

# architecturenz



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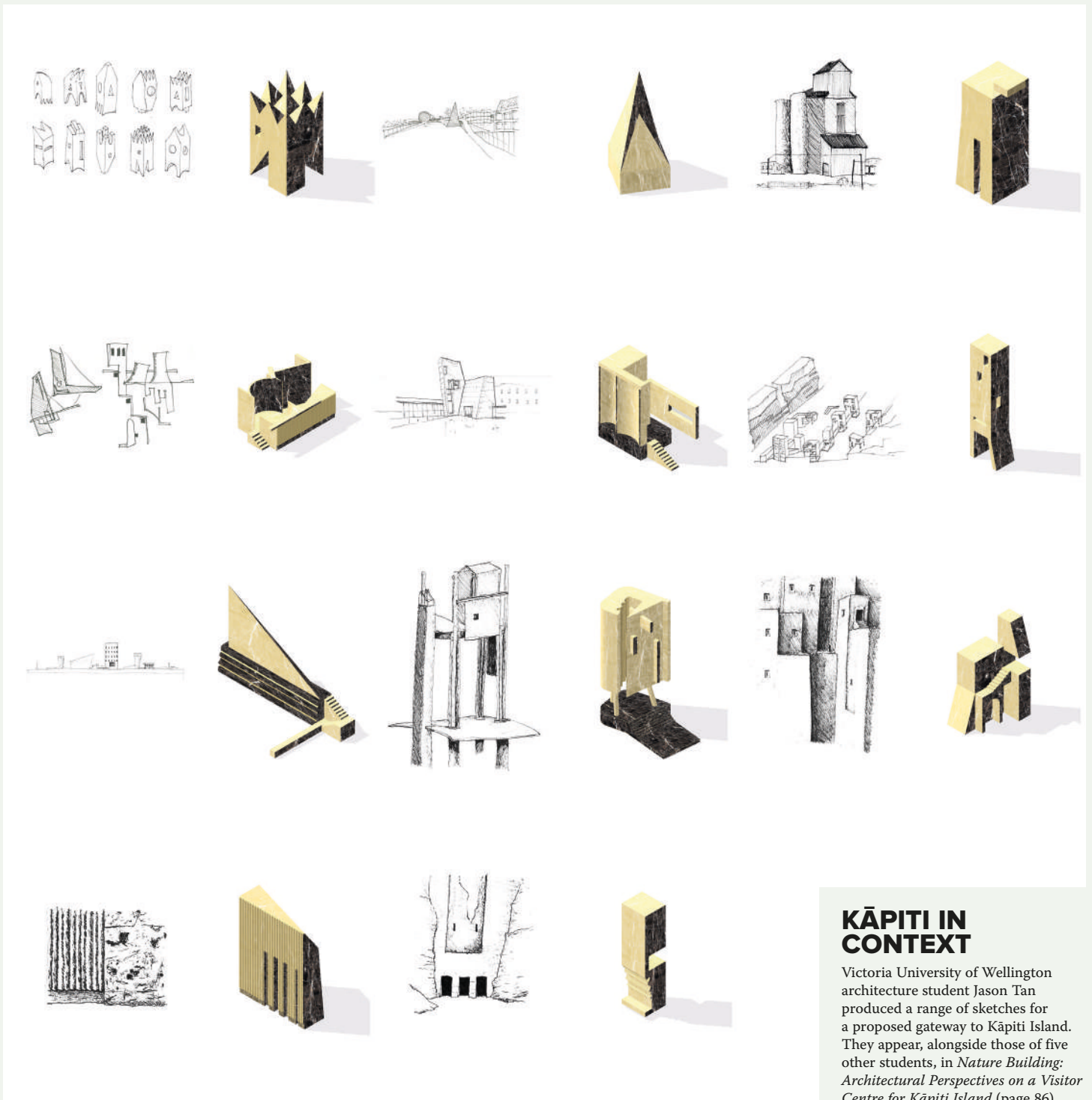


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# Crit

Student work, books and exhibitions



Building sandcastles for Paraparaumu Beach. Illustration: Jason Tan.

## KĀPITI IN CONTEXT

Victoria University of Wellington architecture student Jason Tan produced a range of sketches for a proposed gateway to Kāpiti Island. They appear, alongside those of five other students, in *Nature Building: Architectural Perspectives on a Visitor Centre for Kāpiti Island* (page 86).

# Books

## ***Nature Building: Architectural Perspectives on a Visitor Centre for Kāpiti Island***

EDITED BY SAM KEBBELL  
AND RILEY ADAMS-WINCH  
PUBLISHED BY VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, 2018

*Nature Building* considers the relationship between nature and culture, and is centred on a 2018 student project for a 'Gateway' for Kāpiti Island. The design project was run by Dr Sam Kebell at Victoria University and drew from rich contextual sources, locating the student proposals at the centre of a relevant political, social, environmental and historical landscape.

Kebell's premise is that "the built environment vividly reflects the culture that made it" (page 13) and the publication supports architecture as being threaded through every aspect of any society. It reaffirms the notion that, in the architectural design process, context is everything.

The 200-page publication is edited by Kebell and Riley Adams-Winch, with design by the latter. The collection of short essays and design projects brings together environmental advocacy, community engagement, and cultural and political leadership, and seems to be both a recording of events and as a provocation for action.

Three essays act as an introduction (by current Mayor of Kāpiti Coast K Gurunathan, Kaitiaki John Barrett and Kebell) and two essays close it – one by Martin Bryant and Penny Allan (both of University of Technology Sydney) and one by Chris Maclean, of the trust which supported the exhibitions and this publication.

The core of the book focuses on six individual student projects (of Jason Tan, Joe Batchelor, Ryan Esselink, Elise Cautley, William Hope and Callum Leslie), followed by the development of a selected scheme by a team of students and academics (Kebell, Cam Wilson, Riley Adams-Winch, Callum Leslie,

Andrew Charleson and Martin Bryant). The final project won the AAA Visionary Award 2018, Open Work in Progress category.

The assemblage of student architectural responses is generously presented with images and each is accompanied by an analysis from Kebell – easily locating the work of each student in a broader genre and providing clarity to each design approach. This illustrates the way in which any design process is valid, as long as it allows the deep questions at the core of the project to emerge. We see the students asking questions of architecture, using sources from well beyond the site. Kebell helps his students understand what a 'rich built environment' is, and how it extends beyond the architectural object.

Contributor biographies can be found at the end of the book, providing a snapshot of the range of ideas drawn from politics, history, environmental guardianship, landscape architecture, academia and practice. Public exhibitions of the development and final work continue this awareness of the importance of community engagement, and of embedding the education model in conversations ranging from colonial land confiscation to council funding models.

The final project is described by Bryant and Allan as being important in a global context, arguing that the contribution of New Zealand architecture is no longer the elegant shed but lies in the adaptability to, and measurement of, environmental and cultural forces. "This is a practical proposal but it's also an important cultural idea that matters far beyond New Zealand shores" (page 196). The collaborative final project is placed firmly in a rich field of complex local and global contexts.

*Nature Building* seems to fall deliberately into that largely empty gap between academia and architectural practice: one which is so difficult to tread. It communicates to the profession and wider communities the value and processes of architectural education. It also deliberately crosses the usual boundaries between academic, practice and public



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**04** William Hope's, 'Leave It' planning sketch (page 139) is one of six student design proposals.

**05** The book is available at [humbugaa.com/product/book-nature-building/](http://humbugaa.com/product/book-nature-building/)

audiences, illustrating how architecture feeds from and enriches communities.

This refreshing and welcomed publication shows how the deep architectural questions are also everyday ones, and, hopefully, helps to bring rich architectural discussions into the broad experiences of many, as it also draws from them. **Ⓜ**

**Lynda Simmons**