

Architects Rachel Nolan and Patrick Kennedy were shot exclusively for Belle.



MEMORY BANK

Functionality and emotional engagement balance the work of architects Kennedy Nolan.

Portrait SEAN FENNESSY Edited by KAREN McCARTNEY

“WE ARE VERY INTERESTED in exploring how buildings age, how they make you feel and how we can intensify the engagement of memory,” says Patrick Kennedy of Melbourne architecture practice Kennedy Nolan. And this notion of creating a memorable experience is echoed by his business partner of 16 years, Rachel Nolan. “It is often about contrasts,” she says. “For example, if you move through a very low, dark space into a high and bright one you tend to remember it.” Ditto the journey through a house where everything isn’t revealed at once but rather unfurls in layers as shifting perspectives deliver the unexpected. “Our solution is never a box grafted onto an existing building,” says Nolan.

While older buildings retain an embedded memory, such as a brick ‘English-style’ arts and crafts house in Kew which featured in *Belle* in October 2015, Kennedy points out, “We never want to go into battle against an existing building despite, in this case, it being ordinary and quite an ugly example of its genre. Instead we elevated all the good qualities and made it better by adding invention, proportion and a touch of folly.” What is clear is the way in which the internal re-organisation serves to engage directly with the garden, and the use of trades such as skilled carpenters, bricklayers and stone specialists who have delivered an expressive and evocative outcome.

Setting up their practice in 1999, with nothing but a fax machine and a shared PC, they held a common view of architecture born out of growing up in Albury Wodonga in country Victoria, where a certain 1970s regional vernacular was at play. Their counter-culture stance, which embraced the then unfashionable, has stood them in good stead as they have learnt to clearly articulate their case and the world has come around to their way of thinking. “Landscape has always been important to us and we design to the perimeter of the block as well as placing equal emphasis on interiors. These weren’t important considerations for architects back then,” says Nolan.

As a practice, their use of outdoor, green and garden space is distinctive. “It has taken us a long time to persuade clients to move away from the traditional back and front garden and to see the benefits of threading a number of garden spaces through a site to capture light, for air flow, and to actually make outdoor space work harder and be more, not less, accessible,” says Nolan.

Not all their projects are alterations and additions although their award-winning project Deepdene – 2016 National Architecture Award: Residential Architecture – Houses (New), 2016 Harold Desbrowe-Anneer Award for Residential Architecture (New) – did start that way. This family house with its requirement for six bedrooms, two living spaces, a study, and a swimming pool demanded a great deal of rigour in the planning. “We do lots of work we don’t enter for awards because it doesn’t contribute to the profession in terms of solutions. This was an intense project, with huge constraints, designed to elevate the type, and contribute to the streetscape while being robust enough to take the heavy daily use of a family of seven,” says Kennedy.

Into all this function they have injected abstracted planes of ornament such as the porous pool wall – glazed blue on the pool side and painted white on the other – and used enduring materials which will gain character with the passage of time, such as copper cladding and French terracotta shingles on the roof. “There was so much quiet innovation in this house, so much honing until we believed that we had got it right, we were pleased that the profession recognised the balance of functionality and imagination,” says Nolan.

For more go to kennedynolan.com.au.



Clockwise from top English-style brick arts and crafts house in Kew. From inside the Kew house there is a strong connection to the garden. The exterior of award-winning Deepdene house. Copper cladding and French terracotta roof tiles at Deepdene. The pool at Fairfield house is in a bush setting. Pool at St Kilda West house.



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CALIFORNIA
PITCH FOR A WINTER COAT

Mark Ulnes is an architecture practice based in Oslo and San Francisco that bridges the aesthetics between Californian design principles and those of Scandinavia. Their Troll Hus in California's Norden (left), channels an alpine chalet, its orientation maximising sun exposure and the concrete legs allowing for heavy snowfalls. A protective pine cladding treated with tar ensures it is robust and blends easily into its forest environs. morkulnes.com



VIETNAM

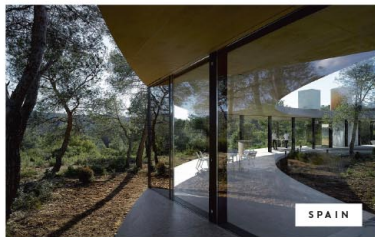
FLORIDA
JADE VIEW

Architects Machado Silvetti used striking green-glazed terracotta tiles to clad the Center for Asian Art (right) on the campus of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida. It took the team of 12 artisans at Boston Valley Terra Cotta one month to make the 3000 tiles. The facade adds a gleaming dynamic to the surrounding landscape. machado-silvetti.com



BUT NATURALLY

This concrete house in District 2, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (above), addresses some concerns of a city that is rapidly growing without due consideration for green space – a preoccupation of architect Vo Trong Nghia. The deconstruction of a concrete form allows for apertures and voids to be filled with greenery which has a place inside the house as much as outside. votrongnghia.com



SPAIN

BOUNDARY PUSHING

This is the second house (left) to be completed under the auspices of alternative developer Christian Bourdais' Solo Houses master plan. The first was by Chilean practice Pezo von Ellrichshausen. The brief was to rethink what a holiday house could possibly be. The response of Belgian architects KGDVS was to design a space as un-house like' as possible – in tune with the natural environment with few constraints. officekgdvs.com



SOGLIO
CREDIT SUISSE

BEFORE VISITING THE MILAN FURNITURE FAIR TO REPORT FOR *BELLE*, WRITER DAVID HARRISON TOURED WITH FRIEND AND ARCHITECT GIANMATTEO ROMEGIALLI TO SEE THE WORK OF ARMANDO RUINELLI. THIS IS THE INTERIOR OF HIS BARN (RIGHT) IN SOGLIO, ON THE SWISS SIDE OF THE ITALIAN BORDER, WITH ITS HIGH LEVEL OF CRAFTSMANSHIP AND SKILLED BLEND OF ANCIENT AND MODERN. RUINELLI-ASSOCIATI.CH



NEW YORK
ENTRY STATEMENT

56 Leonard Street in Tribeca, NYC, by Herzog & de Meuron has been described by *New York* magazine's architecture critic as "the most alluring addition to the downtown skyline in decades". Its foyer (above) plays with brutalist form in the most sophisticated of ways, taking on the monumentality of a gallery or museum. herzogdemeuron.com

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: (LEFT) NIKOLA LECHE/STUDIO GRASSANO (ART), BRUCE DUMAS/ART (TROLL HUS), ALFONSO GEBER/ART (JADE VIEW), JESUS PRINCEZ/ART (SPAIN), DAVID HARRISON (SOGLIO)