

Sydney Indesign 2013

DOWN TO

BUSINESS

WORDS

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It's not often that architects and designers are afforded the opportunity to engage with suppliers and manufacturers one-on-one. This year's edition of Sydney Indesign (SID) facilitated an interdisciplinary dialogue, providing an energetic forum in which the Australian and international design industry could openly engage, exchange information and get down to the business of design.

Taking place in Sydney, the event spanned an intensive three days (15 – 17 August 2013), spreading across five design precincts, including 3000m² of exhibitor space at the inaugural Galleria. Among the usual exhibits, showroom events, and product launches was the addition of several initiatives intended to bring the members of industry together and stimulate growth within both business and the community at large.

Among these 'added platforms' were three new speaker series, entitled WorkLife, LiveLife and Indesign Podium. Running concurrently in Galleria and selected showrooms, speaker events tackled the topical issues to generate industry-wide discussion, teasing out real opinions and first-hand

experiences from noted design identities – both Australian and international alike.

Indesign Podium (designed and built by europanel, Geyer and The Initiative), opened the first day of SID with the WorkLife series hosted by Dr. Paul McGillick. The full day seminar looked at the future of the workspace, led by 14 global thought leaders including dw|suters CEO Leone Lorrimer, futurespace director Stephen Minnett, and HASSELL principal Matthew Blain.

The audience of architects, designers, developers, builders, engineers and end-users participated in a lively Q&A in which the state of Australia's commercial landscape was debated and assessed.

In the spirit of business development and growth, the Friday and Saturday seminars engaged the topic of business in design, drawing on industry insiders' real knowledge and practical insights to map and analyse successful and unsuccessful business practice.

Here, the NAWIC/BOLON forum opened a dialogue around women leading creative industries around the world. Directors of Swedish flooring brand BOLON (The Andrews Group), Marie and Annica Eklund, canvassed the state of women within creative markets internationally, alongside local female leaders NAWIC's Angela Ferguson and Bridgeen Rocks from Hassell. The forum prompted an active exchange between the panelists and audience members

alike, the conversation focusing on how and why women are leading change in the business of design.

The outcome suggested that locally, Australia is lagging behind the high standards set by Europe, and Scandinavia in particular. Where the Bolon sisters posited that the business culture in Europe is a fairly level playing field, the Australian panelists and audience members alike remarked that the balance in Australia remains unresolved. Here Rocks pointed out that she is often the only woman in a boardroom of 10 male colleagues, a notable lack of diversity which was echoed by several women in the audience.

SID 2013, while certainly expansive, wasn't entirely 'out with the old'. True to its ethos of encouraging collaborative endeavours between industry professionals, The Project returned to facilitate collaborations around the theme of 'Process' between suppliers, manufacturers, architects and designers. The outcomes were not only experiential, educational and space transforming, they stimulated new opportunity for creative engagement between collaborators and visitors.

Some of the standouts from The Project this year included KE-ZU with Yellowtrace, Tables, Chairs & Workstations with E2, Evie Group with Kikki.K and Warwick Fabrics with Group GSA; all fusing the creative powers of design firms and suppliers – to great effect. ●



Opposite page / Indesign Podium Galleria: designed, manufactured and constructed by europanel, Geyer and The Initiative, WorkLife seminar hosted by Dr. Paul McGillick, Photo: John Dougherty, Spy Photography

ALEXANDRIA

Sydney's newest precinct conducts a flourishing design trade

Where Surry Hills is a long standing hub of design retailers and studios, Alexandria is the new frontier. Just a little bit underground, the Alexandria precinct has fast become the new hotspot for Sydney's commercial design scene, and the participating brands that call Alexandria home used this unique dynamic to their advantage.

Brands such as Cosh Living, Gelosa and Carpet Republic are among the original cornerstones of Alexandria, welcoming a swag of newcomers to catch the attention of SID visitors. Complementing Blu Dot's three-day spring break, and Cosentino's showroom launch, time-out in Tables, Chairs and Workstations' private workspace gave the precinct a well-rounded atmosphere.

Blum with Lincoln Sentry demonstrated the underground dynamic of the precinct with its interactive Kitchen Test Drive showroom – allowing visitors to gauge the value of dynamic space. This is representative of the new experiential showroom, for which the district is becoming known, where several brands are challenging the traditional 'look but don't touch' showroom model.

69 O'Riordan Street in particular has quickly developed a 'precinct within a precinct' mentality. Here, the first floor is laden with design retail houses that work fluidly with one another, where all sectors of the design industry are housed under the same roof. ●



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01 WHO: Tsar with David Trubridge
WHAT: Design brought to life with live body painting from the Academy of Makeup showcased The Project theme of 'process', as did the considered David Trubridge installation.
Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography

02 WHO: The Project by KE-ZU with Yellowtrace
WHAT: The exploration of process through development, evolution and practice brought together key members of the design community for the LiveLife series, including Caroline Butler-Bowdon of Sydney Living Museums NSW, and noted architect Bruce Eels.
Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography

03 WHO: The Project by EcoSmart Fire with Fourtwo
WHAT: EcoSmart Fire showroom hosted a Max Brenner Chocolate bar around the eco-friendly fires, encouraging visitors to interact with product as well as engage with brand ambassadors.
Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography

04 WHO: The Project by Coco Republic and Smeg with futurespace
WHAT: An acoustic installation prompted each entrant to 'Choose Your Own Adventure' – Italian or British.
Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography

GALLERIA

Bringing the design community together

Extending its reach this year, Galleria joined forces with over 50 exhibitors to challenge the idea of the traditional trade show. Where standard trade events have numbered stalls and walled booths in ordered rows, Galleria positioned its exhibitors sporadically, inviting visitors to navigate a different path each time. Careful curation saw young Australian designers installed alongside suppliers and manufacturers, offering a more cohesive exhibitor experience and allowing suppliers, manufacturers and designers to forge vital business connections.

Taking advantage of the Galleria's experiential nature, many exhibitors staged timed events, engaging neighbouring exhibitors and visitors in friendly networking, whilst stimulating potential partnerships.

Many approached the task by leveraging key designers to attract suppliers and specifiers to their brands. Classique, Fanuli and Zip Industries for instance paired with celebrity designer Jamie Durie; and Formula Interiors canvassed its new range of interior systems with a giant Jenga competition – the winner of which receiving a Glass Collection Latte stool by Keith Melbourne. Others engaged their unique target market through demonstration, as with health and lifestyle retailers Healthzone, who explored the process of meeting style and functionality demands, in a move that captured the attention of visiting specifiers with regard to eradicating uncomfortable and unhealthy working conditions. ●



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01 WHO: The Project by James Richardson with Daniel Dalla Riva
WHAT: Visitors enjoyed a cup of tea and wrote about the process of 'slow' design on hanging teapots for a chance to win a chair by Patricia Urquiola – featured in the space.
Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography

02 WHO: Formnation with INTEG and Binder
WHAT: An experiential acoustic space with INTEG monitor arms, and Formnation Soundform and Soundbasic panels, showcasing the Binder app launch at the Galleria Hotspot.
Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography

03 WHO: Mafi
WHAT: Mafi timber floorboards resolved and bent into a functioning and interactive skateboard ramp demonstrating the malleable nature of its product.
Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography

04 WHO: The Project by Stormtech with Rice Daubney
WHAT: Launch of Stormtech's new grate designed by Marc Newson, presented in an interactive walk-through water world by the Rice Daubney team.
Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography



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SURRY HILLS



The original design and supply precinct

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01 WHO: The Project by SeehoSu with BVN Donovan Hill **WHAT:** A well-curated launch of the new Studio SeehoSu showroom, allowing visitors to explore the Sakura Garden and Maruni Bonsai Field. *Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography*

02 WHO: Arthur G with Designer Rugs **WHAT:** The two paired with local businesses, Ask The Butcher meats and bespoke gelato emporium Messina. The space also gave visitors the opportunity to engage with designers, and positively revel in new product. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*

03 WHO: The Project by Café Culture with Stack **WHAT:** Café Culture's woodland showroom allowed visitors to experience the latest products from Miniforms, Bellawood, Lee Broom and Chris Hardy. The showroom conveyed the tone of their brand – featuring a bright yellow Volkswagen bus serving Jafe Jaffels. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*

04 WHO: The Project by Reece Bathroom Life with 6 Hats **WHAT:** Reece displaying the precision of Swiss design and cuisine, appealing to the specifier market by launching the latest from high-end designers Laufen, Geberit and Nikles. Winners of the Bathroom Innovation Award, Chris Connell, and Amanda Paukner was also announced on Saturday. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*

The Surry Hills district has long been Sydney's design CBD – so to speak. Renowned for housing established design brands and studios, the precinct is a year-round industry hub, boasting the *crème de la crème* of industry suppliers. The presence of Surry Hills at SID certainly lived up to the hype, and was exemplary of an environment where mutually beneficial partnerships can flourish.

True to this dynamic, Surry Hills exhibitors celebrated the event with outstanding interactivity. Spence & Lyda for example, leveraged the value of internationally acclaimed figures such as Singapore-based product designer Nathan Yong, in addition to hosting part of the LiveLife seminar series. The outcome of which suggested that direction of urban development – specifically within the residential sector – should come from architects and designers as opposed to local councils and developers.

Living Edge Commercial partnered with architecture firm Hassell to flesh out the innovations of activity based working. This was represented by the latest from Living Edge brands such as Herman Miller and Walter Knoll.

Perhaps the most collaborative of the precinct was DAL+Brands and Signature Floorconcepts with Bold Collective and Whitehouse Institute of Design, who used SID as a platform to launch Signature Floorconcepts' CYMK Colour Concept product, as well as DAL+Brands latest range from Moll, Hag, RH and RBM. All juxtaposed with an interactive photobooth to engage visitors with colour, as well as showcase new work from design students. ●



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REDFERN/WATERLOO & CHIPPENDALE

Taking a refined, targeted approach to visitor engagement

Removed from the cluster of the Surry Hills showrooms, the Redfern/Waterloo and Chippendale precincts are marked by a seemingly less aggressive market approach. Where Surry Hills and Alexandria can be characterised as fast-paced and quite direct in tackling the market, the Redfern/Waterloo and Chippendale districts are by comparison well considered and quite targeted in their approach.

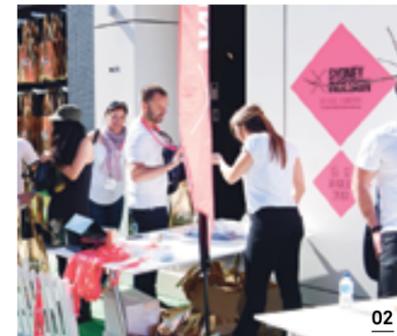
This identity was reflected in the precinct's SID activities, with resident showrooms holding thoroughly considered events and initiatives. Furniture supplier Interstudio upheld these principles, hosting a high-tea with director of famed Danish brand Englebrechts: Rasmus Hildebrand, who lead a pensive discussion around translating Danish trends to the local Australian market.

Zaffero lighting furthered the district's commercial sensibility by hosting a live demonstration where a local designer engaged in the process of product manufacture; as did Design Republic, who transformed its new showroom by combining design, manufacture and retail in one space. These initiatives allowed exhibitors to open an interactive dialogue with their architecture and design audiences around the value of process.

The showrooms in these districts engaged in intensely targeted, yet seamless non-aggressive branding strategies, highlighting the systematic nature of the areas in their approach to business within the local and national design industry. ●



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01 WHO: Corporate Culture with BOLON by The Andrews Group **WHAT:** Celebrating the relaunch of its flagship showroom, Corporate Culture hosted a low-key breakfast and LiveLife seminar on multi-residential living, in addition to showroom tours of new product. *Photo: Fiona Susanto Photography*

02 WHO: Inlite **WHAT:** Visitors stepped into an inflatable gold room to experience the Marslet lighting collection, and upstairs the new Delta Light installation made its Australian appearance following its launch at Milan Furniture Fair. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*

03 WHO: Viabizzuno **WHAT:** An experiential initiative aimed at product and brand engagement – an Instagram competition was devised where 'best photo taken in the showroom' won you a Viabizzuno Margaret table lamp. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*

04 WHO: Winning Appliances **WHAT:** Working on the premise that people typically engage over food, Winning Appliances invited visitors to 'cook up a storm' in a unique branding exercise aimed at creating a sense of community around its many high-end brands, with help from talented chefs. *Photo: John Doughty, Spy Photography*