

建築

Architecture+Design+Culture

# Dialogue

## Architecture Education

建築教育

Diagram  
What is the idea to be communicated  
3D VIEWS  
Emphasis/clay.

Perspective view,  
H.V.  
area of vision.

### 特別報導：

“筆”比“滑鼠”更有力？  
建築教育—微型城市下的文化交流

### Special Report:

The Pen is mightier than the Mouse?  
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B.H. 16  
to make it  
in form.



## Beyond Spatial Design

Architectural Education - Cultures in Meta Cities

在學習空間設計之外  
建築教育—微型城市下的文化交流

Editorial Staff  
編輯部

為了建築雜誌本期的特殊議題—今日的建築教育，由擁有新加坡—倫敦—伊斯坦堡等多重背景的陳家毅建築師，來專訪知名的里歐·凡賽克教授。里歐教授任教於墨爾本皇家理工大學，指導建築系學生前衛課程，而他對於墨爾本建築文化的影響，便是將墨爾本的都市形象，成功推進世界級的設計城市。

在本文中，陳建築師與里歐教授引導出一個深層的討論，他們經由新加坡、英國、澳洲及美國的城市與建築學校間的生活經歷，因而擁有豐富的實務經驗、學識涵養及文化經驗，引導出現今建築系學生自身年少時期的空間體驗，對於過去、現在及未來的影響作出精采且深入的論述。

For *Dialogue's* special issue on critical issues in architectural education today, Singapore-London-Istanbul based architect Kay Ngee Tan interviews Leon Van Schaik, Innovation Professor at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, renowned for his pioneering graduate programs at RMIT, and his influence on the architectural culture of Melbourne, which has helped put on the world stage Melbourne's successful design-city image.

In this article, Kay Ngee Tan and Leon Van Schaik, bring to the discussion their rich practical, academic and cultural experiences across cities and architecture schools in Singapore, the UK, Australia, and the US, for a stimulating and sophisticated discourse on past, present and future influences on the inward journey of learning for the architectural student today.



陳家毅 / Kay Ngee Tan



里歐·凡賽克教授 / Professor Leon van Schaik



陳家毅(陳)：今天這論題可能是跟我個人的經歷有關，或者是因為曾在英國唸書，還有就是你是從南非到倫敦，再到澳洲。我們談談什麼是良好的建築教育的基礎，特別是在今天。

里歐·凡賽克教授(里歐)： 建築教育是什麼？我想這真的是個很空洞的問題。

我不相信以課程為主導的教育方式，一整套能教化人的那種經驗。這是建築教育的真正意義。建築教育就是使每一個人都能找到通往他自己的建築方式。它並不是說我們知道建築是什麼，你照著這些走，你就能找到它。而是，在好的學校裡，每個學生都必須作自己的決定。學生必須要開始這麼想：好，我感興趣的是這個，我想在這裡面可以作出一些建築上的貢獻。

有很多研究指出，任何有活力、富創造力的文化，都是在三個論述的極端之間運作。從歷史上看，永遠都不會超三個，因為你很難在你自己的論點之外，再同時與兩種論點交鋒。三個大約是人類可以應付的極限。若少於三就成了敵對了：變成黑白之分。若只有一個，就會形成一人統治，這對有創意的人是不太好的。

我想一個好學校的方向，也是我自己一貫的方向，就是在學校的界限內能看到三種持續的可能性。這三種極端可能因時而變，因為每一代都有不同的定位，但一開始就得清楚明白你不會變成預先註定的所謂「建築師」。

第二個關鍵問題就是剛才提到我在不同國家待過這件事。建築教育通常用的教材都是偉大的建築物，那些固然重要，但同等重要的是每個人在空間裡的個人歷史。這是建築教育裡很嚴重地被忽略的一面。若說建築師為社會保管了什麼知識的話，這知識就是人們如何創造他們的空間知識，如何運用他們的空間智慧。因為每當建築師與業主溝通時，其實是兩方的沉默論述在交鋒：業主的空間歷史，你在空間裡的歷史，和建築企劃。關於建築教育，我的信念是，學生從頭開始，在建築中選擇一個視點，但同時必須對自己在空間中的歷史進行幾乎像心理分析式的檢視，如此才能認識到自己的偏好是如何被形塑而成的。

陳：不過這方法對於機運不是那麼好的學生可能沒有效。比方說新加坡來的學生，好比在建設發展局的公共住宅一類擁擠的環境長大的。

有沒有必要去丟掉自己已學過的東西？我想知道能否作逆向的操作。

里歐：是可以，不過首先，你不要低估了公共住宅的可能性。你生出來時畢竟總是小孩。你要學習質感，觸覺，聲音，空間，各種東西。這個很奇異的學習過程很快地就消失到下意識裡去了，因為人類運作系統就是把所有這些都變成為自動的，你因而可以專注於眼前的工作。

那麼，在公共住宅裡長大的小孩經歷過所有那些經驗。玩和發現質感不僅是在公寓裡發生，也是在城市裡。那種週遭的豐富性，甚至連你自己的專欄裡所呈現出來的，並不是局限在公共住宅內的。即使是在那種局限之內，還是有空間的美好事件發生，那是我們已經沒有的，那對於我們只在假日才會浮現。所有感動過我的建築都是一走進去，然後會「啊」一聲的那種。不知怎麼的，那種建築物就是能創造出一種空間，能讓你和你累積的知識及你的一切連結起來。

陳：人如何解釋空間。我想如你所說，是根據以往的空間體驗與天生的空間敏感度有關。

里歐：那都是天生的，但像語言一樣在真實地點展開來，是這兩種東西的交會。而目前以課程為主導的建築教育問題，起源於一八四〇年代，建築是在那個以建造工業的環境為主的時代下，被定義為一種行業。那種工程師傅的概念對於建築來說是個問題，因為那不是建築師能夠聲稱自己可以掌握的知識體。工程師可以，建築工可以，任何一個自己動手的商人都可以，我覺得整個行業沒有了解到一點：建築師能提供的最主要是好的空間、好的空間感。

所以說，每個學生的空間歷史都是寶藏，應由那位學生自己特別的珍藏著，但也應該被學校認可與鼓勵，作為學習的內容。

陳：你能說出是哪三樣嗎？你說其中一樣可以是技術。那另兩樣呢？

里歐：我先回到之前所說的。關於三個極端的說法是從人類知識學裡長期研究而得出的，特別是蘭道·柯林斯的研究。在《精通建築》一書的註解裡談到。比如，他研究過東方和西方的社會學哲學，這是人類有記載的最早的知識研究。他發現凡是發生創造性變化、知識上的變革的時代，都是因為三種極端立場之間的強烈爭辯：這是人們已經知道很久的關於建築的事實。

所以這三種論點就是背景。目前技術這項，最有意思的建築師其中有不少是涉足環境及永續性設計。這是他們在這行業中強調的方向，而且這類呈現方式是不斷在變的。

建築和大部份建築論述之悲劇在於現代主義沒被好好地認識。現代主義被看作是「唯一正道」，其實還有各種別的路。那是建築圈裡很具破壞性的時期。

**Kay Ngee Tan (Kay Ngee)** : Perhaps it's to do with my own experience, or, having been educated in England, and also thinking about you, moving from South Africa to London to then Australia. Let's talk about what is the basis of good architecture education, and especially now.

**Professor Leo van Schaik (Leon):** What is architectural education? I mean it really is a very blank question.

I do not believe in a curriculum driven education, a set of transformative experiences. That's what architectural education is about. Architectural education is a way for each individual to find their way to their architecture. It is not something where we know what architecture is and if you go through these steps you will reach it. It is something where, in a good school, each student is immediately in a position where they have to choose and make choices. They have to begin saying, "okay, I think this is what interests me and I think this is what I could make an architectural contribution in."

There is a lot of research suggesting that any vibrant culture, creative culture, is operating between three poles of discourse. It's never, historically speaking, more than three because it's very difficult to engage with two other arguments and your own argument at the same time. Three seems to be about as much as human beings can handle. If it's less than three it just becomes adversarial. It just becomes black and white. If its only one then you have a position of dominance by somebody and that appears not to be very good for people who are creative at all.

I think a good school and what we aim for, and I've always aimed for, is a situation where you can see three possibilities ongoing in the boundaries of that school. Those three poles may shift over time, and they do, as each generation repositions them, but it's becoming aware right from the start that you're not about to turn into something which has been preordained "Architect."

The second thing that is absolutely crucial goes back to your thing about my living in many different countries. Architectural education is usually taught through the great buildings and while the great buildings are important, equally important is every human being's individual history in space. That's a side of education that we neglect seriously in architecture. If there is such a thing as a knowledge that architects hold in custody for society it is that understanding of how human beings create their spatial knowledge, how they deploy their spatial intelligence. It's absolutely crucial because in every dialogue between an architect and a client you're actually engaging two silent discourses- the client's history in space, your history in space, and the architectural proposal. My belief about an architectural education is that the student starts at the beginning, choosing between positions within architecture but also must carry out what is almost a psycho-analytic in-depth examination of their own history in space so that they know how their preferences have been formed.

**Kay Ngee:** But this approach may not work for certain less fortunate students. Let's say students from Singapore, who have been brought up in a small environment, like a HDB flat.

Is there a learning process that you actually have to unlearn what you learnt? I'm trying to see whether you can do the reverse.

**Leon:** You can, but first of all don't underestimate what happens in



an HDB flat. You're still being born into this world as a child. You're learning (knocking) about texture, about touch and feel, about sound of space, about all of these things. It is an amazing learning process which rapidly disappears into the unconscious because the whole human system is one where everything becomes automatic so you can focus on what the task at hand is.

Now, a child being born into an HDB flat is going through all of those experiences. The play, finding out about texture is not just in a flat, but in a city. The richness of what's available, even as you show in your own columns is not confined to an HDB flat. Even within those confines there are wonderful spatial things happening which we lose. We surface them again on holiday. All of the works of architecture that have moved me have been places that you walk into and your shoulders go back and you go "ah." Somehow that architecture has found a way of creating a space that puts you back in touch with that knowledge that you've developed, everything that you've developed.

**Kay Ngee:** It is how one expresses oneself. I think what you say about the spatial experiences is also to do with the inborn sensitivities to spaces.

**Leon:** Which is both inborn but then unfolds like language in a real place. It's those two things coming together. Now the problem with architecture, as a curriculum driven education, is that architecture is defined as a profession in the 1840's around the construction industry. That notion of the master builder is a problem for architecture because it is not a knowledge body that architects can claim to have custody of. Engineers have it, builders have it, every do-it-yourself merchant has it, and the profession, I believe, has failed to understand that the fundamental thing that an architect can provide is good space, good spatiality.

So the history of every student in space is a treasure and it should be treasured by that student in particular, but it should also be recognized and encouraged as something overtly studied by schools.

**Kay Ngee:** Can you define the three elements? You say, one of them can be technology. What are the other two?

**Leon:** Well, let me step back one move from that. The argument about the three poles is something which comes from exhaustive



陳：好，我們稍微轉一下話題，這很有意思，因為我正在想奧托·華格納，他的建築從來不是純美學的，那時期的約瑟夫·霍夫曼也是。好像他們被埋沒了... 現在這年頭密斯美學如此「當道」，建築師們很容易就隨波逐流跟著流行走。

里歐：這其實帶到第二個問題，我們從現代主義接收過來的另一個問題是一種到處籠罩一切的外貌，現代主義很快就滲落到這地步。

陳：它其實並沒有豐富現代建築語。

里歐：建築是個人空間歷史和經典作品之間的交集。本土文化及其自我形成之方式是建築有意思的地方的關鍵所在。觀念塑成，並且在世界各地快速流通，這就是現在我們知道的所謂大動脈共振。

建築裡面的良師之一就是城市：你所在的城市，跟你所經歷過的城市的歷史。我很喜歡艾瑞克·霍布斯堡姆說自己是布拉提斯拉伐／維也納／漢普斯特／紐約人。我們每一個人，如果幸運的話，都會建立起這樣一段過去，而今天我們收的特別幸運的學生，我們學生來自全球各地，很令人興奮...

陳：澳洲本地生跟外國學生的比例如何？

里歐：大約百分之六十是澳洲學生，百分之四十是外國學生。但他們有的來自挪威，有的是德國，亞洲各國，還有墨西哥。我來墨爾本皇家理工大學時，我決定收外國學生，原本一直都有一兩位外國學生，因為執行哥倫波計劃，但我當時就決定門戶大開，招收全世界各地來的學生。

這也是慢慢累積的，剛開始我們學生主要來自亞洲的英語地區，但現在不只了，還有亞洲的非英語區，當然也有越來越多的歐洲和美國人。今天的學生會跟與他有著完全不同的空間歷史的同學一起上課，這就可以學到極多。我也希望外國來的學生了解，他們等於也把墨爾本加到屬於他們的城市名單上。他們需要與這城市發生關係，它的藝廊、它的文化表現，抓住能抓的一切，把它們放進自己的空間經驗裡面。

陳：這很像我在倫敦的經驗，遇到冰島、德國、日本來的同學，你跟同學學到的跟從老師那兒學到的一樣多。在學校受完訓練後，你還會把自己延伸到那些地方，因為你還是會跟那些同學保持聯絡。

里歐：14 歲時，我從一個原本以為就是全部世界的體系移除，被帶入英國的環境，我發現到我不是英國人，且英國人建立了一套完全不同的空間場域，這個差異強大至你可以開始在空間體系的邊緣底下展開你的探索，對於一個念建築的學生而言，當你開始看到不同的社會生產出不一樣空間形式的構造時，這是一個突破點。

某種程度也回到你的問題 –「建築教育有西方模式嗎？」我很確定答案是有的，世界上80%的建築系學生依循這種絕對是不好的西方模式的課程基礎。

陳：我之所以會問這個問題，在於東方過去有一種師徒制的傳承形式，以中國為例，如果你要學建築，你在工坊向大師學藝，這樣的傳統似乎已經完全消逝，倘若有人要蓋中國式建築，不是複製古代廟宇、就是模仿舊建築，對我來說這是中國建築的終結，傳授中國建築的方法已經不再存在。因此我開始思考，因為在今日如果要實踐建築教育，連帶代表你必須要知道所有的運動，你必須要瞭解文藝復興以及所有其他，這絕對會給你一個這類的框架作為工作的基礎，即便是你質疑這個基礎、或者對這個文化不感興趣，也很難瓦解這個基礎，因為你看中國，他們不做他們應該做的事情，一味採用西方建築，這就是為什麼我扯出一個題外話，我一直在想建築是不是有其他教學方式可以更貼近地方與文化，或許這沒有答案，只是一個幻想。

里歐：我不認為它是幻想，這不就是我們在談的嗎？如果人們認真地瞭解他們的空間歷史，同時受制於一種只是單向吸收西方基本教條的建築教育，那麼另一種不同的建築取向應該要浮現，我同意你說在中國建築教育發生的每件事情，除了和西方沒什麼兩樣這個說法，我認為西方直到1840 年代以前也是以工坊為基礎。

如果你遊走在世界各處，你將會認識它們，並且你會看到一個很糟的黑川紀章(Kurukawa)以傳真的方式出現，這裡有一棟貝聿銘(I.M. Pei)設計的作品，他來澳洲的時間不足以瞭解雪梨，甚至沒有到墨爾本，那邊卻有一棟他的作品，

這種收購建築的觀點，如同瘟疫般襲擊新加坡以及所有同樣處境的城市，擁有幾棟來自其他文化的建築物當然無傷大雅，但除非你真正強烈地支持自身城市的建築文化，否則你什麼都沒有。

陳：在教學上為了要能夠啟發學生你所提到的事情，聽起來似乎要加強身體力行，我知道有些學校如威尼斯、或米蘭，特別是義大利建築學院，他們一次授課的人數有上百名。在你的學校，你是否發現這類一對一、更親近的指導，其必備的教學重要元素為何？唯有與學生近距離的討論才能瞭解分析並向學生說明用意，因此這部分的教育，是否如同個人經驗的傳授？

里歐：稍早我們提到在一個關鍵的架構下，學生與學生之間有很緊密的關係，我確信那些擁有上千名學生的學院是這樣操作的，如我們在AA 這般較為幸運的處境，教職員與學生之間一對一的互動是複製加乘的，而較為欠缺的是需要嚴謹空間智慧的架構。

studies of human knowledge...Randal Collins in particular. It's foot-noted in the book (Mastering Architecture). He for example has studied the sociology-philosophy, both East and West, the oldest body of recorded human knowledge. He finds in every period where there's been fruitful creative transformation, intellectual change, it is because there is a powerful argument going on between three positions; one of the things that's been known about architecture for a very long time.

So those three positions sit in the background. Currently the technology one; some of the most interesting people are involved in environmental and sustainable design. That's their emphasis in that area and how these things are expressed each time is something that evolves.

The tragedy for architecture and for most architectural discourse is that modernism was so badly understood by architecture. Modernism was seen as "the one true path" and there was a complete stool of other ways of doing things. It was a very destructive period in architecture.

Kay Ngee: Well just by diverting slightly, it's interesting because I was thinking about Otto Wagner his architecture is never pure aesthetic and Joseph Hoffman of that period. Somehow they were overshadowed but isn't it...Miesian esthetic is so "in" these days there is a danger of people, of architects simply follow the trend.

Leon: This comes to the second question really, but one of the other problems that we inherit from modernism is a look which is washed over everything everywhere and modernism decayed into that very rapidly.

Kay Ngee: It actually hasn't enriched the language of modern architecture.

Leon: Architecture is the intersection between personal histories in space and the cannon however expressed. The local culture and how it forms itself is the crucial part about what's interesting in architecture. Ideas form and they flow around the world in a rapid rate of knots. This is what is now known as aortic resonance.

One of the great teachers of architecture is the city; the city that you're in and the history of the cities that you've experienced. I very much like Eric Hobsbawm description of himself as a Bratislava-Viennese-Hampstead-New Yorker. All of us, if we're lucky, build up a history like that and you know the really lucky students that we get today, because we get students all over the world which is so exciting...

Kay Ngee: What is the percentage of Australian versus foreign students?

Leon: It's round-about sixty percent Australian and forty percent foreign, but they come from Norway, they come from Germany, they come from every part of Asia, they come from Mexico. When I came to RMIT I took the decision to take in foreign students, there had always been one or two on account of continuation of the Columbo Plan but I took the decision to open the doors to anyone who came from around the world.

It's been building, first of all we get mainly from the English speaking parts of Asia, but its now not only that part of the world but also the non-English speaking parts of Asia and of course more and more Europeans and Americans. Now, a student today will typically be in a

class with people who have had a totally different history in space and they can learn so much from that. I also want people who come from overseas to understand, that one of the things they are doing is they're adding Melbourne to one of their lists of cites that belongs to them in that way. They need to really engage the city, its galleries, it's cultural expressions and take everything they can from that and add it to their portfolio of spatial experiences.

Kay Ngee: Very much like my experience in London meeting people from Iceland, Germany, Japan, and you learn as much from the teacher as much as the students themselves. After the training you've had in that school you still extend yourself to these places because you're still in touch with these people.

Leon: What happened to me at the age of fourteen being taken out of one system, which of course I believed to be the world in its entirety ... when I was taken from that situation to England, I discovered that I was not English and that the English had constructed an entirely different spatial realm. The difference was so powerful that you can begin to get your feelers underneath the edge of their spatial system. That is a breakthrough moment for a student in architecture, when you begin to see how different societies build different spatial constructs.

In some ways that comes to your question- "is there a Western-mode to architectural education?" I'm sure the answer is yes and that eighty percent of the architecture schools in the world follow that curriculum basis which is definitely a bad western model.

Kay Ngee: The reason that I ask that question is that in the East there used to be a sort of workshop, atelier system. If you were to learn architecture, let's say in China, you learn from the master in the workshop. That tradition seems to have completely died. If someone were to do Chinese architecture it's either copying an old temple or mimicking ancient architecture. That is for me termination of development of Chinese architecture. The way of teaching Chinese architecture is no longer there, so I start to think because of, if you were to have architecture education these days it means automatically you have to learn about all the movement. You have to learn about the Renaissance and all that. It definitely gives you the sort of like framework as a basis that you work on. That is very hard to shake away of, even if you question this basis and also culturally you become boring because you look at China. They don't do things that they should do. They just adopt Western Architecture. That's why I ask you a trick question. I've been thinking if there is another way of teaching architecture that really relates to, the place and the culture. I mean maybe there's no answer to it because it's just a fantasy.

Leon: Well I don't think it is. I mean isn't that what we've been talking about? If people seriously study their own histories in space and are subjected to an architectural education that is simply absorbing the canon which is fundamentally western, then a different kind of architectural approach should emerge. I agree with everything you say about what's happened in Chinese architectural education, not that it was very different from the West, I mean the West was also Atelier based until the 1840's...

If you go around the world you'll come to know them and you'll see a bad Kurukawa which arrived by fax. There's an I.M. Pei, I.M. Pei came to Australia didn't get beyond Sydney didn't even reach Melbourne but we have one of his buildings.



有一定數量的一對一模式是好的，太多反倒不利，會養成一種依賴，事實上它會阻礙學生的成長，更好的方式是當一個學生團體聚集在一塊，開始反抗、提出「為什麼？」的時候，他們透過彼此引導出這樣的結果，有一個很棒的故事是皮瑞斯(Pilar Gonzales Pereis)告訴我，有關法蘭寇(Franco)在一夕之間增加西班牙大學學生數目的經過。是這樣的，有一些原本在演講會場上的學生走出來，其他在外面等待的學生便抓著他們問「他們說了什麼、他們說了什麼？他們不可能這樣說，他們有這樣說嗎？」接著他們到咖啡館去，他們會有書、他們辯論，這種時刻幾乎是理想的建築教育類型。

陳：好了，我們談過建築的歷史與所有其他，我想聽聽你開始在墨爾本皇家理工大學(RMIT)的經驗，以及你遇過什麼樣的困難？請問你將這間學校視為與AA、巴特雷(Bartlett)等相同體系學校的一部份嗎？請問你對RMIT與這些學校相同或相異之處的看法？

里歐：首先，我並沒有從RMIT這間學院開始，它成立於1887年，是一所具有百年歷史的學院，事實上它將近有150年的歷史，且就像AA它歷經不同時期的多樣品質，曾經有過興盛與衰退的時期。當出現一位真正優秀的實踐者領導全局，就會出現一段好的時期，在艾德華時期，就非常棒，這很驚人，藝術、工藝運動建築師在當時領導整間學院，RMIT選擇我是因為在許多方面他們同意我的建築哲理，於是他們把我引進去。

陳：在我心中一想到美國教育系統以及其中的冗長教條，也會有這樣的問題，你認為這與美國之事環境較為相關嗎？在某方面，他們非常相信與義大利相像、相似的傳統。

里歐：我不知道這是什麼，但有些地方的教職體系裡，為了要求得一職，需要表現出某種偽學者的方式，RMIT是世界上少數學院之一，我認為AA是其一，其他尚有西敏寺、巴雷特、南加州建築學院亦名列其中，我們有教學單元系統，在一個教學單元與實務－學術之間，有多樣複合的學生級數。

當年剛成為AA的學生時，第一年你必須在馬克、費雪(Mark Fisher)的瘋狂科技，白派建築(白色塊體建築)，或是葛瑞米、賽(Graeme Shane)的都市系統，三者間選取一個學習。當你順著體制前進，便覺得「天啊！我好像錯過很多？」不論你選擇的是瘋狂科技、白派建築或都市系統，都是在學習「他們在做什麼？」這便是這課程的特殊之處。

我不認為這些年來我們與美國學院有很好的連結，因為極少學校有這樣的感知力，許多學校著迷於理論的狂熱，關於如何與亞洲連結這個命題，我認為會透過我們的學生逐步蔓延。

陳：透過學生這方面，我們來談談亞洲...

里歐：我們在東京、台北執行出非常成功的都市研究，也在吉隆坡進行了一個很棒的調查。

我們從亞洲獲得無比的收穫，因為這裡的豐富性激發出學校裡的基礎教育，因為學生在亞洲環境的薰陶之下，並且他們接觸到澳洲人、墨西哥人以及成就自身的所有事物。

陳：一直以來有一種強烈的促使，想要在亞洲成立一間我們現在所沒有的，好的建築學校，最接近的就是RMIT。我不知道澳洲人將如何定義他們自己，是否是亞洲的一部份。這是否對RMIT來說正是一個好時機，去實質地承擔亞洲的身份？因為我們招收許多亞洲的學生，還有你之前說過的那一切，是否在不久的將來，可能我們能夠說：「啊，我們真為RMIT感到驕傲，因為它是亞洲最好的學校。」我知道我有點擴大了範圍。

里歐：這是要以城市為基礎的。據我觀察NUS(新加坡國立大學)的狀況來說，舉它為例，並非是因為它不在亞洲，而是它不斷地向建築明星「磕頭」。現在當我來到RMIT的第一件事，就是停止那所謂的國際系列。他們過去習於將他們所有的經費，用來聘請海外知名的建築師，在大講堂中對著成千的人們教課，而我說：「你們之中，有多少人曾被他們回頭邀請？」而他們說：「沒有任何一個。」所以我說：「當他們邀請我們，跟我們邀請他們一樣頻繁的時候，我們可以再度開始這件事情。但我要抱歉的說，這不是建築教育的樣子。不是遙遠地朝向羅傑斯(Richard Rogers)、佛斯特(Norman Foster)或舒米(Bernard Tschumi)那些，你列舉得出名字的建築師腳下膜拜。」

如果RMIT可以在亞洲提供些什麼的話，那就是建築教育如何在五年之後還持續下去。所有的這些研究指出，大約要花上十年的功夫，才能創造出一個能夠實際展現出建築熟練度的作品。這是否已經成為這種熟練度的自然法則？對每個人來說，這會是不一樣的：接著立足其上，再做出一個躍進，又是另外十年了，然後你就必須要再評估另一個平台。優秀的建築師會這樣做，他們工作再工作，然後評估，工作再工作、評估，接著再度躍進，而非站在那邊不動。

[翻譯：姚大鈞、李思微、吳秉業]  
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That kind of notion of architecture being something that you can buy off the shelf has plagued Singapore and plagues all cities that do this kind of thing. It certainly doesn't hurt to have a few buildings which are from another culture, but unless you are really strongly supporting the architectural culture of a city you've got nothing.

**Kay Ngee:** To inspire students in a way of teaching you mention sounds very labor intensive. I know that some schools like in Venice they have, or Milan or especially Italian architecture school they teach the class in the hundreds. In your school do you find the sort of like, one to one, more intimate tutorial a must or an important factor of teaching? Only by talking closely to the student can you then understand analyze and also explain the intention back to the student? So is that part of education, like having one to one experiences?

**Leon:** Well, we said earlier it's student and student having a critical relationship within a critical framework. I'm sure that's what happens in those schools with thousands of students. In our more privileged situation such as the Architectural Association what is a one to one between staff and student that gets replicated. What's missing though is a framework which takes seriously spatial intelligence.

A certain amount of one on one is good, too much is bad. It becomes a dependency and it can in fact stunt the growth of the student. Far better is when a student group gets together and starts to rebel, to question "why?" Very often they drive that through each other. There's a wonderful story that Pilar Gonzales Pereis told me about what happened when Franco, overnight, multiplied the numbers of students in the universities in Spain. What happened was that the few students who could get into the lectures would come out and the other students who were waiting outside would grab them and say "what did they say, what did they say, they couldn't have said that, could they have said that?" Then they went off to the cafes and they'd have the books and they argued. That's almost the kind of idealized architectural moment.

**Kay Ngee:** Okay, I think we spoke about the history of architecture and all that. I'd like to hear your experience of starting RMIT and what sort of problem did you encounter? Do you see the school as part of the same system as the AA and the Bartlett? Inevitably you come from the AA and you have a very similar type of background to some of this type of school. How do you see RMIT in the same or different to these schools?

**Leon:** The first thing is I didn't start the school at RMIT. It's a hundred years old. It was started in 1887; it's nearly one-hundred fifty years old actually, and it's had various periods of quality like the AA. There have been periods when it's been powerful and periods when it's not. It's always been good when there's been a really good practitioner leading it. In the Edwardian Period, it was really good. It was fantastic, arts and crafts movement architects leading the school at that period. In many ways the RMIT chose me because they agreed with my architectural philosophy. They imported me.

**Kay Ngee:** I also have that question in my mind always about American Education system and also the wordiness of it. Do you think it is more to do with the American intellectual environment? They believe a lot in the tradition of talking like, similar to Italian in a way.

**Leon:** I don't know what it is but somewhere in the tenure system or something, it requires people to perform in a certain kind of pseudo-

scholarly manner in order to have a job at all. RMIT is one of the handful of schools in the world and I think the AA is one, Westminster is one, the Bartlett is one and Sci-Arc is one where we have the unit system, the multiple levels of students in one unit and the practitioner-academic.

When you arrived as a student at the AA you had to pick between Mark Fisher, a kind of mad technology, that old guy from Oregon and it was all White Architecture, White Box Architecture, or Graeme Shane and the way out for me, urban systems. So first year student-urban systems, mad technology or white architecture? You look at that afterward and you go "my God what did I miss?" Well, even though you were doing mad technology, or looking at the white architecture, and you were looking at Graeme Shane's lot and you were "what do they do?" the learning that came from that was just extraordinary.

I don't think we relate to the United States schools very well at all these days because so few of them have this kind of sensibility. Many of them are consumed by this theory mania. The question about how we relate to Asia I think is fundamentally through our students.

**Kay Ngee:** So speaking about Asia through the students...

**Leon:** I mean we run very successful urban investigations in Tokyo, in Taipei, we did a very good one in Kuala Lumpur.

We benefit enormously from Asia because of the richness that it brings to the education in the school fundamentally because the students are exposed to Asia, and they are exposed to Australians, and Mexicans and what have you.

**Kay Ngee:** There has been this strong urge to want to have a good architectural school in Asia and there isn't one. The closest to getting one is actually RMIT. I don't know how Australian would define themselves whether they are part of Asia or not. Is it good opportunity for RMIT to actually take on the Asian identity? Because we have quite a huge number of Asian student and all that, is there possibility that we can say in the near future that "oh we are so proud of RMIT because it's the best school in Asia." ? I'm pushing the boundary a bit I know.

**Leon:** It has to be city based. The problems that I observe with the NUS for example are not that it is not in Asia but that it is "kow towing" endlessly to the stars. Now the first thing that I did when I went to RMIT is to stop what was called the International Series. They used to put all of their money into bringing famous overseas architects to lecture to a thousand people in a hall and I said "how many of you have been invited back?" and they said "not one" so I said "when they invite us as often as we invite them then we can start this again but I'm sorry this is not what an architectural education is about. It is not worshipping distantly at the feet of Richard Rogers, Norman Foster Bernard Tschumi you name it."

If there was something that RMIT could offer in Asia it's that model of how education doesn't stop after five years. All the research indicates it takes about ten years to create a body of work that demonstrates mastery. Having done that what is the nature of that Mastery? For each individual it will be different, building on that, a leap, and then another ten years, then you have to reassess, another platform. The great architects, they do that. They work and work and then they assess, work and work asses, and leap again and they don't stand still.

This interview was held in Singapore on 17 June 2006.