

## MINUTES

REAIE REsearch Conversations and Inner West Network Meeting  
7 June 2023

### RELATIONSHIP WITH PLACE

Sydney Modern / AGNSW **Open till 10pm**  
Art Gallery Road, Sydney (next to the Art Gallery of NSW)

**Time: 6pm- 8pm (Went until 8.30)**

There will be no virtual meeting due to the nature of space we are gathering on.

**Convenors:** Deb Garrett, Virginia Aghan, Paula West, Victoria Kirkwood

**Attendees:** Virginia Aghan (Childcare Environment Consultants), Paula West (Early Childhood Consultant), Victoria Kirkwood (International Grammar School Sydney), Alma Fleet (IEC Macquarie Uni / Semann & Slattery), Caroline Arthur, Sue Hercus, Victoria Parish (Blue Gum Community School Hornsby), Natalie Cordukes, Anna Cimarosti, Monica Kim, Gianna La Rocca, Dalma Rehak, Dianne Thornton (Northern Nursery School), Helen Smith (Uniting Ella Early Learning Haberfield), Silvia Lorenzotti (SDN Mosman), Mel Elderton, Su Garrett (Explore and Develop Annandale)

**Minutes:** Victoria Kirkwood

**Apologies:** Liz Cohen, Joanna Krabman, Toni Jacky, Robbie Lee (Northern Nursery School) Linda Henderson, Sara Zappia, Kylie Lawson, Courtney McConnell (Abbotsford LDC), Amanda Carreira (Kincoppal Rose Bay School) Rowena Robinson (Manly Vale Early Learning Services).

#### Prethinking prior to meeting: Please see Extract and link to article



- [Dharug Custodial Leadership: Uncovering Country in the City](#) Dr Jo Anne Rey. Particularly the concepts of Goanna Walking and the Dharug Ngurra Web

**Place-based pedagogy:** a pedagogy refers to an understanding that educator knowledge of the setting or context will influence how educators plan and practice. This pedagogical approach is particularly important to Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples and their connection to land and places should be explored with local Elders and community members in culturally responsive ways.

The revised Approved Learning Frameworks [V2.0, 2022](#)

#### Agenda

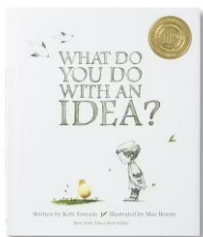
Item	Discussion
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<p>6pm - 6.15pm</p> <p>Gather together in the space outside the North Building</p> 	<p>This evening we meet on Gadigal Land at Sydney Modern to engage in conversations about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with place- children as active citizens</li> <li>• Place based pedagogy - environment as third teacher</li> <li>• In Reggio, “Knowing the place is to know Reggio” What does this mean to you in the Australian context and what does this place ‘say’ to you?</li> <li>• Contextual Learning</li> </ul> <p><b>Acknowledgment of Country:</b> We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the Country on which the Art Gallery of New South Wales stands.</p>
<p>6.15pm - 6.30pm</p>	<p>Journey to the Yirribana Gallery to view video installation by Māori artist Lisa Reihana <a href="https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/collection/commissions/lisa-reihana/">.https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/collection/commissions/lisa-reihana/</a></p>
<p>6.30pm - 7-20pm</p>  <p>7.20pm - 8pm</p>	<p><b>Exploring Sydney Modern</b></p> <p><b>Temporal Environment:</b> refers to the timing, sequence and pace of routines and activities that take place throughout the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place based quotes - French philosopher and architect, Gaston Bachelard - Poetics of Space. Space has memories. Space speaks to you.</li> <li>• How do you know a place? Temporal, relationships, revisiting over and over.</li> </ul> <p><b>Meet back together for discussion in a break out space</b></p> <p>People split into different small groups. Some chose to join a formal tour of the gallery whilst others wandered freely or headed off to revisit a space.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>There are boundaries around thinking if we stay in familiar places. Moving to different places evokes different reactions, expands and challenges thinking.</p> <p>Artists are presented with spaces and this needs to compliment the artist's creativity. Spaces influence the artwork. The art and the space become place.</p> <p><b>What's the reason behind coming to meet at the AGNSW? Why this space?</b></p> <p>Children live in the city. There are schools in the city. The outer community comes to the city. This place is between the two network groups, the one in the Inner West, and the one on the North Shore. We try to have two meetings on either side of the bridge each year.</p>



Space - 'the dimensions of height, depth and width within which all things exist and move'

Place - 'a particular position, point, or area in space, a location'



### **Children are citizens of the city.**

It's good to get out of our own space and come into an open, different space to create. Togetherness is more than just a space.

Each person has their own space and time- their own mind galaxy. Different dimensions come to the fore. People have different expressions and perspectives of place.

### **Individual and collective work - collaboratively**

Northern Nursery described a collaborative project using clay. Children were invited to create and join clay together. The artwork became more and grew bigger.

The children were asked to design a machine together to collaborate and discuss. Two children were insistent on their own design. They had no connection with the project, but the individuality is the child. Children reach out to other people and stretch. They do not stay in a bubble. The process took time to evolve. Children could choose the group that they wanted to work with. It wasn't working very well, so they stopped. Upon asking questions the children wanted to come back and try again to work collaboratively.

Felt inspired by the cardboard house project, as am new in seeing collaborative focused work involving diverse community perspectives over time.

### **Are Space and Place different things?**

The interpretation of space and place may not be the same. Establishing a place is to establish belonging. Space is an architectural frame. It is an invitation here within the gallery today to form connectedness. (A.F)

Blue Gum talked about the new school in an old heritage building with a house and garden full of history. The scent of the garden comes inside, such as the lemon gums. The future and past are interwoven; young and old, aboriginal and colonial, the present with the next generation.

The children at Blue Gum had a real curiosity about the fireplace. They were fascinated with shadows. Upstairs there's a little door. What was in there? The children wondered and predicted. There was much excitement.

They read the book 'What to do with an Idea?' by Kobi Yamada Illustrated by Mac Besom

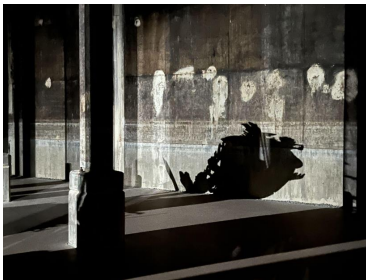
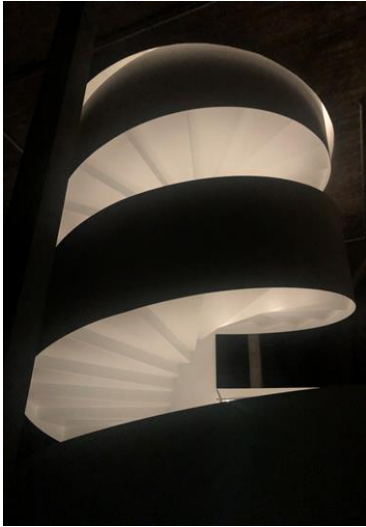
The room behind the door was a blank room and empty space. They decided to write ideas on the walls, making their ideas visible.

### **Empty spaces - possibility of creating place**

We don't often offer an empty space to children, something that's not filled already. When the Canberra team (Blue Gum) visited Hornsby they reflected and went back to declutter the environment making a calming space.

They created bigger spaces in smaller places.

So too, the Art Gallery does this. Bigger spaces become smaller spaces. The spaces are large and public, then intimate and engaging. Architecture, art and light are used intentionally.



We wondered why the new Art Gallery building is not joined to the old Art Gallery building. These reflections were curious as people brought their personal ideas, preferences and memory into the thought process.

### **Light and dark - entering unknown spaces with different perspectives**

We discussed The Tank. It was dark, and people wanted to use their other senses such as touch and smell when their vision was minimal.

We spoke about the different perspectives of entering the dark space.

One may descend slowly via the spiral staircase allowing glimpses of what is to come and an overview of the space, or via the lift - entering unknowingly into a dark cavernous space. The experience of darkness, fading, moving and unpredictable light and shadow was powerful.

### **Vulnerability and relationships - integral to space and place**

When entering the unknown space one notices the separate details and then pieces them together to gain understanding. We need to feel safe in the unknown. We didn't want to be alone in the dark space. The beautiful moments of our own shadows gave us a sense of our own place and became part of the art. It's not an isolating space. It was black with no light.

We need people.

We wondered when we would take children into this space? Some thought it's not okay to take them. If they're in fear they need safety.

We need a relationship in vulnerability and build relationships. It's in the 'not knowing', the trust, to believe in the place, in the relationship. It's all contextual as adults going into the space.

Some were mixed with curiosity and trepidation. Dark spaces brought back memories. Memories of personal connections. We look for personal connections with space. It's a very powerful space on our own.

We discussed how spaces and creating places can be complicated. It includes safety.

The idea of negative space was brought up. Negative space, as in something blank, something in which there is space to grow. Other people then referred to negative space as an emotional space or something that's personal with negative feelings.

### **Temporal space, revisiting, creating familiarity**

To create place, we need to revisit the space. We need to have our own time to form judgement around that.

We can change the spaces we provide for children's learning. Why do we change spaces? Children / adults need familiarity. Who makes the decisions about changing place and space, and why?

Those on the tour reflected that re-visiting the artworks, specifically, the large statues out the front of the gallery lead to a deeper understanding of what they were, and why they were there. It was quite a classical scaffold, however, explaining the reasons behind the artwork and the meaning behind the artist's intent and re-visiting, helped our understanding in knowing the context on a deeper level.

### **The role of a critical friend - trusted relationship**

The role of a critical friend was identified as vital. We need to keep challenging our current knowledge and perceptions, personal biases and continue to learn and unlearn.

We spoke about being able to shift children's perspectives within safe spaces. The relationship built on trust and non-judgment was key to vulnerability leading to growth.

Emerging ideas from the meeting included:

- Stepping outside our comfort zone
- Place and space are different
- Place is formed within safety, belonging and relationships
- Spending time and revisiting is important

### **Next meeting:**

**Thursday 31 August**

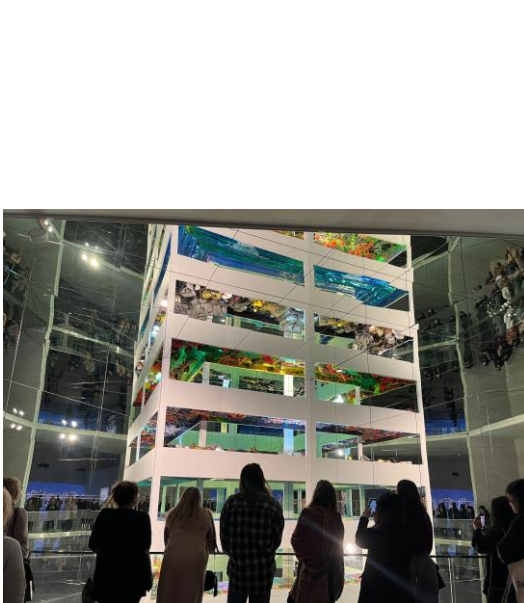
**Blue Gum Community School**

Dharug and Guringgai Land

1 Rosemead Road Hornsby 2077









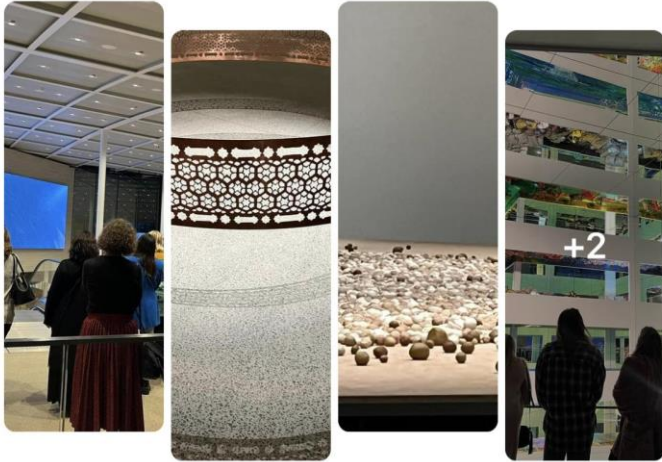




**Victoria Kirkwood**

Admin 8 Jun · 📍

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful Network Meeting at Sydney Modern. Great to connect, challenge and inspire.



👍 Virginia Aghan and 6 others

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**Victoria Kirkwood**

Admin 11 Jun · 📍

Different perspectives create different relationships with space. Revisiting spaces and spending time gives a deeper connection. A sense of place is formed within relationships. Place is about attachment and belonging.



👍👍 Virginia Aghan and 6 others

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