

**2017 Interstices 19 (Under Construction) symposium**  
**Surface - Pattern: a pursuit of material narratives.**

**2 - 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Auckland, New Zealand**  
**The University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand**

**Keynote Speaker:** Associate Professor Spyros Papapetros  
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Parnell Baths Mural (Photo: Susan Hedges, 15.12.2016)

Surface and ornament have been extensively reviewed, admonished, discarded and pursued. More recently there has been a renewed interest in the writing of Aby Warburg and Alois Riegl, while numerous studies have addressed these issues relative to Semper, Adolf Loos, Hermann Muthesius, and Le Corbusier. They have been made prominent by issues of animation (see, for example, Papapetros 2012, Payne 2013, van Eck 2014) and digitation (see for example Spuybroek 2008 and Schumacher 2009).

Incrustations, protuberances, textured expressions, smoothed surfaces, surfaces enlivened as screens, are they ornament or cladding? The 2017 Interstices Under Construction Symposium, "Surface - Pattern" pursues the tension between ornament, adornment, object enlivenment, cladding, surface and pattern, and an exploration into the strange animations inherent in surface-pattern continua.

Thought in one direction, smooth surface tends towards speed and a friction-less gloss; in another, pattern stirs surfaces inciting decelerating, contemplation, and even deviation. Etymologically, 'surface' accords with the revealing of an upper or outward layer, but it also points to things that receive a surface through polishing or finishing. Pattern suggests the imposition of a plan or design that ultimately models or leads back to exemplars and the impact of patrons. Conjunctions of surface-patterns thus encompass rich and complex narrative effects.

This call for papers invites considerations, at a range of scales, of surface-pattern complexes like territory and landscapes, built assemblages and 'cladding', interior surfaces, décor and furniture, sculpture or objects of the decorative arts.

The symposium is motivated by the renewed fascination with the architectural surface and the expressive effects it mobilises – effects that both eschew and uneasily dabble in the decorative. Material mediation has become a means for experimentation, a way of teasing out smooth geometries, tessellated patterns, iconic figures and textures, which may all also perform technical functions, like joining or harmoniously accommodating incremental and differential movement. If, following Paul Virilio, the built, like the social, is inseparable from a *politics of speed* (in which surfaces, ways, and conduits at every scale are 'policed' in order to arrest impediments to an accelerating commerce of motion and passage), we might wonder what role patterning plays today.

As Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have argued, periodic repetition is key to encoding a milieu, founding territoriality and place-specificity. However, it is also a rhythmic vehicle running on difference, a metrical, staggered and reversible time of variable intensities, in which beginning and end are confused (Bogue 2003: 28). Performative and plastic arts in the Pacific and elsewhere use repetition not only as aesthetic device but also "to symbolise and effect relations of mana" (Tomlinson & Tengan 2015: 17), both channelling affective force and representing memory and knowledge to those who understand (Clark 2006: 12; Nepia 2013: 133, 197).

Pattern and rhythm run free of and extend beyond planar fixity, implicating faces and surfaces that may change, reverse or combine, they alter perception and architectural space. Surfaces, beyond their seconding within building hierarchies, open onto movement and shifting states (Taylor 2009: 47). Architecture, then, can be rethought in relation to an outside that is not kept out or apart, in terms of surfaces, flatness, dynamism and movement rather than stasis (Grosz 1995: 135). Patterned and patterning, surfaces provide a saturated environment rich in repetition, difference and an atmosphere by which architecture is more than a machinic structure. As the distinctions between structures and ornaments, function, form, façade and decor are reconceptualised, surfaces are no longer decorative elements but entities in themselves. Surface "turns into architecture [as the] surface becomes weighted, deep, differentiated, tartan, alternating, camouflaged, tonal, gradated, textured, branded, serial" (Bruno 2014: 93).

It is with this sense of the spatial effects potentiated by surface-pattern that we invite you to submit abstracts for the forthcoming Interstices Under Construction Symposium.

Please send a 500-word abstract and a short biographical statement of 100 words to Susan Hedges ([susan.hedges@aut.ac.nz](mailto:susan.hedges@aut.ac.nz)) by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Abstracts will be vetted through blind peer review and, if accepted, published on the Interstices website (<http://interstices.ac.nz/news-events/>). Notifications will be sent out by March 2017. The symposium will be followed by a call for papers for Issue 19 of *Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts* on the same topic in June 2017.

Convenors: Andrew Douglas , Tina Engles–Schwarzpaul, Susan Hedges,

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