

FORM

ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

Adelaide's recent Vantage Festival of Architecture and Design was a huge success, setting the benchmark for future events.

BY LEANNE AMODEO

The inaugural Vantage Festival of Architecture and Design offered plenty of opportunities for conversation, networking and debate. Organised by joint Creative Directors Anthony Balsamo and Dino Vrynios and Executive Team Leader Leah Salamon, in close collaboration with the SA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, the five-day event delivered a series of sessions and presentations that were as intellectually stimulating as they were entertaining. Most importantly it succeeded in engaging the general public in a discussion on topics pertinent to the local architecture and design industry. *The Adelaide Review* sits down with Leah Salamon and Dino Vrynios to talk about the event's outcomes.

As two of the event's key organisers what were your festival highlights?

LS: Handing out the winner's prize for the *Shoot the Architect* competition on the final night was probably my highlight. The whole festival was such a whirlwind and I only realised at that point we'd managed to pull it off and it had actually worked.

DV: Being on stage and wrapping up the

whole event on the final night allowed us to reflect on how far we'd come from those initial conversations we'd had only four months earlier. It was a nice moment because we realised as a team that we'd actually delivered and exceeded what we set out to do in our inaugural year.

How important was public engagement to the overall success of the festival?

LS: Our key objective from the very beginning was public engagement and the idea of connecting directly with the public as architects. Audience questions at the end of the *Architects Inprofile: Design Conversations* session were fantastic, for example, because it was fascinating to hear what people who aren't architects had to say. And the *Design Will Save Our Suburbs Soapbox Debate* also built momentum and had people still speaking about it the next day; so many people commented on how 'alive' that night felt.

DV: It was great to have the general public participate in the festival's four *Archi-tours* because so much of what we do as architects is difficult to portray. So hopefully those events gave people an appreciation for the value of good design, as well as an understanding of



Upcycle Architecture - a series of cardboard pop-up installations in Tarntanyangga /Victoria Square as part of Splash Adelaide.

what's involved in the architecture process and how architecture can improve quality of life.

What are the advantages of holding a festival like this in a city the size of Adelaide?

DV: I think Adelaide has a great strength in its size and the fact is you can get things achieved here far quicker than you could anywhere else. It's easier to engage someone in a position of authority in Adelaide to help speed up the process than it is in, say, Melbourne or Sydney, because you're competing with so many other voices that are also trying to be heard. Hopefully we can continue to build on the natural synergy we have with organisations like the DIA and AILA and start to stitch together collaborations that

invest in promoting an appreciation for good design in Adelaide.

Did the festival raise any issues for ongoing discussion?

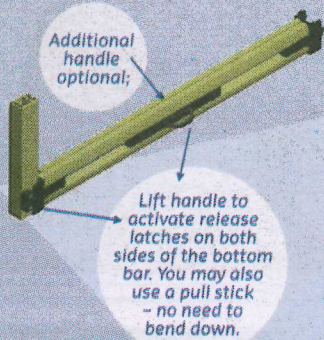
LS: I think there are definitely a lot of questions that weren't answered during the festival, but that's the best thing about it – getting the conversation started and leaving those questions unanswered, because it keeps people talking. The point, of course, is that it's about continuing the discussion, like the one that took place during the *Unbuilt Adelaide* presentation on renewing and rethinking Adelaide in order to add value to the city.

DV: That session was great because it was

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DV: As architects, most of the projects we work on can take between six months and three years to be fully realised, so we have that understanding built in, but the general public may not. That's a challenge we face, and one of the things we were trying to achieve with the festival was finding ways to communicate the idea of long-term investment. It's hard because we live in such a 'throw away' culture that prioritises instant gratification, but we need architects to be 'good design' ambassadors and government to support what we're trying to achieve as architects. If that can happen then Adelaide will be an even better place to live.

What can people expect from the festival next time around?

LS: Next year we're aiming to have architects and designers take ownership over the festival, so they can bring fresh ideas into the mix. We'll be asking them to tell us what they want the festival to be and how they want to build it.

DV: We'll also be further consolidating what we achieved this year by getting other organisations involved, so before you know it the festival will be significantly bigger. There's no reason why we can't work together with these other organisations to potentially turn October into a design culture month in Adelaide. Leading up to the National Architecture Conference being held in Adelaide in 2016 we also want to show that we have the capacity to deliver a really full and exciting range of fringe activities.

a really good way to reflect on some things we perhaps don't do so well in Adelaide or on perceived missed opportunities. I particularly enjoyed the Taylor Cullity Lethlean presentation on Victoria Square because it made me appreciate that project. A lot of people think the Victoria Square redevelopment in its current state is a compromise on the original proposal and in some ways it is, but it's just a case of securing future private, state and federal funding. The project's infrastructure is in the ground ready for it to progress; it just needs that funding, and that's an important thing to talk to the general public about.

Did the festival address any misconceptions the public may have about architecture in general?

» This year's festival ran from October 10-14. Visit fad.org.au for details of next year's festival as they become available



Over 90 architecture practitioners and students designed and constructed the Festival Hub venue as part of One:One Adelaide.

Supporting FAD

At Architectural Window Systems (AWS) we are committed to supporting industry professionals and we have a vast amount of pride in the relationships we have formed. As a proud supporting corporate partner of the Australian Institute of Architects, we were excited to put our signature brand Vantage to the name of the inaugural Festival of Architecture and Design. We thought what a fantastic idea, being able to celebrate all things architecture in a city recognised for its festival culture, we had to be a part of it!

The Festival of Architecture and Design brought a beautiful vibrancy to the city and displayed how the entire community, not just architects and building designers, can enjoy architecture and design. There was a sense of festivity in the air throughout the city and shared by all.

A highlight from the festival was the *Archi-Tour: Tour De North*, a bicycle tour of North Adelaide led by legendary broadcaster Keith Conlon. The tour highlighted the beautiful and

tremendous architecture in Adelaide, from churches to schools and parklands, with a brief history lesson to go with it. Keith's passion and love for architecture and Adelaide made the tour even more successful and enjoyable. After the bike ride, everyone sat in the beer garden of the Kentish Hotel, pondering over the future of architecture in Adelaide.

The festival gave everyone a new perspective on architecture. It attracted a number of locals who could enjoy the experience and fall even more in love with their city. The Festival of Architecture and Design was a truly spectacular event; we at AWS are excited to be involved again next year.

» **Lucy Howells, AWS Sales and Marketing Assistant**

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FAD – ARCHITECTS IN PROFILE

After a sell-out event in partnership with Australian Institute of Architects in May this year, *The Adelaide Review* joined forces once again for an event as part of the inaugural Festival of Architecture and design and showcased a section of South Australia’s leading residential architects on Sunday October 12 as part of FAD.



Tania Jezukaitis and Gilbert Row.



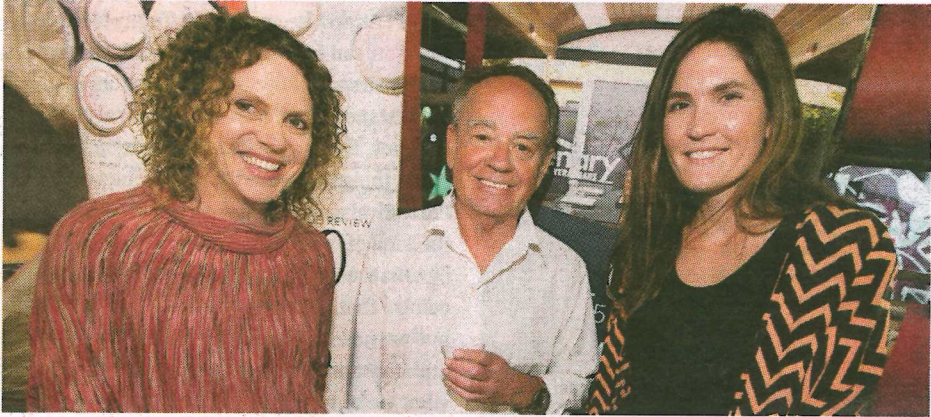
Mladen Zujic and Julian Worrall.



April Guan and Greg Hubczenko.



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