legacy remains a loaded issue—the Swiss historian Stanislaus von Moos has even taught a course at Yale titled Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates in Context—the exhibition as staged in Kriens, Chicago, Frankfurt, and Los Angeles remained close to the curators' intentions to treat the documents in the mode of artworks invited to speak for themselves within the frame of the exhibition.[12] This was an extension and recalibration of Venturi and Scott Brown's efforts to bring the mundane into focus as a matter for capital A architecture, but which had by now become complicated by the status their work assumed as intellectual heritage.

In Australia, however—as at Yale, but unlike elsewhere (to my knowledge)—Las Vegas Studio was on both occasions explicitly paired with a locally curated exhibition, through which the gravity and canonicity of *Learning from Las Vegas* was invoked to legitimize two local postmodern subjects, each in turn: that of Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast as presented through a rephotography project by Melbourne-based John Gollings (*Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013) that explored the immediate lessons found in the Las Vegas project and ran these through an additional, temporal filter; and later, alongside the Gollings show, the Melbourne reception of postmodernism through the agency of *Learning from Las Vegas* in the 1970s and 1980s, comprising in 2014 a reassertion of a resilient version of the Australian history of the postmodern experience that had been arguably unsettled by the Gollings show and its origins—including films, drawings, and correspondence with a series of architects and practices that together posed an immediate and arguably more legitimate claim on the Venturi–Scott Brown legacy.[13] In its joint staging with the Gollings rephotography show at the Gold Coast and with the substantial supplementary Melbourne material at RMIT, Las Vegas Studio was instrumentalized to two distinct (and competing) ends that rendered the exhibition itself—and its original curatorial project—an effectively neutral if naturally celebratory lens through which to regard Las Vegas and the attention it attracted at the end of the 1960s as a touchstone for architectural and urban analysis.

Mercenaries, Missionaries, and Misfits
Contested across the later decades of the nineteenth century by German and British crowns—its borders redrawn and its name

recast half a dozen times over the course of half a century—the Territory of Papua (formerly British New Guinea) was transferred from British to Australian rule by the Papua Act of 1906. The newly formed Commonwealth of Australia was only five years old at this point, and its interests remained closely aligned with those of Great Britain, but the administrative arrangement between Australia and Papua made sense: a mere one hundred miles separated the island from the northern tip of what had until 1901 been the British colony of Queensland. Australia absorbed German New Guinea during the First World War and governed the Territory of New Guinea under a League of Nations mandate from 1920 until the Japanese invasion of 1942. The Pacific War made clear that the larger territory newly renamed Papua and New Guinea had strategic geopolitical importance beyond its nineteenth-century significance as a source of gold and other minerals: Papua and New Guinea was positioned in close proximity to British, Dutch, French, and American interests, all of which had been challenged by Japan and conceivably remained vulnerable. Also clear was that the colonial project had reached the end of its legitimacy, and so Australia relinquished its claim over Papua and New Guinea while maintaining active participation in an international trusteeship arrangement administrated from 1949 by the newly formed United Nations.

Across the 1950s and 1960s the new nation realized much of the institutional infrastructure required for self-government: a public service, courts, House of Representatives, and so forth. Australia remained a strong figure in this development, even while its ongoing presence was tarred by the colonial experience and the legacy of British administration. Renamed Papua New Guinea in 1972, the country became self-governing the following year and then achieved full independence in 1975.[14]

As part of the preparation for nationhood, two public universities were established in 1965 in the capital, Port Moresby: one teaching across the arts and sciences (the University of Papua New Guinea); the other a technical university, initially called the Papua New Guinea Institute of Higher Technical Education. The latter institution was within two years moved to the outskirts of Lae—the country's industrial capital on the east coast of what had once been Kaiser-Wilhelmsland.[15] Renamed in 1970 as the Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology, it initiated a professional architecture program that same year—the country's first—recruiting thirty-seven-year-old Neville Quarry from the University of Melbourne to serve as its inaugural head. The Papua New Guinea University of Technology, as it would become in 1973, had received substantial financial support from the Australian government and maintained close ties to the Australian schools. (The university is still a member of the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia.)

Recognizing the rare opportunity to develop a school of architecture from scratch—and in the well-resourced name of development—Quarry set about building a young staff drawn predominantly from his own former students and colleagues and their circles. Highly favorable conditions were extended to faculty prepared to commit to two- or four-year contracts. From Melbourne, he attracted as lecturers Ken Costigan (who would dedicate decades to the country as an architect and educator), Tony Styant-Browne (with his wife, Julie Jame, who had studied architecture at the University of Melbourne and graphic design and fine art at RMIT), and Adrian Boddy.[16] From Sydney, he recruited Janet Grey; from Brisbane, Gordon Holden. All were a decade or more his junior, born around the end of World War II, and all were prepared to sign on to the adventure of teaching architecture to what was explicitly cast as a first generation of nation builders (the first two graduates gaining their diplomas in 1974). Styant-Browne and Jame had been in the same year group at the University of Melbourne, where Quarry had been the Second Year Master. They met Costigan when he transferred to Melbourne after three years at RMIT. John Gollings, too, had been at Melbourne, although he traded architecture for photography after a handful of years. He nevertheless figured as an occasional presence in the early years of the school at Lae. Malcolm (Mal) Horner was a graduate of the City College of New York and taught planning. Closer to Quarry's own age were Stan Barker (a senior lecturer and another Melbourne alumnus), Arthur Thomas (a Japanese Englishman who entered the university with public works experience, having come to Papua New Guinea after a stint in Kenya), and Dimitri Perno (from Queensland's Sunshine Coast; he would later work in Samoa).[17]

Quarry passed away in 2004, but conversations with Holden and Styant-Browne confirm that the atmosphere of his school was one of experimentation, both in educational terms and in terms of the research programs and methods that underpinned the teaching—a program explicitly shaped by the open project of documenting the country's architecture and village structures as well as by clear intellectual debts to such figures as Christopher Alexander and Amos Rapoport.[18] The school's explicit agenda was to support "localization"—the training of Papua New Guineans for those roles that had for decades been assumed by colonial administrators and foreign technical experts.[19] The course was more practical than academic, anchored by design projects that were as often realized as not and by a research agenda that sought to better understand the tasks and nature of architecture in that corner of Melanesia. Many of the faculty had studied at the University of Melbourne, one of Australia's older, sandstone universities that, in their eyes, had become burdened by its own traditions and by the orthodoxy of

modernism. Many of the faculty thus seized upon Lae as a liberating experience, in part embracing in the adventure and in part dedicated to the introduction of the architecture profession to a new territory.

Lae Readers

Styant-Browne bought his copy of *Learning from Las Vegas* at Jervis Manton in Melbourne in 1972 before commencing his two-year tenure in Lae. He brought the book into an environment that could not have been more different from the Las Vegas documented by Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, and their students but was, nonetheless, hungry for new ways to understand, value, and represent the world. In America, Scott Brown and Izenour, in particular, continued to apply the methodological gains of *Learning from Las Vegas* to analyses of other American cities. Melbourne architect Corbett Lyon recalls following a studio in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania where Izenour led a study of Atlantic City on these terms, one of a number of iterations to which the cinematic, windscreen view had been applied to an urban setting.[20] Quite independent of this immediate afterlife to the Las Vegas project, Styant-Browne could see the application of this approach to the Queensland seaside town of Gold Coast, where the settlement of Surfers Paradise had fifteen years earlier been castigated by Australian architecture's critic-in-chief Robin Boyd as an epicenter of what he called "Austericanism." With this term Boyd encapsulated the Australian uptake in appearance and taste of a flabby American midcentury boom that had been paralleled in an Australia that was in the process of changing its allegiances from the British point of reference that had tended to define its values up to this point in favor of the American culture that had become the Pacific measure since the Second World War.[21] For Boyd and others of his era, Austerica was not the place to be, but it appealed to those who had followed the emergence of pop in the fine and applied arts and the culture of the beat generation—much of which came to be known less through firsthand experience than through novels, films, essays, music, and magazines.[22]

Styant-Browne's father, Geoffrey Styant-Browne, was—with a number of neon-bordered gas stations and California-inspired motels and private houses to his name— one of the culprits of the Austericanism of the Gold Coast that would become an object of his son's analysis a generation later.[23] The family had lived on the Gold Coast during the younger

John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 38. Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south from The Shore at night, Surfers Paradise, 1974 and 2013.

Styant-Browne's formative years, and Tony was familiar with the impoverished yet peppy signage and tacky *architecture parlante* of the small city's tourist strip of the years flanking 1960, in which the first substantial postwar development experiments had been introduced and replicated and in which tourism had flourished much as it had in Florida, which experienced a simultaneous boom. Like Las Vegas, the Gold Coast was unburdened by a nineteenth-century plan; it was a strip, orientated from its inception toward the needs of the motorist, who in this case was likely arriving to the Gold Coast along the main highway connecting nearby Brisbane (fifty-five miles to the north) to Sydney (500 miles to the south). The Gold Coast was not Vegas—any more than it was Los Angeles or Miami Beach—but it was the closest thing available to test Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, and their students' assessment of the contemporary, car-orientated city. If their treatment of Las Vegas seemed worthy of emulation, it was on several bases. Both cities had grown from nothing on the back of economies derived from pleasure and the illicit. Both had condensed in a comparatively extreme urban expression values that had become widespread in their respective cultures while being widely regarded as cities devoid of civilized life. Both describe a moment of victory for popular culture over high culture—and of the corresponding win for sign over significant form.

This might well have had the same anthropological value for privileged graduate students from Connecticut making runs down the Las Vegas Strip as for those young Australian architects serving as part of a last colonial gasp by helping Papua New Guinea come of age. Among the Lae set this attitude found a secondary expression in the application to Surfers Paradise of both direct lessons from Papua New Guinea and distant lessons from Yale—both in the manner of observational studies.[24] The latter model figured more explicitly in the group's expressed intentions, however. Their goal was to validate an Australian city and its architecture, both of which exhibited the same tendencies as the American city captured in *Learning from Las Vegas*, and to do so by turning the analytical tools

employed by the Las Vegas Research Studio upon Surfers Paradise, the Australian city least fettered by historical forces and most susceptible to the rise of the sign, a leisure city in which the notion of a cultured soul taking up residence would be incomprehensible.[25]

Together with Gollings (from Melbourne) and Horner (from Lae), Styant-Browne and Jame (also Lae

based) planned a two-week vacation in January 1974 during which the team would research, strategize, and undertake a study of Surfers Paradise in particular and the Gold Coast more generally in the mode of the Yale Las Vegas project. The Papua New Guinea contingent traveled the 1,500 miles by air, and the Gollings family drove 1,000 miles from Melbourne—the car quickly converted to those same purposes to which the Yale students had turned their complimentary rental car five years earlier, with Gollings trading a bonnet-mounted camera for the more casual arrangement of sitting, himself, on the bonnet to shoot with a Widelux.[26] Their images are on occasion more moody than the starkly lit Las Vegas photographs. The weather was against them, with the region experiencing such sustained rainfall across January 1974 that the month culminated in the most devastating civil emergency in nearby Brisbane's recorded history. Between rain squalls, though, and over a two-week period, Gollings, Styant-Browne, Jame, and Horner (along with a bunch of children whose summer vacation had been hijacked for the cause) mapped out the Gold Coast, photographed it with a range of equipment, and gathered ephemera (newspapers, magazines, and various other materials) to inform their study—

all of which was intended to be collated into a book that would respond, from the antipodes, to the Las Vegas study.[27] Horner and Styant-Browne would map out the area of study and direct its analysis, Gollings would lead photography, and Jame would work on the drawings and book layout. The book project, rigorously conceived in the model of *Learning from Las Vegas*, did not see the light of day. At the end of 1974, Styant-Browne faced the decision whether to sign on for a further five-year contract at Lae or to move on. Choosing the latter, he moved to Los Angeles—from Lae to LA, as he has put it—taking up graduate studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, the start of a decade-long American sojourn. The book followed him across the Pacific but failed to eventuate as his professional career took off, leading

to work with "the breathtakingly talented" Charles Moore and with César Pelli, Tony Lumsden, Lawrence Halprin, "and, on one project, Frank Gehry." The neon of Surfers Paradise dimmed with distance.[28]

Vegas in Paradise

This brings us back to the exhibitions of 2013 and 2014 and a first observation; namely, that pairing the Gold Coast with Las Vegas rendered each city, rather than its representation, the proper subject of each show. In his rephotography project Gollings revisited, forty years later, the images he, Styant-Browne, Jame, and Horner had taken in January 1974, using, where possible, the same lenses and contemporary variations on the same techniques—not to mention his extensive field notes—to reshoot images of Surfers Paradise from the same positions and at the same scale.[29] The nature of rephotography (or, recalling its origins in geology, "repeat photography") is to document change, a gesture that can never be undertaken without casting judgment on that very change.[30] In this, the Swiss and Australian shows were on a different conceptual footing. *Learning from Surfers Paradise* (1973–2013) occupied the lower gallery of the Gold Coast City Gallery with a clear then-and-now message, while the upper gallery housed Las Vegas Studio, for which "then and now" was a question of the means of analysis rather than its subject. Among the elements of Learning from Surfers Paradise was Styant-Browne's own copy of *Learning from Las Vegas*, as well as a modicum of correspondence and documentation from the 1974 field study and its preparations in the months prior. But in their presentation these were entirely subsidiary to the photographic work, a nod to the fetishists. Gollings had kept good records of his position, equipment, and settings, and the project consequently traced the dramatic change in scale to which the Gold Coast in general and Surfers Paradise in particular (not to mention the adjacent canal estates off the Nerang River) had been subject over these decades. The overwhelming image conveyed in the exhibition was of a city that had exceeded the scale of its analysis in the 1970s. A pair of photographs depicting a freestanding 1950s motel (the El Dorado,

opened 1955) becomes, in 2013, a lobby interior, without a change in frame or position. An open field littered with a lonely sign and oil drum fills up with boxy suburban homes. Gollings documents the effects upon a city of rapid growth driven by the market forces of tourism.

As Matthew Condon admits at the end of *A Night at the Pink Poodle* (1995)—referring to an old Gold Coast highway motel since replaced by a high-rise (although its neon signage is protected)—as much as one might heap nostalgia upon the postwar age of innocence, the motel is no longer a destination for the family holiday so much as a place for truckers to doss, bedbugs to thrive, and hookers to ply their wares. And for his protagonist, Icarus—a nickname, thankfully, even if for a penthouse salesman—this motel poses the question of coping with the reconciliation of the fragile image of a better past and the realities of how the past is subject to mechanisms other than the mere passage of time: the brutal realities of development and the obsolescence it fosters among buildings and their inhabitants; the struggle to continue investing in the identity of the center as it gives way to an anonymous sprawl; and the desire of the city itself to mature and be taken seriously, even against a backdrop of lost freedoms.[31]

John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 98. TraveLodge, Surfers Paradise, 1974 (top). The Islander Resort, looking west from the corner of Beach Road, Surfers Paradise, 2013 (bottom).

In mounting a rephotography project alongside the materials of the Las Vegas studio, however, the effect is to foster precisely this nostalgia. Las Vegas at the end of the 1960s is inevitably highly aestheticized to eyes conditioned by the gains of Andy Warhol, Ruscha, and the original Mad Men. A corresponding image of a smaller, poorer, pop city such as Surfers Paradise fosters a sense of something having been lost. These were not exhibitions of photography or urban analysis so much as of Las Vegas and the Gold Coast, and to this end the City Gallery reversed the curators' preference to treat the documents as artworks capable of speaking for themselves and added labels to the show, a didactic overlay rather more typical of antipodean than of European galleries. This was a show about how the Gold Coast was at a certain moment like Las Vegas and how, just as you could learn from Las Vegas, you could learn (presumably the same things, if in an

Australian register) from Surfers Paradise. Las Vegas was important because *Learning from Las Vegas* showed us that what happened there was not a sequence of very bad things so much as something

entirely normal that became exceptional through its amplification. In this way, Las Vegas Studio—documenting work from the 1960s—served to legitimate the Gold Coast project and, by extension, the Gold Coast as another exceptional city in which the normal was amplified beyond the limits of good taste. The exhibition framed a local discussion about how the Gold Coast *was* and about how much had been *lost*. And in its local staging, the intellectual and artistic project documented in Las Vegas Studio went almost entirely unnoticed.

In particular, the exhibition of Las Vegas Studio served to legitimate the Gold Coast of the early 1970s to which the Lae group had been drawn by demonstrating not only the changes to which the Gold Coast had been subject since the 1970s, but also the wholesale removal of what only recently has been cast as its postwar heritage. Las Vegas circa 1968 was therefore positioned as a litmus test for a Gold Coast that even now, in culture and the arts, holds itself accountable to its most historically

Above: John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 121. Parking lot, Surfers Paradise Hotel with Kinkabool and Paradise Towers, view south from Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise, 1974 (top). Body store, Surfers Centro Arcade, Surfers Paradise, 2013 (bottom).

Left: John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 114a. Surfers Paradise Boulevard, view south, 1974 and 2013.

iconic moment—the era of "white shoe" developers Bruce Small, Stanley Korman, and Bernie Elsey—a moment in which something was happening that connected with a radical shift in the nature of the city that the Gold Coast was well positioned to track.[32] Through this move, the exhibition asserted a real historical city against which the contemporary city was held to account, but only in the mode of nostalgia: "Look what we've done." This fails to deal with the shifts to which Las Vegas itself has been subject in the intervening years, shifts that parallel the fates of any number of cities that rest heavily on tourism, speculative development, and the misbehavior that accrues to both; it fails to account, too, for the paradox of privileging historical urban dross while at the same time ignoring its present-day manifestations as deservedly below the radar—no longer proper to the aestheticization to which the industrial or service periphery was subject in the 1960s and 1970s. The lesson of Las Vegas for the Gold Coast is much less in the form of a problem—how to read today's industrial parks or strip malls as part of a larger complex of urban phenomena; how to continue to test and expand the limits of what is worth discussing in architecture—than in the form of an answer: the Gold Coast deserves your attention because it was once like Las Vegas and can be so again.[33]

In this is a distinction we must draw between Gollings's rephotography project and the institutional project for which it was put to work—a gallery that is under the direction of the city corporation and that consistently mounts exhibitions that take the Gold Coast as a subject. The gallery is independent of the city only to the extent that it and the city remain on the same page in presenting an image of the Gold Coast to which visitors and locals alike might tether their respective horses: curating art and history as identity management. As a photographer Gollings has his own questions in

John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 171. El Rancho Bar-B-Q, corner of Ferny Avenue and Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise, 1974 (left). Circle on Cavill Fashion Dining, corner of Ferny Avenue and Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise, 2013 (right).

coming to this subject; so did Stadler and Stierli as curators. In their paired staging, though, the work presented by Stadler and Stierli served largely to legitimate Gollings's subject and the agenda brought to the paired shows by the Gold Coast City Gallery itself.

The pairing nonetheless put the reception of *Learning from Las Vegas* in Lae into play in the postmodern history of Australian architecture in terms that quickly reoriented attention to the project of Horner, Jame, Gollings, and Styant-Browne and to their subject. But in the light placed on their efforts to respond directly to the lessons of Las Vegas, as presented by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour, the shows briefly set up an eddy in a history of Australian postmodernism that has tended to prize both the local path out of modern architecture in the mode of a critical regionalism and apprenticeship in the dark arts of architectural theory at the world's discursive centers. The 1973–1974 Surfers Paradise study was a failure by all measures that concern its import for Australian debate or the translation of the gains of *Learning from Las Vegas* to an Australian setting. We might now see it as a work of intentions, albeit without import in its own time. Except that it happened and had been hitherto overlooked in writing the history of Australian postmodernism.

Duck and Cover

Turning now to the show staged at RMIT, the conversation between these two iterations of the Las Vegas exhibition could not be clearer.[34] Accounts of the Australian reception of American, meaning Venturian, postmodernism tend to revolve around the return to Melbourne of Peter Corrigan after he completed a master's degree in environmental design at Yale in the years when Venturi and

Left: John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 115. Surfers Paradise Boulevard, looking south from The Shore to Apollo, Surfers Paradise, 1974 (top). Surfers Paradise Boulevard, looking south from The Shore to Focus and QT, Surfers Paradise, 2013 (bottom).

Right: John Gollings. *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, 1973–2013. No. 82. Pacific Ocean and Surfers Paradise Beach, latitude 27°59'51.15" S, longitude 153°26'15.258" E, altitude 994 ft. (303 m), 1974 and 2013.

Scott Brown offered the Las Vegas Research Studio (though Corrigan himself did not take this class) before working his way through a series of postmodern practices: Philip Johnson, Paul Rudolph, César Pelli, and Kevin Roche—architects whose work defined a generation.[35] The subsequent impact of his return upon Melbourne's institutions (RMIT especially) and upon a younger generation of architects and students habitually positions the city as an urban architectural culture fed by ideas rather than business that was capable of shaking off the mantle of architectural modernism and, therefore, was the intellectual counterpoint to Sydney's pragmatism and institutional lethargy. This is a story in which, in the end and despite token gestures here and there, only two Australian cities matter. In Melbourne, therefore, at the RMIT Design Hub, the Las Vegas studio show had to contend with this legacy. The Museum im Bellpark contribution was again paired with the Gollings rephotography project but separated into different parts of the building to underscore through a spatial arrangement the primacy of the Las Vegas materials. An installed sign even declared the Gollings work a "detour." Observed local curator Fleur Watson, "It is perhaps unsurprising that *Learning from Las Vegas* found the most resonance in Melbourne within an Australian context."[36] Corrigan contributed a note to the room guide called "The Venturis and I." From no position could work from both elements be registered at once, as had been the case in Queensland. Instead, Las Vegas Studio and Learning from Surfers Paradise were positioned as distinct, if related, shows, in which Las Vegas served as an inspiration for the latter and in which Surfers Paradise was very much a local curiosity and, consequently, an inert element in
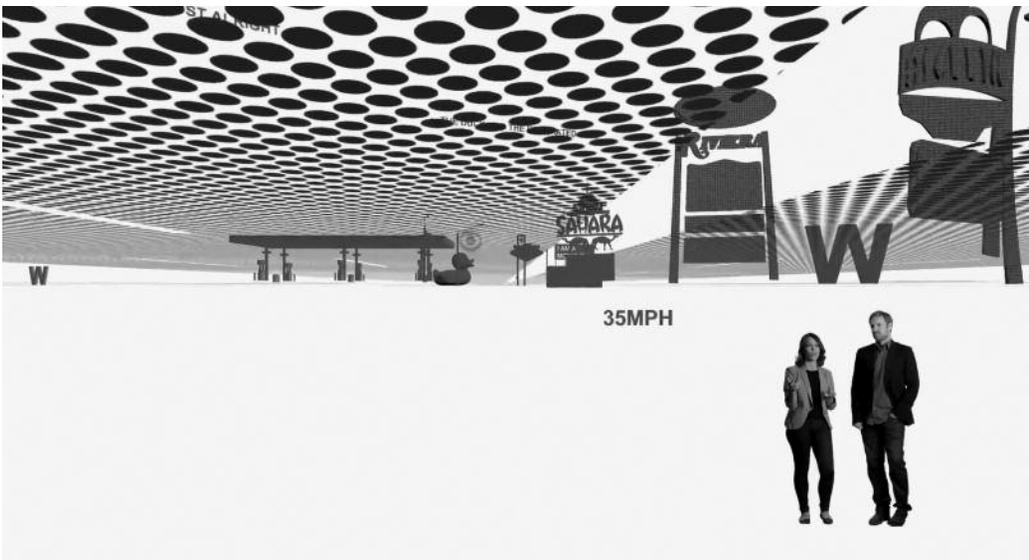
the postmodern history of Australian architecture. If the exhibition staged on the Gold Coast demonstrated the need to reconsider this history, the show at RMIT offered a response: "We've given it some thought, and we're happy with things as they stand."

The show's designers, Nick Searle and Suzannah Waldron (Searle x Waldron Architecture), enacted this assertion of the status quo in their otherwise compelling exhibition design. The Las Vegas materials compiled by Stadler and Stierli were sent back to the walls by the curator, where they were presented as originally intended (as artifacts in their own right) and not as documentation of a proper subject (from which might be drawn some authority), while into the large gallery spaces were inserted a series of furnishings that displayed correspondence and drawings demonstrating the direct uptake and close personal relationships maintained by the protagonists of Melbournian postmodernism (and their children; and, by extension, their grandchildren). Documents proving the childhood acquaintance of Scott Brown and Leon van Schaik in South Africa were tabled along with drawings and books annotated or signed by Venturi, even a thank-you note, which all added up to a broad-based claim on the authority of direct experience. And for these, Las Vegas Studio served as a background.

To drive the point home, and into perpetuity, the Design Hub commissioned a series of documentaries, filmed and rendered by Toby Reed and Sam Reed (and produced by Nervegna Reed Architecture and RMIT Design Hub), in which interviews were staged and styled with van Schaik, Lyon, Howard Raggatt and Ian McDougall of Ashton Raggatt McDougall (ARM, authors of the "Not the Vanna Venturi House" and the Howard/Kronborg Medical Clinic in Footscray, Victoria, 1993), and Rob McBride and Debbie-Lyn Ryan—all architects who had in one way or another been shaped by the Melbourne grappling with a Venturian postmodernism (as it is, curiously, commonly positioned), as well as with Gollings and Styant-Browne and with the designers Searle x Waldron.[37] Watson again:

The influence of Venturi and Scott Brown's texts and research studios inspired these architects to look at the city differently and allowed them to dream a different reality of Australia that wasn't beach and harbour but a diverse city filled with opportunity, life and a sense of humor and local culture to be found within our suburbs.[38]

The interviewees shared a common vocabulary around, if not aphorisms from, *Learning from Las Vegas* and what they had taken from the book and the broader suite of concepts on which it drew. All, that is, except Gollings and Styant-Browne, whose uptake was on quite different terms, less faithful in one way, more faithful in another. The documentaries also included a discomforting "rear-view mirror" interview with art historian Conrad Hamann, who across the 1970s and 1980s did more than most to articulate and then uphold the image that the show, as a whole, actively reinforced.

The design of the films captures everything one learned about *Learning from Las Vegas* in architecture school—the acceptance of the billboard, the trade of façade for sign, the choice between ducks and decorated sheds, and so on. The interviews belie an anxiety over whether the connections to the center were strong enough to make what happened at this particular point on the periphery matter. Each of the films offers a celebration imitating critique rather than criticism proper, thereby becoming complicit in a broader assertion of the city's authority over this particular subject and, in a way, exercising nostalgia for a more invigorated moment in that city's once-more radical architectural culture, which had itself passed by the mid-1980s as its energy and outlets were systematically institutionalized.[39] The response at the RMIT Design Hub to the Museum im Bellpark show exposed something that demands further attention—not a series of errors in the reception of *Learning from Las Vegas* but something that had grown around that reception and taken on a form of its own. This intellectual and institutional history could be treated as any other pathology: given over to closer

Howard Raggatt (passenger), Ian McDougall (driver), and Conrad Hamann (back seat) in *Las Vegas Studio: Melbourne*, dir. Toby Reed and Sam Reed, 2014. Produced by Nervegna Reed Architecture. Interviews by Toby Reed and Fleur Watson.

THE DUCK AND THE DECORATED SHED

inspection or left, fingers crossed, well enough alone. In this the particular speaks to the general.

Learning and Leaving

The pair of exhibitions at Surfers Paradise and Melbourne placed the material of the Las Vegas Studio into an inert conversation in which the very invocation of *Learning from Las Vegas* served to legitimate a proper subject that was not, in the end, the photographs and films gathered from the archives of Venturi and Scott Brown. As such, the complexities thrown up by that material (and its curators) were, in Australia, set aside in favor of a caricature of the project that was assumed to be robust and unchanged by the intervening decades. Like a cognitive game in which the thing seen is a matter of pure conjecture, Las Vegas Studio, in Australia at least, suggested an image to its audience and activated a set of assumptions triggered by a rather more complex set of biographical, autobiographical, and institutional narratives. While intrinsically interesting to someone closer to the individuals and settings that shaped those analytical habits—like a great performance of a familiar play—for readers farther afield the pairing of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour's Las Vegas with the Gold Coast of Gollings, Styant-Brown, Jame, and Horner, or with the Melbourne scene of the 1970s and 1980s, points to the need to look more closely at the broader reception of the work of this generation of histories and theories of architecture and the city.

Learning from Las Vegas was not written in a vacuum. Nor was it read in one. And as much as we might make a strong guess as to the kind of company it kept on the bookshelves and reading lists of the 1970s, the book did not land in any *normal* context. Curious as it might seem to look to a setting like the architecture school at Lae, by doing so we can understand something new about how the book operated in the architectural culture of its day, away from the possibility of its authors managing its contents and directing its lessons. To speak easily of centers and peripheries no longer makes sense, but we might at least acknowledge the useful distinction in speaking of the immediate and the removed. Lae was removed on two counts: from the cultures producing the work that was important for the young faculty who were there in the first years of the 1970s; and from the more mature (some would say staid) architectural cultures of the major Australian cities from which a stint in Papua New Guinea was cast as offering temporary (or in Costigan's case, sustained) respite.[40]

For the Australians at Lae, *Learning from Las Vegas* offered a compelling variation on the studies that percolated into their own education from the British and American architectural press as methodological sources for studying the contemporary city—not

supplanting Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City* (1960) and Gordon Cullen's *Townscape* (1961), which were already in circulation during their undergraduate years and with which they were intimate, but being put into operation alongside them.[41] *Learning from Las Vegas* celebrated an accentuated normality that would have already seemed distant to those at Lae, while it would have grated with such scions of the Australian establishment as Boyd (who had died in 1971, age fifty-two). For Gollings, Jame, Horner, and Styant-Browne, *Learning from Las Vegas* offered a clear model to apply to the Gold Coast as the closest city that taste had left behind. The Gold Coast was not Las Vegas, to be sure, but it was close enough to the Las Vegas they found in the work of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour to justify a better look.

The risk in this most recent celebration of the book, though, was that *Learning from Las Vegas* would be seen as a singularity, which it was not—neither for the group at Lae nor for any of the figures interviewed for the exhibition at the RMIT Design Hub. They were reading deeply if not widely, and we make an error to assume that *Learning from Surfers Paradise* is something other than an index of the process by which ideas were assimilated and put into action. Holden and Styant-Browne recall an influential visit to Lae early in 1973 by Clare Cooper Marcus and her husband Stephen Marcus on the back of a lecture tour through Australia. During a stay of six weeks or so, she hosted regular evening discussion groups in the couple's on-campus accommodations, significantly expanding the libraries of the young academics in attendance. The Sea Ranch complex by Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull, Jr., and Richard Whitaker (Condominium 1, MLTW, designed 1963–1964) already loomed large in their imaginations, as did the possibilities suggested by Christopher Alexander's *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (1964).[42]

Having graduated from Melbourne just five years ahead of Quarry, Rapoport was no stranger to Australian readers, and the first generation of Lae-trained architects read *House, Form and Culture* (1969) as a matter of course.[43] Holden taught a course called "Man and Environment Studies," and after his time at Lae he pursued advanced studies in urban design at the University of Manchester. (After a review of the academic program in 1974, this course took on greater significance within the curriculum at Lae, with all members of the faculty involved in its delivery, and with students taking the course in each year of their study.)[44] Costigan went to Berkeley to study under Alexander, whose 1977 *A Pattern Language* would underpin his own search for an architecture proper to the island. Grey took up studies at the University of Hawai'i to pursue a degree in social anthropology. (Margaret Mead, then in her seventies, also visited Lae during these years.) Cooper

Marcus shaped the group's reading of Herbert Gans (acknowledged, too, by Scott Brown and Venturi)—a new figure for some but known already to Styant-Browne. Cooper Marcus also reinforced the psychological dimensions of the environment–behavior studies approach for which Rapoport had advocated. The group was turned on, too, to Cooper Marcus's own work, including such books, then in development, as *Easter Hill Village* (1975) and *House as Mirror of Self* (1995)—the kernel of which was published in 1974 as "House as a Symbol of Self."[45] Styant-Browne records his debt to Cooper Marcus for introducing him to the painting of L.S. Lowry. Although they knew Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture without Architects*, it was overshadowed by what seemed the more pressing lessons of early Paul Oliver and the *Personal Space* (1969) of Robert Sommer.[46]

Quarry and his department had found an opportunity to step away from the establishment in order to look with fresh eyes at the tasks before them: educating architects, analyzing traditional environments, and reconciling what they had known as students and young professionals with what they encountered in this new situation. The authors recalled by those involved in this project might now seem to keep odd company with the Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour of *Learning from Las Vegas*, but they were not reading to a rule. The bibliographic and intellectual contexts in which the idea to document Surfers Paradise was explored and executed was full of contradictions that cannot be reconciled to the proper image occupied by this book in the history of architectural theory.

The Australian shows mounted to complement Las Vegas Studio exposed the nature of the enduring authority of *Learning from Las Vegas* in light of the kind of work it is regularly called upon to do, and not only for Australian architectural history. This allows for—though hardly invites—a reflection on the role played by intellectual history in testing the relationships assumed to underpin these exhibitions. They demonstrated something of the image that *Learning from Las Vegas* has come to assume—the shorthand to which it is habitually boiled down, the prophecies it is commonly held to have proclaimed, and the documentary truth it is held to convey for Las Vegas itself—a city that long ago traded an advertorial streetscape for monumental buildings again asserting the capacity of architecture to convey meaning in the city. They demonstrated, that is, the apparent availability of *Learning from Las Vegas*. Stadler, Stierli, Vinegar, and others have sought to hold the Las Vegas Research Studio and the book that made it famous accountable to a level of criticality resonating with the criticality it directed at its own world. But for many readers, and despite the efforts of recent critics, *Learning from Las Vegas* remains a book read one, two, three decades ago. The Gold Coast celebration and

Melbourne neutralization of the activation of *Learning from Las Vegas* by its readers in and around Papua New Guinea renders this instance of the book's reception history an example of that history's resilience (as a strong narrative) to geographical or institutional variants or, indeed, to the passage of time. And yet the marginal example presented by the reading context of this work at Lae—and the foils it presents to historiographical habits of another stripe—demonstrates the stakes of sustained misreading and the difficulty of overcoming knowledge that is reduced to aphorisms in the trajectory of ideas in twentieth-century architecture. It exposes our unease with reading without authority and our distrust in those who do it anyway. In this, the surprising and the obscure have some value.

Notes

While I have bent many ears over this piece, I particularly thank Gordon Holden, Martino Stierli, and Tony Styant-Browne for their observations on this essay and its subjects.

1. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972). *Learning from Las Vegas* (revised and reformatted in 1977) recorded the research and thinking of students from the Yale School of Art and Architecture in a traveling research studio lead by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour in 1968.

2. Compare, on this point, Albert Narath's essay "*Großstadt* as *Barockstadt*: Art History, Advertising and the Surface of the Neo-Baroque," in *The Baroque in Architectural Culture, 1880–1980*, ed. Andrew Leach, John Macarthur, and Maarten Delbeke (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015).

3. Among recent contributions to this analysis are Aron Vinegar, *I Am a Monument: On Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); Aron Vinegar and Michael J. Golec, eds., *Relearning from Las Vegas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); and Martino Stierli, *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror: The City in Theory, Photography, and Film* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013).

4. Ed Ruscha, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (self-published, offset lithograph, 1966).

5. Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1964).

6. Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi, "Preface to the First Edition," in *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977), xii.

7. Hilar Stadler and Martino Stierli, eds., *Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown* (Zurich: Scheidegger und Spiess, 2008). The humor underpinning the list of sponsors and perks cast as acknowledgments—publicity, accommodation, transportation, and entertainment—is barely contained. Scott Brown and Venturi, "Preface to the First Edition," *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977), xii.

8. Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (London: Allen Lane, 1971); Giorgio Ciucci et al., *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal* (1973), trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983); and Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: Monacelli, 1978).

9. This is a key question in Vinegar, ch. 5 ("Reducks, 1972, 1977"); and in the first chapter of Stierli, 23–73.

10. Shown at Museum im Bellpark, Kriens, Switzerland, 23 November 2008 to 8 March 2009; Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt, 27 March to 5 May 2009; Yale University School of Architecture Gallery, New Haven, 29 October 2009 to 5 February 2010; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, 21 March to 20 June 2010; Graham Foundation, Chicago, 28 October 2010 to 19 February 2011; and École Polytechnique Fédérale, Lausanne, 22 September to 3 December 2011. Most recently, *Las Vegas Studio* was included in the "Résonances" section of *Les rencontres des photographie* at Arles, 6 July to 20 September 2015.

11. RMIT University was formerly the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

12. At Yale, Las Vegas Studio served as background to the more overt (and overtly definitive) celebration of the project and its progenitors, as shown by the exhibition's title there: *What We Learned: The Yale Las Vegas Studio and the Work*

of Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates. Nicolai Ouroussoff offers a "correct" reading of the show in "The Lessons of Las Vegas Still Hold Surprises," *New York Times*, 22 December 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/23/arts/design/23yale.html?_r=0.

13. The date range in the title of Gollings's project refers to the year (1973) in which the original project was planned and the year (2013) in which the new photographs (taken 2008–2012) were first exhibited. All image pairs in the catalogue are dated 1973–2013, as are the photographic pairs reproduced here.

14. At the risk of compressing a complex geopolitical history down to a couple of references, see John Dademo Waiko, *A Short History of Papua New Guinea*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Ceridwen Spark, Seumas Spark, and Christina Twomey, eds., *Australians in Papua New Guinea 1960–1975* (St. Lucia, Qld., Australia: UQ ePress, 2014).

15. On the history of higher and technical education in Papua New Guinea, see Ravindar Rena, "Higher Education in Papua New Guinea: The Need for a Change Towards Globalization," in *Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific: Strategic Responses to Globalization*, ed. Simon Marginson, Sarjit Kaur, and Erlenawati Sawir (London: Springer, 2011), 361–74.

16. Jame now publishes a quarterly called *The Great and Small Gazette* out of Melbourne.

17. Gordon Holden to author, 12 May 2015; Tony Styant-Browne to author, 28 August 2014; and Tony Styant-Browne to author, 30 May 2015.

18. Philip Cox, Tony Styant-Browne, and Adrian Boddy, "Vale Neville Quarry (1933–2004)," *Architecture Australia* 94, no. 1 (2005), http://architectureau.com/articles/obituary-16/; and Gordon Holden, "Neville Quarry," *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 573.

19. On localization in Papua New Guinea and its social effects, see Deborah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington, *Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). They note, on page 4, that the expatriate public service diminished from 7,000 in 1972 to 1,719 in 1988—an index of the effect of the program on the rise of local expertise.

20. For footage of Steven Izenour discussing Atlantic City, see the documentation of his lecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, 1 January 1977, in SCI-Arc Media Archive, http://sma.sciarc.edu/theme/atlantic-city/. For footage of Lyon discussing this studio at the University of Pennsylvania, see *Learning from the Venturis—Corbett Lyon*, dir. Toby Reed and Sam Reed (Nervegna Reed Architects and RMIT Design Hub), YouTube video, 7:02, posted by Toby Reed, 22 August 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umd_9pIxPmM. A curious outcome of this project is Steven Izenour et al., *Atlantic City Historic Buildings Survey* (Atlantic City, NJ: Office of Historic Preservation, 1980).

21. Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1960).

22. Styant-Browne recalls Tom Wolfe's *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965) as an early document of this cultural consciousness and an incidental crossover with the acknowledged debts of the Las Vegas studio.

23. For a brief description of this city-region, see Andrew Leach, "Lettre de la Gold Coast," *Criticat* 14 (2014): 116–24, in English as "Gold Coast Letter," *AA Files* 70 (2015); as well as Caryl Bosman, Aysin Dedekorkut-Howes, and Andrew Leach, eds., *Off the Plan: The Urbanization of the Gold Coast* (Clayton, Vic., Australia: CSIRO Publishing, forthcoming). My research on the Gold Coast is supported by the Australian Research Council by way of a Future Fellowship. Documentation

of work by Geoffrey Styant-Browne is held by Tony Styant-Browne in a private collection.

24. The Village Studies program was initiated at the Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology under Boddy, Costigan, Grey, and Holden at the school's outset and was then taken up and (as Holden describes) thoroughly professional-ized after 1974 by the landscape architect Wallace MacAllister (Mack) Ruff (1912–1999, who was killed in his home, in Papua New Guinea, at the age of eighty-seven). Under this major research project, faculty and students traveled to numerous villages in Papua New Guinea to conduct measure-and-draw studies of village fabric as it then stood. Gollings participated in these studies too. Over several years participants set about to record, through photographs and measured drawings, the region's traditional architecture. Ruff had visited the university on a sabbatical from the University of Oregon, where he had been head of the Department of Landscape Architecture. He settled in Papua New Guinea follow-ing his retirement in 1976. The Village Studies Project is described in Wallace M. Ruff and Ruth E. Ruff, "The Village Studies Project for the Recording of Traditional Architecture," in *Sepik Heritage: Tradition and Change in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Nancy Lutkehaus et al. (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1990), 568–86. The article includes a number of Wallace Ruff's drawings (as does the book's cover). See, too, Michael Austin's obituary, "Elgin in the South Pacific," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* 11, no. 2 (2001): iii–x. The Architectural Heritage Centre of Papua New Guinea is Ruff's institutional legacy in that country. See also Gordon Holden, "Papua New Guinea Village Studies of the Early 1970's: History and Reflections," in *Audience: Proceedings of the XXVIIIth International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Antony Moulis and Deborah van der Plaat (Brisbane: SAHANZ, 2011), CD-ROM, 1–20. Holden's paper contains a comprehensive list of the village surveys. See, too, Paul Memmott and James Davidson, "Indigenous Culture and Architecture in the South Pacific Region: 25 Years of SAHANZ Research," *Fabrications* 18, no. 1 (2009): 74–117.

25. This point is explicitly made in the editorial of a special issue on the Gold Coast published by *Architecture in Australia*, January–March 1959, 51–52. In my own defense, see "In Your Face, Place," *Architecture Australia* 101, no. 4 (2012), http://architectureau.com/articles/in-your-face-place/.

26. Over the decades since this project, John Gollings has become one of Australia's preeminent architectural photographers. See Joe Rollo, *Beautiful Ugly: The Architectural Photography of John Gollings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011). On the camera arrangement, see Virginia Rigney, "Motion View: The Car and the City," in *John Gollings: Learning from Surfers Paradise*, exh. cat. (Gold Coast: Gold Coast City Gallery, 2013), 61–62.

27. The group's equipment included a Nikon F2, a 6x7 Pentax, and a Widelux F6. John Gollings, "Fixing Time: Making a Rephotography Project," in *John Gollings*, 5.

28. Styant-Browne to author, 28 August 2014; and Styant-Browne to author, 30 May 2015. See, too, Tony Styant-Browne, "Knowledge Needs for Quality Design," in *The Knowledge Needs for Architectural Practice: Knowing How to Know*, ed. Susan Savage (Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 1995), 40.

29. Las Vegas Studio / Learning from Surfers Paradise was staged on the Gold Coast to coincide with the thirtieth annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (Griffith University, 2–5 July 2013), which I convened with Alexandra Brown. Stadler and Stierli joined the

event in conjunction with a public program at the Gold Coast City Gallery within the conference program. The rephotography project was, however, conceived and executed as an initiative of the Gold Coast City Gallery and, in particular, its senior curator, Virginia Rigney.

30. On the origins of rephotography, see Karin Breuer, "Mark Klett, Rephotography, and the Story of Two San Franciscos: An Interview with Karin Breuer," in *After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*, ed. Mark Klett with Michael Lundgren (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 4.

31. Matthew Condon, *A Night at the Pink Poodle* (North Sydney, NSW, Australia: Vintage, 1995). On heritage issues around the Pink Poodle and its protected signage, see Lee Stickells and Nicole Sully, "Learning More from Las Vegas," in *History in Practice: 25th International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Ursula de Jong and David Beynon (Geelong, Vic., Australia: SAHANZ, 2008), CD-ROM, 1–14.

32. Peter Spearritt and John Young, "Korman, Stanley (1904–1988)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 17 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2007), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/korman-stanley-12755; Robert I. Longhurst, "Small, Sir Andrew Bruce (1895–1980)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 16 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2002), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/small-sir-andrew-bruce-11714; and Frank Robson, "Paradise Lost," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 2011, 24.

33. The current mayor of the Gold Coast, Tom Tate, is proprietor of a restaurant-venue called Vegas in Paradise and is a regular visitor to its namesake city.

34. All materials relating to this exhibition are online at http://www.designhub .rmit.edu.au/exhibitions-programs/las-vegas-studio. See, in particular, the exhibition guide *Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown* (Melbourne: RMIT University, 2014), http://www.designhub .rmit.edu.au/docs/lvs_exhibition-guide_spread.pdf.

35. Peter Corrigan was the subject of the exhibition *Peter Corrigan: Cities of Hope*, curated by Vanessa Gerrans, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 12 April to 8 June 2013. See the exhibition website at http://www.rmit.edu.au/rmitgallery/peter-corrigan; and Toby Reed and Sam Reed's film *The Architecture of Edmond and Corrigan*, YouTube video, 36:48, posted by Toby Reed, 27 April 2013, https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=EU_DygyDdvc. For a general overview of postmodern architecture in Australia, see Conrad Hamann, "Postmodernism," in *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 554–56; and Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture since 1960* (Sydney: Law Book Co., 1986).

36. Fleur Watson, introduction to *Las Vegas Studio* (2014), n.p.

37. See *Learning from the Venturis—Corbett Lyon*.

38. Watson, introduction to *Las Vegas Studio* (2014), n.p.

39. I go further into aspects of this subject in my reading of the influence of the Melbourne-based journal *Transition: Discourse on Architecture* on Australian debate in Andrew Leach, "*Transition* to *Discourse*: Architectural Theory in Postmodern Australia," in *Exhibitions, Periodicals, and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture: The Medium Is the Message?* ed. Véronique Patteeuw and Léa-Catherine Szacka (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, forthcoming).

40. Costigan and compatriot Iain Stevenson jointly received the International Award from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1999 for twenty years of practice in Papua New Guinea. The roll call of Australian architects who have at one time or another undertaken projects in this country is not short, and a full

elaboration of the relationship between Australian architecture and that of Papua New Guinea would demand a much better grasp of the situation than I can claim to have.

41. Kevin A. Lynch, *Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1960); and Gordon Cullen, *Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961).

42. Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

43. Amos Rapoport, *House, Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969).

44. Styant-Browne to author, 30 May 2015.

45. Clare Cooper Marcus, *Easter Hill Village: Some Social Implications of Design* (New York: Free Press, 1975); Clare Cooper Marcus, *House as Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home* (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1995); and Clare Cooper Marcus, "The House as a Symbol of Self," in *Designing for Human Behavior*, ed. Jon Lang, et al. (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1974), 130–46. Among Gans's books, Holden specifically refers to *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: Free Press, 1962), while *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Vintage, 1967) figures more obviously in the trajectory to *Learning from Las Vegas*.

46. Holden refers to Paul Oliver, ed., *Shelter and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1969); Robert Sommer, *Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1969); and Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964). Gordon Holden, interview by author, 12 May 2015. This conversation was held in Holden's current office at Griffith University, where he keeps an extensive archive of his teaching materials from his time in Papua New Guinea and maintains a well-preserved library.