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State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria

2021 Libraries by Design Conference – Day 2

Wednesday, 9 June 2021

Captioned by: Bernadette McGoldrick

OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION

MAXINE McKEW: Well, good morning, everyone, and welcome to Day 2 of the 2021 Libraries by Design Conference, hosted by the State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria. It's very good to have you with us. My name is Maxine McKew. I'm your MC for the day. And by way of background on me, I'm a board member of the State Library of Victoria and, of course, the chair of the Advisory Committee on Public Libraries.

Now, this conference is part of a large program of collaborative work that the ACPL oversees, which supports best practice across our libraries. And today I'm joining you from Naarm, also known as Melbourne, and I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Now, we started the conference last week with the theme of planning a successful library development. And we heard from a range of terrific national and international guests, who gave us insights into the concepts of placemaking and urban development, creation of partnerships and, of course, engaging communities.

Now, we move today to the theme of Creating Libraries for the 21st Century. What does a sustainable library mean for the future? Today, again, we're going to hear from a range of terrific international and national guests, and after a couple of speakers in our first part of our presentation we're going to move to a panel discussion, which will feature some top architects, who are going to discuss philosophies in relation to the design of libraries. Now, our program will continue next week, when we take a look into some of Victoria's recent successful library projects and gain insights about how they overcame a range of challenges.

Now, please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the program,

which can be found in the tabs to the left-hand side, in the Virtual Lobby. We understand that you may have commitments during the day when you won't be able to hear all of the sessions, so just be assured that all of the sessions will be recorded and available after the live broadcast, so you'll be able to catch up at your leisure.

Just a bit of housekeeping: To ensure that you have the best experience today, we suggest you read through the help desk, located in the tabs on the left-hand side of the Virtual Lobby. If you need to contact anyone in our production events team or tech support, again, navigate your way to your inbox at the top of your screen and search "event support" for instant chat. If you get lost, head back to the Virtual Lobby to see which session is live and coming up. And, lastly, if you are posting about the conference, you can use our official hashtag, which is #LibrariesByDesign2021. #LibrariesByDesign2021.

Now let's get down to business. And I'm delighted to introduce our first plenary keynote this morning, Margaret Sullivan. Now, Margaret is a national thought leader in assist be public libraries envision their preferred future. She's actually joining us this morning from Manhattan. Now, Margaret leads Margaret Sullivan Studio, a full-service strategy and design firm collaborating with innovative library systems internationally. The firm was founded in 2014 and has been an industry leader in re-envisioning the 21st-century library for diverse and complex communities. Margaret has also assisted, in this capacity, about 30 public library systems right across the United States. Margaret's also worked for prestigious architecture firms. And in 2017, I note that she was named one of Interior Design Magazine's Rising Stars. Now, I'm delighted to welcome Margaret. As I say, it's early evening for her in Manhattan. Margaret, over to you.

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Thank you, Maxine, and good morning to all of you on the other side of this wonderfully tiny globe! My wish for you today is that your Australian morning is as sun-filled and full of possibilities as my New York City morning was for me. I cannot tell you how honoured, humbled, and grateful I am to be opening this conference. What an awesome line-up you have today, and my job is to get your creative neurons open, free, and ready to absorb all of the ideas that you will be exploring. What a privilege it is to be speaking to a group of dedicated professionals - all library-ing in your patch of the planet to do the hero's work of connecting all of us to possibilities and to designing the experiences that give our physical spaces meaning and purpose.

This is my second presentation in Australia during COVID and I sure am ready to get on the plane to meet you all. I am feeling the warmth, the humour, and a term that I actually learned from an Australian - civic love - through the screen, and I hope you feel mine in return.

Speaking engagements like this one give us the chance to delve into questions. I have called this presentation Library As The Imaginary. One of our young team members in the Studio introduced us to that word in describing a world that librarians can create. It was such a beautiful way to describe creativity, to me, and different. It is an unusual way to apply the American English language, and yet so optimistic. And I think of our privilege each and every day, and the opportunity that we all have as experienced designers, librarians as experienced designers, to create with radical intention the feelings and the outcomes that will nurture, lift, inspire and engage the imaginary of ourselves and our communities. Join me today on a journey to joy through the imagination, the paracosmic, immersive experiences and a whole bunch of colourful slides.

Margaret Sullivan Studio was formed over seven years ago as a design firm focused on the reimagining of the library of the 21st century.

With a super laser focus, we have transformed over 4 million square feet of public libraries throughout America by working with some of the most progressive librarians in the country. This all started over 20 years ago with ImaginOn, the Joe and Joan Martin Centre in South Carolina, a partnership between the department and the Children's Theatre of Charlotte. It was dubbed the first library of the 21st century because it was designed to create learning experiences for all. That was had I learned about the science of experiences. And when applied to architecture, we can unlock the potential of building materials and interior design to actually benefit learning. For ImaginOn, which meant we could specify highly contrasting materials to activate the brain functions in youth that stimulate positive growth and development. From this point on, I always say, "If we are gonna spend the money on carpet, may as well make it work for good." We are in the golden age of library design. The science of happiness has given us the tools to measure feelings and experiences, and the charge to create environments that make people feel. No other institution is as well positioned as libraries to act on our call to action. And our secret weapon is placemaking - and I'm so glad that that was part of the first day. We apply this process because it engages the community, builds on their cultures, and weaves community character into the design process. And when we embrace culture in our designs, it gives us the colours, the patterns, the textures, the smells, the memories, the nostalgia, the hope, and the joy that grounds folks in the best part of their past and fosters the courage to propel them into a better future.

What guides everything we do is a simple question that will magically guide you. And when you engage design professionals in the same question, you can shape their work more meaningfully. How will the spaces and the places - how will our spaces and places support the activities to create the feelings and the outcomes we want for our

community? With this powerful inquiry, we can create experiences for storytelling in all its vibrant forms that heighten the senses for youth, with colour, contrast, and pattern, so that their brains will form to be ready for reading. We can design environments for wonder with sensory portals, like this magical interactive tunnel on the way to Story Time that lets us transition from the real to the imaginary. We can foster play in the South Bronx to stimulate the chemicals in the brain that make us feel safe, playful, and present. We can provide the patterns in pops of colour to elicit joy in Colombia, South Carolina. We can give these youth in Memphis to Indi film competitions, national robotics competitions, to feel confident, competent, and connected. And we can design innovation zones in New Haven, Connecticut, with a lightness in the colour palette, soft Curves in the carpet, and displays that provide moments of curiosity - characteristics of environments that are proven to enable us to do our best work.

And our values are fully realised when we co-create with the community. And we must do this work with radical empathy. We will never hear fully our community's motivations that drive their ambitions until we open ourselves in total service to them. In our community engagement work, we go to our communities for them to tell us what they want to think, feel, and do at their libraries. And the next generation, with their confidence and employing empathy as a basis of design work, they are giving us the confidence to apply empathy and compassion in ours. And when we know - really know - the community, our compassion gives us the drive to create the intentional experiences for them to feel their best so that they can be their best.

We are constantly looking all around us with inquisitive questions. "How might we...?" We say. "How might we design the spaces to make the vision, your vision for your library, come to life?" "How will we evoke

the experience we want to create for our customers?"

"How will we create the place that gathers?" "And how will we foster play and inspire wonder and imagination?"

How will we do it? We will look around us and see inspiration everywhere, just by that simple inquiry. A bookstore in New York City, that you can tell is designed for the literati, or a bookstore in LA that is designed for the hipster creative. Or a bookstore in China for the magical, for the children to enjoy. And why not step into a Story Land, or follow a red ribbon to a book? Or climb into a treehouse to nurture the soul? Or even step up into one designed specifically for adults to find their reading nooks? Where will we provide the environments for our community members to write the next great novel? Where will we design spaces for our families to snuggle AND read together? And what kind of environments will we create so that our communities believe that they can make a difference together?

We must create the environments that demonstrate that we believe in our communities, through experiences. And with an experience principle, an intentional commitment that we make to our community members, this becomes your powerful tool. When we commit to creating feelings in our experience and design process, these feelings will manifest in outcomes for your community members. And you will see how we, with intention, at MSS, create vision boards that do manifest into environments that foster joy. And by asking, "How will we facilitate positive customer interactions?" we then have created these tools that we enjoy so much that help us all level up our skill set. So, how many of you have ever created a vision board for yourself? And then how many of you have ever created a vision board for a community? This is one of our favourite exercises we do with our clients. We ask library staff members to design their vision for the community and then create a vision board

based on these evocative words and qualities. And they come up with the most inspiring imagery and the most inspiring commitments that do manifest them into evocative experiences that are rooted in the cultural connections that they have with their communities. And here is my little secret: Prepare for these keynote speeches by immersing myself in TED Talks. Going to the troves of ones that give me constant rejuvenation on the days I need a lift. From Melanie Huggins, we are reminded why we need these experiences. That got us thinking, what are experiences for? She likes to remind us that it's as simple as this: The difference between simply getting a library card and having a "meh" experience, to feeling like you've won the lottery. What will this mean for us now? Where will we laugh, cry, heal, be angry, as we all collectively restore from this pandemic? What are experiences for? Perhaps they are for taking us out of our current reality in such a radical way like Burning Man does in the Nevada Desert, so that we can be aware of the change we want to make for ourselves and the change we want to make for the planet. And from Jamila Reddy, who gave her TED Talk there, we are reminded that the imagination is a tool for healing, that the simple act of imagining a new future is a revolution. In the same way that she was inspired and enlightened by a Buddhist monk that the imagination is really just a step away, imagine that there is a line surrounding you and everything that exists within that line is your reality, and at any given moment you can choose to step over the line and choose a new reality. In order to get to the other side of that line, you have to use your imagination.

This reminded us that our friends at DreamYard, an arts centre in the South Bronx, integrate imagination into their social justice curriculum every day. And during the pandemic we physically manifested this curriculum into a portal design with the belief that with love, colour, pattern, and joy, we can change oppressive systems. But where do we

take our communities after they enter the portal? What will they need? For that, we go to Patrick Remer's TED Talk, who taught us about the paracosmic. That in the state of neurologically being in another future, more utopian world than our imaginations, researchers have proven that we believe we are actually there. And this gives us the tools to build the resiliencies, the courage, and the creativity to actually create together our new world orders. So, what is the paracosmic there that we can create for our communities? Obsessed with the on-trend commercialism of escapism and immersive experiences, I started to think about my own experiences with interactive environments. The ones that generated the memories, the moments of meaning, of pleasure and of transformation. My first art immersion was when I was 16 and I got to be in a room with Andy Warhol's floating Mylar balloons. Talk about feeling cool! So, now, at almost 50, I feel cool when I go to the music festival Coachella and walk amidst these enormous, beautiful sculptures. And then I think about where I really want to go that I haven't been, and I would love to be in the skating rink in Detroit to be with these fantastic, hysterical blow-ups by the art group Friends With You.

Or to go back to the artist Nick Cave's The Let Go, a 24-hour dance party. Or to be immersed in any one of the artist Olafur Eliasson's multi-sensory environments. Or take me back to the Rain Room at the Museum of Modern Art, where you could step within a waterfall but never get wet. Or go back to Vegas and be immersed in the mesmerising James Turrell light sculptures that you don't even know how in the world moments like this can get made in this world. Or to be in Yayoi Kusama's Obliteration Room, where your anger can turn into beautiful, cathartic joy. Or get me back to the tickets for the Colour Factory, where Instagrammable moments of happiness abound. Or immerse me in America's latest obsession - a Van Gogh explosion of interactive

sunflowers. And then, with all of these ideas, it got me to this: What can we do right now? And from Ingrid Fetell Lee's TED Talk, we learn that if we give ourselves the discipline of doing one thing, and one thing only, and we do it really, really well, we can create joy. Joy is: "The intense momentary, present experience of positive motion." And we can even measure joy - smiling, laughs. And scientists even measure that joy with the feeling of jumping up and down. And not only can we commit to creating joy in how we show up for our communities, we can create joy with real and tangible design elements. And these are through the study of what physical environments evoke joy: Round things, circles, bright colours, abundance, multiplicity, and a feeling of lightness. Multi-sensory environments. And we started to look at MSS's designs, and we started to realise how often these elements show up. And not simply as the work of the interiors but as backdrops, as theatre for moments of the community's shared joy, and what we can call "civic love". And that gave us both great pride but also gratitude that it was our clients - that we often call client collaborators - who pushed us outside of the bounds of that serious comfort zone that contemporary architecture can often actually be stymied by. And so then we turned the exercise on us and I thought about what gave the studio joy this year, and it was this wonderfully hysterical holiday card that... These are actually bobble-heads. And so I asked my team, who we enjoy working with so much, I said, "What gives you joy and what has given you joy during the pandemic?" And so we made our list. I said, "Riding my bike." Some folks said, "Eating ice-cream. Being in nature. Cooking new things. Swimming at the lake. Sunshine." And then we started to play and turn those into our joy portals. So, as I leave you all today, I give you the charge of the one thing, and one thing only: What will we create together for our communities? What will we enter together and embrace them with in our

communities? How will we heal together and how will we joy together?

Thank you so much. And I look forward to hearing all about your day today and all of the wonderful learnings that you all will have.

MAXINE McKEW: Margaret, thank you so much for that presentation. I love the way you described what we're living through now as the "golden age of library design". And, of course, how science and design is coming together. We've got a few questions here.

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Great!

MAXINE McKEW: One from Brendan. And he's pondering how you design to reduce loneliness? We have been hearing a lot about that during the pandemic.

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Oh! I know! Oh, that's so near and dear to my heart, because I think, many of us, we probably, you know... I have family members that suffer from depression, you know, my mother is now elderly and the pandemic, of course, hit her so hard. And I think, you know, loneliness takes - it takes two aspects. One is both that cultivation. I mean, I'm a big fan of invite our communities intentionally into our spaces. But I think the second is creating environments, once we know what brings our communities joy, what they enjoy - what kind of environments they enjoy being in, but more importantly what they enjoy doing. I think particularly around, with seniors and just thinking about a day in the life of their experience, one of my - my best friend one time asked me, "What would be the perfect library experience for your mother?" And I said, "Well, in the morning she gets up and she goes to exercise, and then she plays bridge and flirts with her boyfriend, and then

she has coffee, and then she goes and picks up my children, and, you know, she can bring them to the library in the afternoon." So, it's just really thinking through, you know, getting in their shoes to just encourage and invite and create the environments for folks to enjoy a third place. Simply for being a third place.

MAXINE McKEW: And we've got another question from Nadine, who says, "Considering we live in a neuro-diverse community, how do we design for sensory diversity?"

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Ooh, I love that. I love questions like that, because that does speak to the complexity of designing for the public realm. I'm gonna answer the question very simply with one example, and I'm gonna use the example of music. And I think music is such a wonderful way to create - music and light are such low-hanging fruit, they're not expensing, and there are ways in which we can create a multiplicity of environments. So, I think that's one way that we can customise our environmental surroundings without a whole lot of money, and they can also be transformed pretty easily throughout the day.

MAXINE McKEW: And I've got a question here from Rhonda. She was picking up on your lovely notion of the vision board. And she says, "I love this approach to creating spaces for people and how this works. Could you say a little bit more about the vision boards?"

MARGARET SULLIVAN: You know, all of our work comes from gut instinct, I have to say. Conventional architecture, we were doing vision boards by "tell us what you like in this building and put dots on what you think looks great". But I think the kind of evolution that we made was on the heels of

that question, "How do you create the feelings?" And by articulating the words, the evocative qualities, and characteristics with language, and then designing the vision boards for emotions and feelings and evocative characteristics, I think that opens us up to just so many more possibilities of those nuances that are gonna make the 21st-century libraries something really special.

MAXINE McKEW: And here's an interesting one, I know, from libraries who sometimes feel pressed for resources. "When you don't have a lot of money to spend, what do you recommend to your clients?"

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Oh! Well, you know, give us five cents and we can create an awesome experience. So, I think the first step is always to create - use the placemaking techniques. Create the living rooms, the games spaces, the meeting spaces through furniture and layouts. And, I mean, you know, you can always use cheap furniture. I'm not an advocate always, but you can always start at a capacity if you're creating the space and the place - as I said, music, light, and even just community co-creation. We've designed on a dime and the whole community has come out and been part of the labour force, and that's its own form of community gathering. So, it's always possible. And go to all the placemaking techniques. And anything is possible.

MAXINE McKEW: I like that - "Design on a dime". We've got just one more from Janet Salvatore, "Can you share an example?" And you gave us some lovely images there. "Share an example of bringing joy to children in your design?"

MARGARET SULLIVAN: So, one of the... I'm trying to think. You know, we

definitely... There are so many examples. But one of my favourite examples is the portal that we showed an example of, where it's a very simple light sculpture, puppetry artist who designed this light sculpture that is the portal between the main space of the children's area and into the storytelling room at the Richland, South Carolina, Main Library. It's just such a magical experience when you're in it. And it's just wonderful to see the youth come out of these portals, in either direction, saying, "Wow! I can't believe that this is a library! Wow, I can't believe that they have this here! Wow! I wanna come back."

MAXINE McKEW: Well, that's terrific, Margaret. Let me thank you. We're up to our time limit now. But you've given us a lot to think about, and thank you for sharing your presentation and those wonderful visuals that you assembled there. And also for doing this in your evening time slot, so I hope you go off and have a lovely...

MARGARET SULLIVAN: You know...

MAXINE McKEW: ..stimulating evening.

MARGARET SULLIVAN: I will. I have the first open-air gala of the season in New York tonight, so I have a fun place to go.

MAXINE McKEW: Fantastic. I can't tell you how envious we are because we're still in a mini lockdown here. We hope it's a mini lockdown. Well done, you, going out to have fun!

MARGARET SULLIVAN: I know. Well, we've all had our ups and downs. Y'all have a wonderful day!

MAXINE McKEW: Thank you so much.

MARGARET SULLIVAN: Enjoy your time.

MAXINE McKEW: Delighted you could join us. OK, well, let's move on now. And just a reminder before we hear from our next guest, that if you're posting about the conference - plenty to talk about already - it's #LibrariesByDesign2021. OK. Let me introduce our next guest, also coming from New York State, actually, and that is Rebekkah Smith Aldrich. And Rebekkah is executive director of the Mid-Hudson Library System. She has been a certified sustainable building adviser and holds an advanced certificate in public library administration from the Palmer School of Library and Information Science at Long Island University. Rebekkah is the library sustainability columnist as well for Library Journal. And she's a library journal mover and shaker, and past president of the Leadership and Management Section of the New York Library Association. She's coming to us from the town of Hudson, which she told me a little bit earlier is not far from - if you know it - the famous Hyde Park in the Hudson Valley, which, of course, is the home of Franklin Roosevelt's home and estate, and a wonderful interactive library of his professional time in office. So, Rebekkah, you are very welcome.

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Oh, thank you so much, Maxine, and thank you, everyone, for joining us this morning. I hope you're having a lovely start to your day. I started my day about 12 hours ago, so I think my voice is gonna hold out for this one today. I totally want to admit right up front I'm not an architect, I'm not an interior designer, I am a library lover and user and passionate library professional, hopefully like many of

you at the event here today. My goal for you in the next 20 minutes is to share a mindset that I think can influence the future of library design and the operation of our existing facilities, which is so often where we find ourselves, where we might have the opportunity to expand or build new, we may be dealing with a building we've had for quite some time and need to make the best of it. So, I just wanted to share some thinking with you about how to get a right mindset for the future as we design more sustainable buildings that build community resilience as we think through the disruptions we're all faced with in the future. I brought some examples to show you, and I also wanted to introduce you to a program that is the first of its kind in the world, that we've developed here in New York called the Sustainable Libraries Initiative to help libraries find a way to methodically move forward using what's called the triple bottom line of sustainability, which I'll introduce to you here today as well.

So, just to get started here, you know, I'm the executive director of the Mid-Hudson Library System. I get to work with 66 independent libraries every day, which I've done for close to 20 years, and I enjoy being a consultant as well for libraries around the world in thinking about how to build libraries that thrive and how to connect with patrons in a way that creates more community resilience and creates more buy-in from your community about what you're doing at your library. Whether it's program and service design or building facilities that really meet the needs of your community, what I'm very interested in is engagement with our communities and helping people see their values reflected in all we do at their library, right? It's their like, not really ours, if we think about it the right way. So, I wanted to just tell you a little story to kick things off here, which was the day I left my office, in Poughkeepsie, New York, much closer to Hyde Park, this was March 2020, when our governor shut down the state. And I saw something I thought I would never see - the

doors a all 70 of my buildings closed. I had to send my staff home. I didn't know what was going to happen. I think many were feeling the same way, as the pandemic ravaged our country and globe, we didn't understand what it was gonna take to come through it. Just this week our governor announced that we would be dropping many of the restrictions they've put in place to help manage the public health crisis, but this day is so emblazoned in my head because about two blocks away from my office is this theatre, a beautiful, historic theatre in the downtown. I pulled my car over because the sign hit me right here. We had no idea what was about to happen but we knew we were all in it together, every single one of us. And the only way to get through it was to be kind and to stay safe. This is a mantra we just had for our libraries throughout the entire pandemic so far, which is we might not know what's coming next, but if we pull together, we are kind and empathetic, and we put people's safety ahead of other things, we're probably gonna be OK. And this was the guiding light for us, as we moved through the pandemic and tried to navigate reducing barriers to library service and keeping library workers safe. It really resonated with our whole library community and the entire Hudson Valley, the 600,000 residents that we serve. And I love it because I think it's really good practice for what we all need to do all the time, when we think about the challenges facing our world. The global pandemic was something we all had in common, not a fun thing to have in common, not a pleasant thing to have in common, but something that we all understood, we could all relate to, and we all understood that we had to pull together to move forward through this, to find ways forward. This is the exact same mentality that's necessary when we think about how we preserve and create an Earth, a Planet Earth, where we have another shared global experience, which is fresh air, clean water, clean food, and safe places to live. When we think about the predictions

surrounding climate change and what is already happening on our globe, all that's coming is worse. What was buried in the headlines of 2020, when we were all so distracted by political unrest, by the pandemic, by racial inequality here in the US that was coming to a head, buried in our newspapers were the headlines about climate change. Last year we saw record-setting heat, we saw record-setting firestorms in the west of our country, we saw windstorms like we've never seen before, we saw more and damaging storms hitting our coasts, all due to climate change - something that has already arrived, is already affecting lives. It was one of the first times we saw climate refugees in our country, which I know you're experiencing as well. Folks that just can't sustain life in the coasts anymore, they have to move further inland because waters are rising, storms are worse, weather is worse. The predictions from at least our government here indicate it will be much worse moving forward, that we will actually look back at 2020 and think, "Those were the good old days," which is something none of us can fathom right now as we're still emerging from the pandemic.

This is something that has to be part of our thinking as we move forward. I'm always reminded of this book - and perhaps you're familiar with this author as well - he wrote this back in 1969. Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth. This line has stuck with me: That it has to be everybody or nobody, that we cannot design for only those that can afford to live in sustainable housing or can live away from damaging storms, or can escape the heat island effect of our cities. We have to design public spaces that are for everyone and respect people's needs both while they're using our library and while they live in places where the natural resources come to produce the facilities that we use to serve the public.

So, we need to think far more holistically about how we're designing in the future to create healthy spaces for the people who come to our

libraries, who work in our libraries, and those folks who live in the areas that produce the resources that build the facilities that we so enjoy to provide our services through.

So, when I think about designing for the future, I am very focused on combatting climate change and building community resilience. And I do think you can do that through the built environment. There is hundreds, if not thousands, of different ways to think about designing sustainable, resilient facilities for the future, but they also have to be places that people want to be and come together and learn together, so they can problem-solve together for the future. And that's something that I think libraries are perfectly positioned for in the future. So, regardless of what you're facing in your facility program or plan for the future, this is something that should be factored into your facility planning: How you use your current building, how you might design a building for the future. Could it affect these two things? It's very exciting to think about. Libraries can really serve as a demonstration site for people to learn about more resilient and sustainable design principles, to demonstrate that public libraries are a good use of public tax dollars, it's a smart place to invest and it's a really great place to inspire the next generation of folks who are coming up, who really do understand the impact of climate change and want to see our generation do something concrete, literally, about it. And here is our chance to shine when we're making decisions about our facilities. Once-in-a-generation decisions that we get to make. So, I hope you'll keep this at front of mind as you're making decisions moving forward about not only construction design, but also operation of your current building.

So, there's this very important group of folks over at the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC. It's a group of climate scientists who have been helping us for decades

understand the impacts of climate change, how we're going to prepare for it, how we're going to mitigate it, and how we're going to come out on the other side of it, hopefully, if we're smart about it. You might think a lot of the recommendations are about building sea walls and renewable energy, which, of course, they have a lot of those recommendations for policymakers. But in a very pivotal report they wrote back in 2014 - I know it's going back a few years now - they really changed their tone. They stopped talking about reversing the effects of climate change and they started talking about surviving the effects of climate change. It was a very different tenor in that report, which is very eye-opening and quite shocking, to be honest with you. But what they really said we need to do is to focus at the local level. What is most important to your local community. How can you work together to problem-solve in the face of how climate change is impacting your local community? How do you help elevate a diversity of experiences and cultures so we can learn from the largest possible cross section of culture and knowledge and wisdom in our world? And how do we help all be heard? Not just those with money and influence, with traditional places of power, and opinion leaders in our communities, but let's help everyone be heard to understand the experience of all who live in our communities. These are four recipes for success that, again, libraries are perfectly positioned to help with. So, I always say to folks, you know, "What the world needs right now, what's gonna save the world, is actually libraries." We really put the pen to paper and think about how important we are. We are everywhere, right? In the US, we've got libraries in every little town, city, county, and state. I think it's the same in Australia. When I took a look at your map of how you serve folks in your country. And that's really exciting to think about activating our network, our professional network, and get all of us thinking about this, and how we can design services, programs, facility,

outreach efforts that totally are focused on combatting climate change, building community resilience, helping people work together for a brighter tomorrow. So, activating what I think many people think of as a somewhat passive organisation is the challenge of our generation for our profession. Now, we know we're not passive, we know we're out there all the time, thinking of ways to help our communities. But we need to do it in a unified way towards this ultimate goal of ensuring folks, as Margaret said, can find joy in life and have the basics, the building blocks, the basics of life taken care of. We're talking about clean air, clean water, clean food, and safe spaces to be as a family and as a community. Libraries are incredibly important partners in providing hope for the future. You might be very familiar with a very famous, if not THE most famous climate activist of our time, Greta Thunberg, who happens to be a young person in her teens, and she very pointedly said to a group of very influential adults on this topic, she no longer wants our hope that we can do better in the future, she wants action. As do many young people. They want to stop with the talking, they want to see more action going in the right direction, and Greta described it as, "I want you to act like your house is on fire because it already is." So, while libraries definitely serve as beacons of hope through every community we serve, I want to introduce this phrase. It may be new to you. It was new when I heard it two years ago. I think we need to be hopepunk. This is a phrase coming from a YA author, Alexandra Rowland. In my 20 years of working with libraries, this really describes what I understand library folks, people who work in libraries, to really bring to the fore. I'm just gonna break character here and read you the definition of hopepunk. It's that cool. "Hope punk says that genuinely and sincerely caring about something, anything, requires bravery and strength. Hopepunk isn't ever about submission or acceptance, it's about standing up and fighting for what

you believe in. It's about demanding a better, kinder world, and truly believing that we can get there if we care about each other as hard as we possibly can, with every drop of power in our little hearts." And in my 20 years, this is exactly what I see in my colleagues, who truly believe in the power of libraries and our ability to enhance people's lives and to build a brighter future for us all. For those of you on social media, following something like the ALA think tank, you know the big trend in the US right now is this T-shirt out of the DC Library, who oversee the punk archives in Washington, DC. What's more punk than the public library, right? We are what we need to be in the future. I think of us as the Harry Potter Room of Requirement at Hogwarts. They need us to be to provide that platform for success in the future. That's why it's so exciting to see the American Library Association adopt sustainability as a core value of our profession. They've used the triple bottom line definition of sustainability, which thankfully introduce environmental stewardship into the conversation. Understanding it's not just about the environment. It has to be a balance for us all. So, these are the three things that make up the triple bottom line that we're looking for. We want to make sure we're balancing environmental stewardship with economic feasibility and social equitability. We can't build buildings that are expensive but sustainable, but meanwhile we've priced out people from using our facilities. Or we've stripped all of the wood from the country to build the library. But meanwhile the folks who live there, they've had their ecosystem destroyed. We're looking for balance in our decision-making. This could be throughout every aspect in how you run your library. From office supplies to how you build a new facility. This is a framework that scales very, very well, not only in the built environment but also organisationally to talk about how we craft libraries and communities that are truly gonna be resilient in the future.

So, I want to introduce two concepts to you - maybe you've heard of them, maybe you haven't. But the truth is sustainability is not gonna be good enough. Just getting to that balance is a tipping point. This is from Bill Reed, talking about the need for us to not just do less-bad, but to find that balance and then move forward on this scale to create more resilience and safety in how we design our buildings. This is taking a much broader and, I think, larger step forward than just going through a checklist like "lead design" or even lead buildings. We have to think about the health and wellness of those who use our buildings, the materials that we use, the greenhouse gas emissions we are able to prevent through really smart design of facilities in the future. This is gonna take not just good decisions at the library level but at the global economic scale. I highly recommend the book Doughnut Economics by Kate Raworth to start thinking differently about the decisions we make in our libraries. We want to respect the ecological ceiling of natural resources but not leave people behind in the decisions being made for the future. Right now it looks like this. Things are definitely out of whack. I think we can all agree on that on a global scale. We have a lot of work to do. So, just a reminder that every little decision you make every day can contribute to getting things into balance and be a model in your community. I know you've been doing good work on the topic of united sustainable development goals. I see this wonderful report from your national organisation, kind of sorting what we already do into the 17 goals. And I just want to applaud you for that but ask you to go further. It's not just talking about what we already do, but it's about thinking differently about leading our way to a just transition of our economy. And these are the five principles of a just transition that I think can add to your mindset as you move forward in designing your spaces. So, thinking not just about advancing ecological restoration and maybe decarbonising how you run your buildings and

where materials come from for your facilities, but democratising wealth, making sure you're hiring local people, using local resources, that you're supporting local industry, not something far away or overseas or in a totally different part of the world - let's really invest in our local community and really make sure that we're retaining and restoring cultures and traditions. And I think that's one of the saddest things about where we find ourselves today - we've forgotten more than we know about how buildings work. And so respecting the wisdom of Indigenous people or First Nations, of understanding they've learned how the world works far before this generation did and we can learn a lot from them. One of the first examples I wanted to show you here this morning, the St Helena Branch Library in the US, it was built on the site of a former colony of folks that were formerly freed slaves, who had been enslaved by cotton farmers in the South in the US. And so respecting the culture of people who came up, who came from Africa who were enslaved in the Americas, and then found a new way forward by respecting their culture. I'll just point out one really cool feature of this building - there's many cool features - but lower left of your screen you see the meeting space. The floor of that meeting space is designed to actually amplify and respect the musical culture of the Gullah Geechee people who live in that traditional community. It's designed to amplify the stomping of the feet and the stomping of wood on that floor to make the music of the former slaves. So, it's actually designed with that history, that culture of understanding and respect that needs to be evident in how we design for the future.

We've got two cool examples for you. New York Public Library in Manhattan is opening up their new Manhattan Branch Library. It will have the only publicly free, accessible rooftop, which is an interesting thing to think about, how we democratise the built environment, without having to

pay the cost of admission. We've got a rural library in New York that turned their property into a farm. You can use your library card to actually check out a plots of land and plant your own fruits and vegetables, or use the community side of the garden and grow fruits and vegetables for the local shelters in the community. So, getting people connected with the built environment but also the natural world once again.

Another cool example here, West Berkeley in California. One of the very first net-energy certified library buildings and municipality buildings in the whole country. Decarbonising how we're fuelling our buildings is a big, big decision, how we can figure out our future for our buildings. And a really cool, upcoming example, one of the first libraries, if not THE first library in the world, that is gonna make sure all the materials they use to build their current library, their new like, are free from forced labour. Something that's a much bigger problem than we all realise. The library is doing really cool work there, so reflecting our values in that built environment. Last example I have for you, and then we'll wind things down for questions, is the new Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Centre. Not only did they build it with the triple bottom line in mind, stewardship, and social equitability, they've given part of the mission of that whole entity to being an environmental education centre. It's a model for what it looks like around environmental stewardship and using the library as the platform to do so. So, just to wrap things up here - I hope you think about leading by example in the built environment, that you really test for equity, not just assume equity in how we make these choices. And while we all have good intentions, let's measure our impact. Not just feel good, but actually measure for the impact we were hoping to have. Let's find like-minded partners. That's what we did here in New York. I want to give a shout-out to this project here that you might find interesting. The Sustainable Libraries Initiative. On the left, there's a free

resource available to you right now. You can download the mobile app or request a PDF of the road map to sustainability to start gathering your thoughts in this area. And if you want to go all-in, we've actually created a methodical approach to sustainable libraries, so using that triple bottom line to think through how you run your library, design programs and services, and how you do outreach in your communities. This is a brand-new program. The first United States program recognised by the International Federation of Library Associations, which is pretty cool. So, if you're interested in that, I hope you check it out. I hope you are interested in a lot of what we talked about here today and that you'd like to connect with me in the future. So, I wanted to share my contact information with you and let you know we've got a new book coming out here from ALA Editions to give you lots more examples of how libraries are embodying the core value of sustainability as we move forward in our profession. Thanks and I'm happy to answer any questions.

MAXINE McKEW: Rebekkah, look, that was fantastic. You've really stretched us with that. Look, let me kick off. We've got questions coming in, but let me kick off - as your libraries in your area have opened up, how have you applied this notion of - you call it weaponised optimism - I love that. And I guess the second part of that question would be - how do you do that and retain the support, if you like, of traditional library users while bringing in and attracting perhaps a younger, more diverse community?

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Thanks for framing it in how we've reopened. I think that's one of the coolest things about libraries here in New York. One of the things I say to legislators is, "Our library is never closed." Our facilities may have closed but our libraries never closed. And

that, in and of itself, was weaponising optimism. Because we need to tell people libraries aren't buildings, they're institutions, they're library workers, there are collections, there are programs. So, seeing libraries pop up on front lawns at farmers' markets, coming to your front door - we have libraries delivering stuff to front doors, books and groceries, and goodwill. You know, we had a lot of libraries calling people to say, "How you doing? What can we do for you?" And so really breaking out of that mould and understanding we need to get to the heart of what people need and that we're still here to help. That famous Mr Rogers quote in The Times of Chaos, "Look for helpers." That's library workers. I have thousands of examples of how my workers did great work to help the community pull through.

MAXINE McKEW: We've got very similar stories here. I mean, so many of our libraries across Victoria had library staff calling library members and even if it was just to say, "Are you OK?" That kind of thing. We've got a follow-up question, which is - and particularly as you were touching on things like addressing climate change, all of this, the question is, "How do you talk about this topic when your library is located in a politically conservative area?"

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: That's certainly an issue where I live. One of the cool things, I think, about living on Planet Earth is that there's very few things we actually all have in common. So, while things have been politicised, definitely the phrase "global warming" and so on "climate change" have been politicised, if you frame it properly for the audience that you're talking to, everyone loves their kids, everyone appreciates the natural world, everyone wants to see tax dollars used wisely. Know your audience. Understand what they care about and frame your message to

reach where they are in life. Really, it's like a game show for me. I really have not met a single person, regardless of where they are in the political spectrum, that I couldn't get them to see why this was so important and why they want to be a part of it, regardless of their political persuasion. I think it's about understanding one message is not one-size-fits-all. You've gotta understand your audience.

MAXINE McKEW: OK. We've got a question from Benita Parsons. She says, "With the comment that we need to move from sustainable to regenerative and restorative, how do we do this? How do the Sustainable Libraries Initiative do this?"

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: We used this concept of thinking about sustainability as the lowest threshold to provide balance. Resilience is building in the capacity to bounce back after disruption. You'll see that in a built environment with buildings that are built to prevent flooding, or have generators for extended power outages. And regenerative is the ultimate, where you're not only taking from the environment but giving back as well. So, libraries that have a microgrid or are using solar panels and in designing a building smartly enough to put energy back into the grid. They're actually giving back, not just taking out of the natural systems. That's where stuff gets really exciting, think about buildings that give back - that's a very cool thing to extrapolate what libraries do every day through our facilities.

MAXINE McKEW: I've got two related questions here. One is, "What are the best ways to measure impact?" And then, specifically, "How do you test or, I guess, measure for equity?"

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Yeah. So, I have two sources that I'm gonna suggest to you. Both are freely available. One is Project Outcome from the Public Library Association, which is a division of the American Library Association. They are seven outcome-based survey tools that you can freely use to measure the impact of your programs. With your facility, there's multiple certification programs you can use to measure your impact. But programatically, Project Outcome is very cool. I will point out something called the Wellbeing Project of Santa Monica, California. It's a municipal program but they've created five categories of planet and place, learning, opportunity... So, really clear categories, and then they've got the metrics that you use to measure your success. And so aligning your library's strategic plan or service program, using metrics like that, it's not just like, "I don't know, it seemed like it went well, or, hey, people gave us a thumbs-up about that." But it's actually saying, "OK, we're gonna measure. Did we get more people register to vote? Did more kids graduate from high school? Are more people feeling like this is a friendly place to live? Let's measure stuff that matters."

MAXINE McKEW: That's interesting. Our Public Libraries Victoria Network is right now working on a program for the next couple of years, absolutely centred around individual and community wellbeing.

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Oh, that's fantastic. I can't wait to learn more about that.

MAXINE McKEW: Yeah, yeah, no, it will be very interesting for us to track. I just want to bring you back - you mentioned, related to this, I guess, five just transition principles. I thought that was most interesting. Can you say a little bit more about that?

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Sure. The whole idea of a just transition is that our economy has to shift to actually combat climate change and build community resilience. And that's not something we can do by ourselves. So, the just principles, the whole idea is that we can't just change the economy like flipping a switch. We have to understand that when you decarbonise the economy, you are leaving some folks without a job. When you transition to different ways of running businesses and thinking about buildings, it changes the way of life for many workers. And we can't leave people behind. There needs to be a concurrent strategy to have workers engaged in a new, greener economy at the same time that we're dealing with the environmental effects of the economy. So, it goes back to that idea of the triple bottom line that we have to balance things as we make big changes, the really big changes that are necessary to combat climate change. It doesn't mean we ignore workers or social equity in the systems in which we're making those decisions. So, it's a simple but very powerful idea.

MAXINE McKEW: The other thing I picked up on from your presentation, Rebekkah, is, of course, as we've all been through this, as you say, this one common global experience of the pandemic, localism has been to the fore. We've never spent so much time in our small, if you like, village communities. We live locally, we shop locally, we recreate locally. It's an interesting lesson, isn't it, in our high-tech, supposedly, globally connected world?

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: One of the things we always promote for our library - we have public votes on library budgets here. It's a very real relationship with the taxpayers. We always say the most important thing

to do is celebrate local business, artists, local farmers, because those are the people who ARE your community and you need to engage with them. I think it's so important for the larger picture as well that you start small and you start local, right?

MAXINE McKEW: Rebekkah, look, we are up to our delegated time. But I would love to - I'm sure our audience would love to hear so much more from you. That has been a terrific presentation. And given those reference points that you provided, we're certainly going to be following up with all of that as well. Thank you for your time, and especially - as I say, it's an evening for you - I hope you've got something pleasant on or even a great book to put your head into tonight. We are thrilled for having you. Thank you.

REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH: Thank you for having me.

MAXINE McKEW: Let me again thank both Margaret and Rebekkah. Really terrific presentations to kick off with this morning. We're actually gonna take quite a short break - and it is a short break - and be back for the next session at 10:55. OK, 10:55. Don't forget, if you want to post about the conference, use the official hashtag, #LibrariesByDesign2021. And head back to that Virtual Lobby and you're gonna pop into the break room to view some of the digital stories. We'll see you shortly. 10 minutes, OK?

KEYNOTE SESSION 1

MAXINE McKEW: Hi there. Back again, everyone. And it was a good start to this morning's Day 2 of Libraries by Design, isn't it? OK. In this session, we've got another plenary speaker and then we'll be going to a panel

discussion on a whole lot of issues around design, architecture, and how we use spaces. But first off let me introduce to you now our third keynote speaker, and it's Kevin Hui. Kevin is the director of Archimarathon, which via the YouTube channels delivers terrific content about buildings, wonderful buildings, all over the place. I had a look at some of them yesterday. I suggest you have a look. For the last 18 years, Kevin has been teaching architecture design studios, especially with public library design briefs, at various universities. Now, he's an avid architectural traveller. He sees an astonishing number of quality, fabulous design projects, and leads tightly curated learning tours around the world. It would be great to be part of one. So, Kevin, welcome. Good to have you with us.

KEVIN HUI: Thank you. Thanks for that, Maxine. So, thanks. I'm gonna talk about... Is my slide up yet? I can't see. Yes, it is now. High. So, I'm gonna talk about libraries as destinations of travel. So, I'm a traveller, so I love going to travel, to learn things. And I'm an architecture traveller. And specifically that is about learning from architecture and experience as much as I can. And I am specifically a modern/contemporary architecture traveller, meaning I actually go and see projects that are 20th century onwards, usually. Because I don't go and see every Tuscan church under the sun, because a lot of them is about typology, and modern architecture and onwards is about newer typology, and each and every one of the projects is a unique solution to a problem and experience.

So, just looking through the tens of thousands of photos I've had, and just looking at what are the types of buildings I go visit as an architecture tourist? Well, museums. I think everyone goes to see museums. Churches. Seems to be, again, things that people go and see because they're quite emotionally charged spaces. Then there are

libraries, and libraries, for some reason, are not as visited as the other institutions' buildings. And I will get to that obviously in the presentation. And then there's cemeteries. Cemeteries are, kind of - it's a bit weird to go see them, but they are places of memorial. It's almost like the basis of the reason why civilisations sort of started, in the way that they are places for remembrance, they are sort of fixed places, and a style of architecture, in a sense. And I've just noticed my video is really jittery! So, they're places of learning and experience.

Going to libraries, I think most people think of libraries as places of, you know, storage of information. You know, since the start of writing, basically, we've had places to store these records of writing, and hence the word "library" and "biblioteca" comes from. You think of the Library of Celsus. And also the Great Library of Alexandria in Ancient Egypt, this picture here is just an imagined picture. But a lot of them, no-one knows what they looked like, but usually they were just places for storage of information. They're not so much places for people to hang around. They were just places to look at the scrolls, if anything.

Now, we look at the Indigenous places in Australia - much older. These are basically the places of learning. This is the storage of information, in terms of the rock art, but also the places to learn. They were museums, they were religious, there were rituals to go with it. And, of course, in a way, memories. So, basically all four types of building in one - it's about the place.

Moving forward, the contemporary library, as we know it, the Western contemporary library has a lot of root in abbeys and monasteries in medieval times. Super, super-brief version of history, but every abbey has a church, has a cloisters, it has a chapter house - which is where the meetings are held - and the refectory, which is usually on the other side of the church because it's the smell of the food and all of the kind of

things. But if you pay attention, on the northern side of the cloister there is a special zone that is actually used, and that's because the sun coming from - the Northern Hemisphere, the sun comes from the south, so it actually hits the northern side of the cloister. And usually you see pictures of them kind of like this, but often they are historically used where the consumption of information and books and writing and contemplation and meditation happen. They lived in the cloisters. And the cloisters were made comfortable, especially in the northern part, you can see in that drawing there was thresh - straw - on the ground, and they used to put people on the end to stop the thresh going out, hence "threshold".

If we go back to the plan, you can see the little nook here, it says, "Books." There weren't many books to start with, before they started copying them and eventually the printing press. But, yeah, they were whatever places they could store them away from light, because books don't like light, and humans do. And, yeah, so they were creating places that were used as a place of comfort. In this case, in Spain, for example, you can see - you can almost imagine quite a sort of cooling kind of environment for contemplation, away from the sun in summertime in Spain. So, they're sort of regional responses to this habitable space.

Eventually, some of these places have a biblioteca and an escriptorio, basically where they were copying books. They started to run out of space, getting more and more books. They were jamming them into different places. They were not places for consumption of the books. They were just for purely storage. In fact, if you look at the abbeys and things, they used to have whatever spaces they had left, on top of the dormitories or in this case on top of the church, where storage of books were held. Again, they were not places for hanging around for everyday meditation and what have you. And often quite dark. Eventually, when the church got more money and all those things, it started doing pretty

fanciful places for storage of books. Again, not places for consumption. Even back in those days, the abbeys would still use the cloisters for the consumption and the reading of books and contemplation.

So, going back to this idea of the public space, or this space - well, cloisters relating to the term "claustrophobic" - but it is a space where a lot of these activities happen, and the comfort and focus on human. Another aspect of the abbeys that's quite interesting that, you know, going back here you can see the book spaces, the nooks. And on the other side of the chapter house is a parlour, hence the word "parle", in a parlour, it's where the monks would actually have a meeting and have conversations if they needed to have a chat with someone, because the cloisters were quiet spaces, whereas the parlour were meeting rooms. So, it's not unlike contemporary libraries where you do have specialised meeting rooms where people can talk in a bit more detail. There's the outer parlour, which is the term that we use for parlour nowadays, which is the connection with the outside world where the monks would actually speak to. Again, not unlike auditoriums where we have public events.

Then we have things like Boullée's proposal for the National Library of France that is like a major temple of knowledge. This kind of grand space, this big reading room where they're surrounded by books - this idea of knowledge being this grand void that you cannot get to. I think that's quite an important model in the way that libraries have been conceived.

Of course, we have the Latrobe Reading Room in the State Library, and that's kind of in that idea of this big reading room surrounded by books. But also places like the Long Room at Trinity College - again, like an archive of storage of books. You can see all the tourists milling around, but, again, they're not really places to sit and read the books, although, yes, there are seats there are - you can see people. But these are kind of

like the touristy libraries. But, you know, people don't really go to community libraries... This is copied in the Jedi Temple in Star Wars as well. You can see as a replica, copy of that in the digital form. So, this idea of the film set is important. So, jumping ahead here now, we're looking at Finland, at Alvar Aalto, turn of the century. The Viipuri Library, it has the sunken reading room space. But also his concern about the sky lights, that they were literally - we're looking at his drawing here, the sketch. He's basically got the section of that space, you've got the sky lights. But also you can see that the person here reading, you know, the books, looking at the way, the quality of the light bouncing into that space. And so basically he was sculpting light. And I think, you know, a lot of Alvar Aalto's buildings, especially the libraries, sort of started this tradition of sculpting light into the space. We've got the Seinajoki Library in Finland, where it does have that sunken reading room, it has a fan-shaped set-up, which is more like the panopticon kind of idea of the desk having access and visual into every corner of the library. But it also sets up human-scale little pockets of spaces. And, again, light.

So, Seinajoki is interesting because anyone who knows Finland or don't, it's not exactly an exciting place. It's probably one of the most boring places in Finland. This is part of the thing about architecture travel, it actually draws you to places that have significant buildings, and you start to see life in very different places. For example, Marrickville - I've studied in Sydney and my parents live in Sydney. I have, you know, no amount of great has dragged me to Marrickville. Bill will talk about this a lot more afterwards. But, yeah, so it really takes you - gives you a destination to go to a certain place. You know, going to Cottbus in Germany, which is the poorest part - Brandenburg State - poorest part of Germany. And even the Germans themselves go, "Why do you go to Cottbus?" Well, I went to see this library by Herzog & de Meuron in the

middle of winter, at night, really. But just an amazing experience to go and drag you to somewhere, but there is an iconic building that becomes the destination that you will want to see. Yes, often that's been done with museums and other things, but I don't know why libraries are not. Because sometimes they really do express a certain community. In Rome, for example, just seeing the Pius IX Library at the Lateran University - so, most people go to Rome and see the old stuff, but I went to see the new stuff. This is actually where a lot of monks and nuns study. They actually use this library. Sorry, priests and nuns. But, yeah, you can see it's this double spiral ramp of reading spaces, and then the older part of the building, on the levels, is where the books are stored in the dark. And if you look at this image here as well, you've got these double ramps - you see upper levels, there's some sort of darker corners and different scales. And it's kind of interesting to see where people sit, like, the nuns would sit in the darker corner in the smaller scale, and the men would be in the more extroverted space, the brighter spaces. This idea of choice is important, in giving people choices of where people can sit, and just to experience this great architecture.

Most people would walk right past this on the way to the park by Gaudi. This is the Metro stop in Barcelona. The scale is community compared to things people usually see in Barcelona. It has beautiful spaces and circulation. But a lot of the activity happens on the edges, where this domestic connection back into the other buildings. Again, just great light. And great children's spaces. This almost looks like something - at one point, I thought it looked like the libraries in Finland. There's a utility in the materials choices. Always very, very good furniture, very good things to touch.

And, of course, also in Barcelona, a lot of people would have skipped this. This is an industrial - well, this is an old reservoir, an

elevated reservoir. And it's been refitted to turn into a university library. So, again, just great spaces, really large industrial building, technically. But when it gets down to human scale, everything kind of brings back to the human touch and the scale of it. And even at night, there's this kind of beautiful lighting in that space. So, again, you know, just to experience some parts of history of the place as well, in sometimes often forgotten industrial relics.

So, moving back to China, one of the tours, we go to China, and I was researching this place called the Tianjin Binhai Library by MVRDV. It's been getting a lot of press in recent years. So, when I was looking for this, I found and stumbled across this other building, which there is hardly any information about. It's by Riken Yamamoto, Japanese architect. And this is like city-scale libraries. This is a huge city library in Tianjin itself, not the satellite city which is behind. And outside is just a series of blocks. It's like, "OK, yeah." But inside it's just an amazing collection of boxes, stacked on top of each other, and then there's this beautiful, filtered light. And then also very nuanced spaces that is created by the shifting of these volumes. And inside of these boxes, I guess, they were lined with bookshelves. Yes, not all of them are full and not all of them are real books, but, again, I don't think the storage of books is as important anymore. Going back to the idea of the monastery - like, information now can fit in one of these things, yeah? So, it's kind of going back to this idea of it's not so much about the storage anymore than it is actually about the public functions. So, in this case, yes, it still has this kind of imaginary idea of the temple of knowledge, but also just beautiful lights and spaces where people can choose where to go, how to explore the spaces, and choose where to be. So, it's something iconic that people are proud of. Here's another example of a library. Seashore Library. It takes ages to get there. I had to take a few different trains and had to

haggle with local taxis or whatever to eventually get there. And there's a church as well in the distance. That's actually a development. But it's a developer who built these spaces basically as a drawcard for people to go and take Instagram shots and enjoy this little space. And most libraries are introverted. This one is actually extroverted. Some of the best extroverted libraries are in Finland, that Juho is gonna talk about. Yeah, this actually looks out at the sea. But it's a drawcard for people to want to, "Oh, maybe I want to buy a property here." This is like the Gold Coast of China, literally. So, just finishing on the Tianjin Binhai Library - when we actually got there, well, most people are there... This is actually not the library space. This is actually just a giant Instagram space. Everyone is just there taking pictures. All those books you see are fake. And most people don't see the trip hazards and the excessive signage and excessive handrails. Because when you've got a hero shot, you don't really see that. You also don't see the printed books. They're printed. And most people are just taking photos. You can see through that little hole there, that is the actual library. There are actual library functions, but behind all that space. But they are just... "OK, they're alright. It's a library. OK." But it's not the dramatic thing. So, there's a catch-22 of the idea that the people love to be able to Instagram and love these beautiful spaces, but at the same time, you know, we would like to see some good libraries as well. So, yeah.

So, this is plenty of what is the role of social media, what is the role of spaces that people are proud of, and actually be a good space to use as well? And, in fact, the Tianjin Library, the first one we went to, we just discovered it and we ended up spending two hours there. Whereas this, we were there for 20 minutes and the students were saying, "Why are we spending so long in this space?" I said, "Well, you tell me. This is popular for some reason. But all you see is that. It's back to the film set. This is a

film set."

Just finishing up here on this little village on the bay near Bilbao in the Basque Country in Spain. We went to this little village, Ortuella, it's an old industrial, former mining town. The library. We were checking out the library. And then the librarian said, "Oh, the mayor wants to see you." And we go, "OK." The mayor saw us and goes, "How did you find out about this? Where do you come from?" And he was just so excited, the fact that we were on the other side of the world and visiting the unknown village, really. And, yeah, so I think architecture plays a huge role in libraries. I think they need to be great spaces. They need to be well-designed spaces. And they should be destinations where people should be proud and go to, and there's a drawcard. So, as much as if functions in all the spaces that need to be functional, they need to be one step more. More than just the user experience, it needs to be the spatial experience and something that will last a long time. I think that's it. Thank you!

MAXINE McKEW: Kevin, thanks so much. I'll just lead off, if I can. It strikes me, with some of those more flamboyant, almost look-at-me libraries, the modern ones you've just shown us there, do you think in future, you know, someone will be writing great novels or great political treatises in those spaces?

KEVIN HUI: I don't know. Because a lot of them... I think the best ones are actually in the smaller community-sized libraries. Some of them are designed to be stage sets. Like the Binhai Library, the big eye with the egg in the middle, I don't think you will in that one. But definitely in some of the other ones, yeah, it could be.

MAXINE McKEW: I've got a question here from Jacqui. She says, "You talk about the evolution of the library as building echoes David Lang's writing about the shift of libraries from information centres to community hubs, and he says the next movement is libraries as movement, a community-wide effort to improve the lives of community members through knowledge." Do you see this shift in the building of the latest libraries you've looked at?

KEVIN HUI: I think that's... Yeah, that's in the program of the library, I think. And I think that can even happen online. There's a lot of online communities. All these things are already kind of happening. But I think library as a free institution, as a free public space, I think it's on top of that. It's already happening, I think, and I think the fact that there is this space that allows people to do that - a physical space, not just a virtual space - you know, because we're kind of doing this communication now as we are in this space right now, and online, and facilitated by the library. I think the physical building is something iconic and something that people are proud of, that's quite important. And they can use it in a flexible way, in whatever way they like, really.

MAXINE McKEW: I've got another question here from Bronwyn Gregory. She asks, "With respect to giving people choices, can you talk a little bit about how architectural design adapts to unexpected use of space by a community?"

KEVIN HUI: I think designing spaces for choice is important. And I think, yes, it is about designing in a level of flexibility. And I think definitely the next two presenters will definitely talk about that more in detail. Because I don't actually design libraries, they do. So, yeah, look, I think, yeah, I

think we need to design for the flexibility, but then again, of course, no-one knows what the future is gonna hold. No-one knew COVID was gonna happen. You know, so we don't know. We don't know, I don't think.

MAXINE McKEW: I've got another one here in Nadine. She says, "Can we hear about some really good examples of architectural design for preserving and transmitting oral traditions, not just the print tradition?"

KEVIN HUI: Uh, YouTube?! (LAUGHS) I don't know. I think the media is changing as well too. Of course, printed books is one technology, but, of course, we've got many different forms of media now. But, again, it's the consumption of that media that I'm trying to talk about. Of course, yes, we can do it all at home, we can preserve the information and have access to it on these things. But, again, my argument is that I think we do need - the future of libraries do need to be great spaces that people WANT to go to. Because all that stuff we're talking about, all these questions, I think their place is they can be done without a space. And, of course, any space, really. You can do it on the street, if you want to. But library, as a building, I think, needs to have a lot more presence in the 21st century as a destination, as a cultural destination for people to be proud of and to want to go to.

MAXINE McKEW: And, in fact, I thought what was interesting about the way you organised your slides there, it was very interesting reminder that, in fact, the whole democratisation of libraries is a very modern thing, a very recent thing.

KEVIN HUI: That's right, yeah. It used to be only the rich or the clergy

had access to it.

MAXINE McKEW: And, of course, design can help with the evolution of that process?

KEVIN HUI: That's right, yeah. But, again, you know, people need to WANT to go there.

MAXINE McKEW: OK. Kevin, we're close to time. But just one final question: I assume COVID has well and truly dampened all your travelling. What's ahead for you? Where are you bursting to get to?

KEVIN HUI: Domestic. Domestic things. I just went to Canberra recently just to check out a lot of buildings. So, yeah, I think there's a lot of community libraries that have been built, especially in Australia, in recent years that's really worth checking out. You know, I haven't been out to see a lot of stuff even around Melbourne, so I should be doing that myself. And I think it's great to go out to different communities to see things. And that's the whole point - we should make them destinations.

MAXINE McKEW: Right.

KEVIN HUI: Much in the same way as museums.

MAXINE McKEW: OK. We've got time just for a couple more questions. I've got here, "Can you talk a little bit more about the introverted and extroverted?" Someone would like to hear more about the introverted library.

KEVIN HUI: Traditional libraries are the reading room, focusing on your work. I think now there are those kind of spaces, but also libraries that actually look out to a view as well, to something that hasn't been done as much. In more recent years, definitely in Finland, they do that. In Melbourne, we have the library by the Docks, that's definitely very much about looking out to the water. And, yeah, so I think that's changing and I think they're places for contemplation, and it's not just a, "Hey, I just need to sit down here and focus, doing my work," but also places you can look out to. And I think it's great as a traveller, sometimes finding these places, where you can work almost like a co-working space, and just have your space and enjoy the surrounding context.

MAXINE McKEW: And just finally, if I could press you, what do you think is ahead? Say the next 10, 20 years, if you had to predict in terms of library design, what do you think we might be looking at around the world?

KEVIN HUI: I don't know. I think they're becoming quite Instagrammable things, such as the one I showed. And, again, this is the catch-22 of just being a stage set versus being also great spaces to be in. I don't know what's 20 years gonna be - I think it's just a slow evolution and focus on community libraries and being able to be basically cultural centres. Basically, they are the sort of icon for each community, really. So, I hope the architecture gets better over time.

MAXINE McKEW: OK. Kevin, look, thank you so much for joining us with that presentation and for the, as I say, fabulous slide show. That was Kevin Hui, everyone, from Archimarathon. And I do suggest you have a look at those YouTube videos - they're terrific! OK, we're now going to

head straight into our architecture panel discussion. And while everyone is - while our guests are getting in place, if you want to head back to the Virtual Lobby, you can hop into the next room. We're pausing to do a quick change onto the next platform and we'll be back to introduce our panel. OK.

ARCHITECTURE PANEL SESSION

MAXINE McKEW: Hi there. Back again, and for this final session of Libraries by Design. And we're going to go to very micro, very particular issues now in this session. We're going to hear about specific architectural projects and continue the conversation then with presentations - a couple of specific presentations - and then with a panel discussion. Now, as you hear from each presenter this time, if you have questions just please ask them in the Q&A feature on the right-hand side of your screen, and we'll try and get to as many of those questions as we can.

OK, first up we're going to hear from Bill Dowzer. Now, Bill is a principal at BVN. He recently led the establishment of its New York City Design studio, development, and design for manufacturer approach to scalable solutions for operators and landlords. Now, Bill has extensive expertise in master planning, in early project strategic direction, and in brief creation. Notably, he's been involved in the design and direction of numerous award-winning projects, ranging from public, educational and cultural buildings to commercial work environments. So, Bill Dowzer, the floor is yours.

BILL DOWZER: Thanks, Maxine. I'll start with the project in terms of that we're talking about today, which is Marrickville Library. BVN started this project in 2013 when we won a design competition. And the opportunities

then really changed from when we won the competition, then the design process through that project. I think it's important also that we recognise the land in which the project sits, which is part of the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. And also the Patyegarang, an Aboriginal woman from the Gadigal people, also really becomes the namesake for the project. So, that becomes within the Marrickville community. I think it's important for us - you know, we used a lot of the things that come from a whole range of different areas about thinking about how we think about workplace and how we think about places for people to be in. But the important thing for us is, "What is a new library?" And it was really questioning that, you know? Like, it's always been a quiet place or a place for books and retreat, but what does a library now represent to the community? And how does it ultimately become a building that people want to use and that people actually come to love within their own environments? And so we did a lot of community consultation, and that included online, it included physical meetings, it included meetings on weekends in the local shopping district, to be able to sort of engage the community because it's such a diverse community in Marrickville. Marrickville has probably one of the most diverse communities in Australia and has a very high multicultural and also education - first in family to go to university in education too, which is interesting. So, the things that came back from the community was an inviting place - you know, they wanted a cafe, an extension of indoors to outdoors. There was also the idea of, you know, it becomes a new workplace, basically, for the community, in terms of having wi-fi. There's a connection to history because the site was historically the home of the Marrickville Hospital. And then also sustainability becomes important. And then the other thing about multi-generational learning - so, a place for all ages.

So, place was important and this was the home of the old

Marrickville Hospital, which you can see on the left, and how you incorporate an existing building into that, and incorporating a master plan where you end up with what was the original hospital street that runs through the building. It starts to talk about where we actually came from in this place. The other thing was it became a marker to the Marrickville community. So, the creation of a new park on the corner of the building, where the building actually encompasses the park, was really about sort of creating a new green gateway to the very urban edge of Marrickville as a very, sort of, strip retail area. And that new green space became a programmable space. So, every space is part of the library, is programmable, including the outdoor area, so we can have outdoor cinema. We can do a whole lot of different things within the garden environment as well as inside the library. So, blurring the line between inside and outside became really important.

Then you see from Marrickville Road looking straight into the library - the library also becomes transparent to the community and becomes easily able to be accessed by the community. They can come straight in and see the functions actually happening within the building. And that was really important in terms of engaging people into the space.

The old and new: So, the hospital was actually very much part of the original site. And what we did was generated the project out of the hospital geometry. So, the hospital building sits inserted as part of the main structure. And the old wards have been recreated as new working environments for the community. And you can see in this image the hospital has actually become - the original building actually comes inside the building, and you get a sense of blurring that boundary between the inside and the outside.

And you can start to see the light and balconies and verandas all open off into the central space to start to sort of create a space that has a

whole series of levels and a whole series of activities that are actually all on show to everybody within the environment. And even down to looking - like, the verandas, the verandas actually come out and extend out into the library spaces, and you can see the slate roof coming inside the building. And all of that helped us generate this idea of the big roof. And the big roof was really about creating a marketplace that blurred the boundary between inside and out. So, the whole of the library, the major library functions, all sat in this space that was covered by a huge canopy. And the building is seen very elementally in its components. So, you can see in these drawings, at the bottom you've got sort of what's from the landscape and the way the building actually opens out to the landscape, then lifting up, then a series of the columns that carry the roof that allow the roof to float above the space. And also the roof is perforated with a lot of sky lights so that it actually drops as much natural light into the main body of the library as possible.

And that gives you this effect within the space that you start to feel, that you actually walk into the main environment, you can see the tiered seating spaces. The timber is really important too, as having a tactile... What we did was use materials that had a tactility, and it became a more human environment for interaction within the library. And every space is a working space or a reading space. Everywhere, including the tiered seating, has power and data so that you can actually plug in, in any of those spaces.

The roof drops natural light all the way through the environment, lighting up the whole interior of the main part of the library. (COUGHS) Excuse me. And you can see from the roof it's quite complex on top, where you end up with a whole series of these sky lights and also natural ventilation to be able to allow the major part of the library to be naturally ventilated and provide the best environment for people within the space

inside.

And that roof extends out into what's called the Hospital Street, or Patio Place now. And it shows you how the columns that come out of the building and start to blur the line between inside and out. And also the materiality extends from the inside to the outside of the building.

And all of that is in combination, what brings together the idea of a new civic heart for Marrickville. And it was really about the idea of bringing the inside and the outside - so, spaces to learn - brings green spaces, inviting those, how sustainability is actually on show and becomes part of the story or the learning. And then the importance of having the community engaged in the process, which was really almost a co-design with the community in terms of the way we went back and re-presented the schemes at many different times throughout the process.

And interestingly too, in terms of building as teacher was a really important function. So, in the children's courtyard off the children's part of the library, we have rainwater tanks that collect all of the water and show the whole story of sustainability is put on show within the environment. And all of the timbers and everything that is actually used through the building, there's a really strong recycling and reuse story. So, all of the timber is either recycled timber or it's actually FSC-approved, sustainably grown timber. So, that becomes a really important part again of the sustainability story for the building, when you start to look at that.

And actually it comes out into the roof, you start to see the big columns which are all recycled timber, and it all starts to sort of tell a story about the building and its engagement.

So, a really important thing for us as architects is, you know, what do the community actually think of it? Or how do they actually respond to it? And I think this has been a really interesting thing for us, because it's not about winning awards and it's not about those sort of things for us,

it's actually about, you know, what does the community actually think of the building? And I think that's actually been the really interesting thing for us and probably the most rewarding part of this whole process is that in the first year, visitation has gone up by 100%. The new members has actually tripled. A huge number of people have attended events. And many people are using it as a workplace or as an environment in which is important to them to go and work in during the day.

And then, interestingly for us, the Instagram stories, which, you know, a lot of them don't mention the architect and I'm glad that happens, because I think it's actually more about the story of the building itself, and it's actually having its resonance with the community and being used and owned by the community. There's quite a few of those, so I won't go through them.

So, that brings me to the end of the presentation, which is really around the whole way that we used recycled materials, opened up the building, became transparent to the public, engaged in that process, and it all comes together in terms of creating a co-designed community building.

MAXINE McKEW: Bill, thanks so much for that. I'm going to give you some time now to have a throat lozenge or something - I know you were struggling through that! But, listen, I haven't seen the Marrickville Library, but you've certainly inspired me to make sure I go and have a visit the next time I'm in Sydney, when we're out of lockdown. OK, now, Bill is staying with us to join us for our panel. So, thanks very much for kicking off there.

OK, our next presenter that I want to introduce is Juho Gronholm. And he is the co-founder and partner of ALA Architects, and that's a Helsinki-based architectural firm that was founded in 2005. It specialises

in cultural buildings, in modernist renovation projects, and in transportation architecture. And Juho holds a master's degree in architecture from Helsinki University of Technology and is a member of the Finnish Association of Architects. So, he is going to be joining our panel as well, but now I want to welcome you, Juho, and let's hear your presentation.

JUHO GRONHOLM: Hi. Thank you. Thank you for the kind invitation. Yes. I'm from ALA Architects. Here are my two partners and there's me. And I'll tell you a story of the Helsinki Central Library. So, this is Helsinki City. In the red dot, our office is there, and home. And the library is in the very heart of Helsinki, next to the railway station and by the Central Park of Helsinki. It used to be a railroad depot. The depot moved and the site was liberated to other activities. The Central Railway Station, designed by Elian Sarin, the father of the judge in the Sydney Opera House competition. Anyway, we have over a hundred years old. He won the railway station competition with this entry. And then a couple of years earlier he won the National Museum competition with this entry - quite similar to the railway station entry. So, the National Museum is sitting, like, 100m from our site. Then there's, of course, parliamentary building of Finnish Parliament, open competition in the 1920s. And at that time quite outdated, because at the same time Alvar Aalto was already doing full-blooded modernism. Then next to the site is Alvar Aalto's work, this from 1974, his last work. And then there's the Museum of Contemporary Art, open competition, won by Stephen Hall in 1991. Which is much-loved. Although, during the competition, many protested against new architecture. And then there's the Music Hall competition, held in 1990s. And the result was unsatisfactory. Not the most inviting concert hall in the world. Quite boring. And then they held open competition

about the library, next to this cultural and national monuments. We did our best shot and won the competition. There were over 500 entries. The program - we divided it into three levels to fit the program site. The ground floor - of course, the meeting spaces. Where there is shared information. Then the middle - the closed spaces, those workshops and music studios and mega-spaces that make noise and need enclosure. And on top of those, open landscape, the traditional library, like, bookshelves. So, we created these three different levels or different kind of spaces, environments. Ground level, sharing. Middle, doing. And then the top, learning. So, actually, we lifted up the traditional library program to a pedestal. The lower level than the parliamentary building, so we lifted up the library. As inviting entrance to the library as possible. Like this.

And, of course, we tried to make the building such that it sort of offers something for everybody. So, this weather-protected part of the big plaza in front of it, which could sort of have flea markets, and things like that. And the whole thing is sort of facing the parliament building. Actually, the most-used entrance is on the railway station side, on that side. As you enter the building, you either go straight up with the escalators or to the left to the main lobby. So, on the ground level, we have entrance, pop-up exhibition, meeting area, gallery, multi-purpose hall, restaurant, family library and cinema. There is information given, people meet there. And there is sort of a quick-loan thing. And, of course, the information booth, returning, and delivering the books. The escalators and the staircase. That's the restaurant. Entrance to cinema. So, cinema is also an enclosed space, so it was manipulated that all of the enclosed spaces would be inside of this timber block. So, the cinema sits inside of that timber block.

Then if you go upstairs to the second level, the living lab, working areas, maker spaces, meeting rooms, some offices, working studios.

Escalators up. There's this informal auditorium thing following the entrance kind of shape, where people sort of hang out. There's still structure visible here, which sort of forms the arch and the column-free open space underneath. Game rooms and music studios and some study places. Mostly, like this middle space between the entrance layer and the top layer, is sort of free for people to use in any form. And then up to the third level, the library level, where all the sort of collection areas are. And also one cafeteria is up here.

The collection in the library is a floating collection. So, there's about 100,000 loanable items, but it's a rotating all the time, so that the total, whole collection of the Helsinki Library is available. The number of books is limited but this is the most-used library of the vast network of Helsinki libraries. There's, like, 50 or 45 branch libraries.

Facing the parliament, having dialogue, culture, and education, facing the parliamentary institution. The library is landscaped. The roof is underlighting to create the different kind of - sort of making the acoustics better. And it's possible to climb up to the ends of the library landscape. And also sort of the landscape forms to fire escape stairs there, and also behind that bookshelf, the bookshelf opens and there's a storytelling room for kids. So, the collections are in the same area, even the kids' collection. And this is the balcony, which is open only in the good weather. Or not during the pandemic. Where the Contemporary Art Museum by Stephen Hall, and the Parliament Building, the Music All are faced, and elevated at the same level as the parliament building. So, that's the story of Helsinki Central Library. Thank you.

MAXINE McKEW: Juho, thanks so much for that. And I know you're going to stay with us while I introduce our next guest, Professor Rob Adams, city architect of Melbourne. And, of course, all of us here in Victoria know

how much of a - well, what a central role Rob has played in the reimagining and the revitalisation of the actual city heart of Melbourne. Something we're all thinking about very much at the moment! Since joining the City of Melbourne in 1985, Rob Adams has led, as I say, the rejuvenation of Central Melbourne, and for that he has been awarded the Order of Australia for his contribution to architecture and urban design. And in 2008 as well he was awarded the Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year Award. So, Rob, I'm going to hand over to you to facilitate this session. So, over to you.

ROB ADAMS: Thanks, Maxine. And welcome, everyone. And thanks, Juho, for your presentation, and Bill and Kevin's earlier. And thank you to the audience. Thank you for joining us. I'm having a few little IT issues, so I'm juggling a bit, but I think we're gonna resolve it. We've had some outstanding questions come in from all of you, and please keep sending them through and we'll come back to that.

But I'd now like to invite Bill, Juho and Kevin back in to discuss and answer some of these questions. Thank you. And it's good to see you. I did enjoy those presentations. Let me start with a question, really, for Bill and Juho. And we all know, if you design a house, you've got direct contact to your client. And here you're designing libraries for communities. And, Bill, you mentioned co-design and how you dealt with that. Can you just go a little bit further into detail? You know, how you got the community involved? And, more importantly, libraries change - how do you keep them involved, so you know how you can adapt for their needs as we go on? I'll go to you first, Bill.

BILL DOWZER: Yeah, I think that's a really good question and I think it's something that - you know, for us, we had a fair bit of experience in

workplace - designing workplace, which was all about engagement with people. So, that was actually something to be brought to this process. But the other one was with a really diverse multicultural community like Marrickville, we had to go through a whole range of different processes to be able to sort of engage people. Because people don't turn up. You know, there's no reason to turn up to a public meeting, or those sort of things. They almost become a bit of a show. And what this was really about, we kept a live website through the design process, through the early stages of the design process, so that allowed people to feed in whenever they could, ideas. We also went through a whole range of every type of different format in consultation. And then I think the engagement - one of the best things is actually about the library staff themselves - is the engagement that we're actually getting and the feedback loop that comes back through that process. And, surprisingly, Instagram, which we never thought, you know - we never thought that was actually going to be something that would give you that sort of feedback. It's surprising what sort of feedback you get, and it's good to monitor that because it actually gives you real... You know, it's not about the architecture, it's actually about the use of the building, and that's the stuff that's kind of interesting.

ROB ADAMS: Thanks. Juho, have you got some views on that?

JUHO GRONHOLM: Yeah, so in Helsinki's case, the story was different because there was an enormous open competition. So, actually, the community engagement before it was given, had to be done by the library itself. But our library institution is very strong with that, of course, with the network and all. And so they had a decade long of time to collect information, what people sort of needed and wanted to have, and also to

engage people. So, when the competition program was announced, it was full of very concrete and real wishes and expectations of the people. And it was easy to build up after winning the competition from that. It's still sort of continuing, and, of course, the library continues to develop their product.

ROB ADAMS: Good. Kevin, enjoyed your presentation, and really liked learning about things like where "threshold" came from - I thought that was fascinating. But just the progression of the library from a very small bookstore through to libraries as we know them today. How does culture impact on design? And does it impact on what the library is fundamentally about?

KEVIN HUI: I had a good think about that recently, and I've come to the conclusion I actually don't think it does. Surprisingly, I think they are definitely contextual responses to the immediate community, but I think every library I've been to, I think the way that people behave, the sound, the smell, the smell of the books, the sound of keyboard clacking and thumping of books and the beeping and scanning of borrowing things, and, yeah, and people's behaviour in the library seems to be universal. It's strangely constant around the world, regardless of culture. I don't know why, but it's quite interesting. But, definitely, the design of each library, the response in terms of its context, immediate context and its community context, definitely there is a response. But I don't think there is a cultural thing. Almost as the institution is global.

ROB ADAMS: Bill and Juho, do you have any thoughts on that as well?

JUHO GRONHOLM: Well, it's, of course, a political thing as well. It's a

politician vision what are the opening hours, is the library free and open for everybody? And we have a very strong institution and people love it and it's well-used and totally free and open for everybody. You have to pay some pennies for the material. The books and most of the services are totally free. And it's something that I think we wanted to ingrain in stone, cast in concrete, to make it physical, to last a hundred years, these political decisions made now, so that this building cannot be transformed to be anything else but an open and public civic space. And that's the sort of thing that sort of buildings have, that they sort of carry our values to the future somehow.

ROB ADAMS: I think that's an interesting one. You know, we talk about culture and we think about how the culture affects the library. But, interestingly, maybe it's the culture of how the library is conceived and run. You know, we were in Canberra recently and walked into the library and it was one of those libraries where everybody was going, "Shush, shush, shush." Then you walk into our Docklands Library and they're playing table tennis. You know, it's become a real community... Maybe it's more the culture of how you run libraries and the culture around it?

BILL DOWZER: I agree with that completely. I think that, you know, starting from the deferential or the quietness of sort of what the library WAS, or what certain people think of as a library - which is sort of a mindset - as opposed to... I mean, it's interesting too, for a local government, it becomes - the library is actually the place where you can touch the community the most and you can actually have the most engagement with the community and get a better pulse on the community. So, if you're actually coming from that perspective, from the actual leadership of the project, then I think that actually changes the

interface and it changes the interrelationship.

ROB ADAMS: Yeah, fantastic. OK. I'm going to ask one final question, then we'll start going through some of the questions from the audience. So, keep those coming. The disruption of COVID - what do you think this means in rethinking the design of libraries? Does it impact on it? You know, how do we design to invite people back, you know, into our centres? I'll leave that open, whoever wants to jump in?

BILL DOWZER: It's been an interesting one, 'cause COVID for... I mean, and Australia is a different context to other parts of the world too. So, I think that, you know, and excepting Melbourne at the moment, in understanding that - I at luck happened to be in NSW, which I don't know that it's by design or by good management, necessarily! But it's been interesting. You know, obviously you saw how important the library was for the community and then how it was when they suddenly couldn't use it. And there was a lot of feedback coming back about that. I think for us it's actually, you know, in terms of limiting the number of people has been the start and, you know, in a post-vaccinated world, we're probably going back to something different. But I do think that there is a strong sense of people wanting to come together again. And how we provide the opportunity for that and the curating of events, and how you do all that sort of stuff... The other thing for us, we're lucky enough with our climate is to have our extensive outdoor areas, and the outdoor areas become completely an extension of the internal space.

ROB ADAMS: I think that's a really important point. I mean, I know the Finns are absolutely passionate about libraries. You know, that passion for books, has that been affected by COVID at all?

JUHO GRONHOLM: Like, shopping centres were open and libraries were closed. That was a much-heated debate. Now the libraries are back on and operating. I think Finland has been fortunate with the good governance and quirks of slightly remote geographic location in Europe, we weren't sort of hit so badly. But things are getting back to normal. Many say there's no back to normal... Start to learn to live differently. But I'm afraid that it's back to normal, or the libraries will be as they were before. Of course, things do sort of change all the time. But didn't have an effect on that, I think.

ROB ADAMS: OK, thanks. I'm going to go now to the audience and ask a few questions. And Teresa Brook, Juho, for you. "The clean lines of the Helsinki Library. Can you speak on the culture of Finland?"

JUHO GRONHOLM: Yeah, some people to say that we engage with nature, the connection or anything like that. I don't understand that. Maybe I'm so part of it I can't, sort of, analyse that, that sort of nature connection. So, nothing to say on that. Timber was used for softness and tactility. Making it soft and approachable. There's a long line of Finnish and modernistic architecture that's part of that Alvar Aalto heritage. But, still, I don't see that as a sort of Finnish architecture, as a Finnish project. It's a part of the global architecture evolution and it sort of happens to sit in middle of Helsinki and it has all these neighbours, and sort of knowing those architectural monuments, and that's a part of that series. It's global style.

ROB ADAMS: OK. Good. Bill, for you, there's a question here from Jess. "The big idea of the...is very powerful. Where does the inspiration come

from, Bill?" I would add into that, while you're answering, I really like the incorporation of the hospital, that feeling of continuity and change, and the link with the outside. So, if you can talk a little bit about that?

BILL DOWZER: Yeah, I think, it also came through the cultural groups. Because you've got strong sort of, you know, Italian, Greek communities within the Marrickville area, as well as a very, very large Vietnamese... The sort of... The idea of marketplace works culturally in terms of an open space that people feel welcome and it's egalitarian. That's really where it came from in terms of that. We originally did this diagram of being able to pull a roof across a space and allow it so sort of be something different that was the integration of the inside and the outside. That's really where the notion came from within that. And also it sat on the High Street. You know, it's sitting on the main road, the main artery into the area.

ROB ADAMS: Yeah. And, Kevin, you could reflect on that, because you started talking about the cloister, which was a marketplace, in a way. What's your reflection on that?

KEVIN HUI: Sorry, I missed half your question. It was dropping out.

ROB ADAMS: So, you know, with Marrickville Library, the idea of a marketplace. I just thought you started your talk this morning talking about the cloister and how that was sort of the meeting space and, you know, where people came together, and the books were quite small. Do you think that is relevant in today's library? You know, more of the library as the marketplace?

KEVIN HUI: Oh, definitely, yeah. Because, you know, there are bookless

libraries out there now, you know, in the United States, I know, for example. But, yeah, again, like, why would people choose to go to a library? They need to have a very good, compelling reason. And people are social. It's quite interesting also - it's actually a place where you can be social without being social. You don't have to talk to anyone. You can find your own little niche and sit down and enjoy, by being still and people-watching and also focus on work. I used to work in the State Library in the Latrobe Reading Room, because it's a great co-working space - kind of, unless you have to go to the toilet and pack everything away. But, yeah, you know, they're great places to be, to be around other people.

ROB ADAMS: OK. You mention ed... There's a question coming in from Nadyne Eggleton here. "How is social media shaping..."? Want to pick that up?

KEVIN HUI: Me or Bill? Because Bill talks about it as well. Well, I already mentioned, I think the MVRDV Library is kind of the extreme version of it. It's, like, the space is completely designed for social media, it's for Instagram, especially Chinese Instagram. The people were there just to take photos and then they left. And, you know, they were already marketing it before it was even built, so I think that's part of the extreme version of it. But I think, look, you know, I would go to both of the libraries and Instagram the hell out of it myself too. But, you know, because they aren't very photogenic spaces, but also beautiful spaces to be in as well rather than just a single picture. So, I think it does play an important role in terms of public awareness and people wanting to be there to make it "a destination", but, yeah, I think it needs more than just being Instagrammable, though.

ROB ADAMS: We had a question here from someone... It was really about, you know, designing libraries for climate change, things like that. And don't take this the wrong way, Juho, but the climate in Finland, particularly in winter, is quite severe. And you reflect a lot on light and how light came in - so did Kevin, you know, when you went through. One impact is, you know, if the climate gets worse, what is the importance of light? And how does it influence design?

JUHO GRONHOLM: Well, in Finland, it's a concrete thing, the damage, bigger snow than before. So, everything is thicker and insulation layers are thicker to minimise the costs, et cetera. And if you're built by the sea, you have to sort of build a metre higher than a decade ago. And it's small actions in multiple sort of ways.

ROB ADAMS: OK. Look, we've got some questions here that we're not going to get through. So, I'm gonna have to call it, though. I'd just like to thank Bill, Juho and Kevin for their contributions today. I think that's been a great discussion. And very topical for us here in Melbourne, as one of our questions was, you know, "What happens with the city library?" And we're looking at a new city library. So, a good time to be thinking about these questions. So, thank you to all of you.

MAXINE McKEW: And, Rob, thank you so much for providing your time this morning and leading that discussion. And really teasing out those very important issues. I must admit I'm very taken by what Kevin just said there, which is he said that you can go to the library and be social without being social, which seems to me is probably a great selling point for millennials. So, there we go! Thank you, Kevin.

OK, well, look, this concludes our speaker sessions for today. So, let me thank all of our speakers for their time, their insights into library development, and the vital role that libraries play in our community. Now, in our next session, you will be able to meet and discuss your thoughts on everything you've heard this morning. Here are a couple of pointers, perhaps, to get the most from these sessions. It's not an exclusive list but you might want to think about some of these things - perhaps an idea that you've heard during today's sessions, what's been discussed that you particularly want to keep working on, or perhaps you want to hear some of the ideas from a session that you did not attend - maybe you were in another room. So, this discussion session will now continue in another place, and you can all head back to the Virtual Lobby and select the next session called Discussion Session. From me, that's it. It's been good to have your company and share the morning with you. Bye-bye.

DISCUSSION SESSION 4

ELLA DOWIE: There's a few people waiting to accept the camera invite. So, I will jump out and I will wait for those people to jump back in. So, otherwise, if no-one comes into this room, there is...

DON: Jump into another room?

ELLA DOWIE: The other rooms have 15 in each. So, if you go to Room 2, there will be some space in there for you to have a discussion with someone else, with some other people. Thanks.

DON: Thank you.

ELLA DOWIE: No worries, bye.

(End of transcript)