



**LACATON & VASSAL:  
ROTHWELL CHAIR SYMPOSIUM 2021**



Living in the city: exemplary social and affordable housing design

27-29 April 2021

The Rothwell Chair Symposium 2021 inaugurates the 3-year appointment of Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal and will explore the topic: Living in the city - exemplary social and affordable housing design.

“Inhabiting is the most wonderful challenge for contemporary architecture.”

As a key issue in making the city comfortable, welcoming and affordable, Anne Lacaton and Jean Philippe Vassal want to highlight the quality of housing. They defend the principle of generosity of space as a critical condition for living well in big cities.

“Every dwelling should be like a villa,” is the aim of all their housing projects. In each, through winter gardens and balconies that enable inhabitants to conserve energy and access nature during all seasons, they increase the amount of living space exponentially and inexpensively. This is their rule that they systematically apply to the creation of new housing as well as through the transformation of all existing buildings, which they see as an immense, unique opportunity.

“Transformation is the opportunity to do more and better with what already exists.” They oppose demolition that they consider an enormous waste, of energy, of material, of history ... and with a profoundly negative social impact.

Anne Lacaton and Jean Philippe Vassal have been selected as the 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates.

The Pritzker jury citation echoes The Rothwell Symposium topic: “By prioritising the enrichment of human life through a lens of generosity and freedom of use, ... this benefits the individual socially, ecologically and economically, aiding the evolution of a city.”

*(Front Cover) Transformation of G, H, I Buildings, Grand Parc, 530 Units, Social Housing (with Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin). Photo courtesy of Philippe Ruault*

**The Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional owners of the land on which the University of Sydney is built: the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.**

**The Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning pays respect to the knowledge embedded forever in the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.**

27 – 29  
04.2021

# Lacaton & Vassal: Rothwell Chair Symposium Program

27.04 TUES

Session 1, 6:30–8pm AEST

**Living in the city: transformation, intensification**

Lecture: Lacaton & Vassal

Moderator: Catherine Lassen

Panel: Lacaton & Vassal, Catherine Lassen, Hannes Frykholm

28.04 WED

Session 2, 12–1:30pm AEST

**Living in the city: re-thinking housing models – Victoria**

Presentations: Clare Cousins, Quino Holland, Rob McGauran

Moderator: Roderick Simpson

Panel: Roderick Simpson, all speakers

Session 3, 6:30–8pm AEST

**Living in the city: re-thinking housing models**

Presentations: Irénée Scalbert, Sophie Delhay, Christophe Hutin

Moderator: Kate Goodwin

Panel: Lacaton & Vassal, Kate Goodwin, all speakers

29.04 THURS

Session 4, 12–1:30pm AEST

**Living in the city: new propositions, questioning politics, planning and policy**

Presentations/Round Table: Peter John Cantrill, Nicole Gurrán, Future Method Studio, Matthew Bennett

Moderator: Olivia Hyde

Session 5, 6:30–8pm AEST

**Living in the city: new propositions, questioning cost-per-square-metre and generosity**

Presentations: Lacaton & Vassal, Andreas Hofer, Florian Köhl

Moderator: Hannes Frykholm

Panel: Catherine Lassen, Hannes Frykholm, all speakers



A major gift from alumni Garry and Susan Rothwell established the Garry and Susan Rothwell Chair in Architectural Design Leadership with a purpose 'to develop, through architecture and urbanism innovation, the capacity to create environments which improve people's quality of life'.

Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal, French architects who have recently been named 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates, were appointed co-chairs of the inaugural, three-year Rothwell Chair at the Sydney School of Architecture, Design & Planning in 2020 to explore their topic: *'we propose to deal with contemporary urban conditions of living in the city'*.

We are very excited to launch their appointment with the Lacaton & Vassal: Rothwell Chair Symposium 2021 – Living in the city at the new Chau Chak Wing Museum from 27–29 April.

The Rothwell Chair Symposium 2021 is a free, online event and will showcase exemplary social and affordable housing design by International and Australian architectural firms and researchers, with an emphasis on engaging the real political, financial and planning contexts.

## Living in the city: transformation, intensification

This introductory session will focus on conditions that provide us with good and affordable housing in cities: generosity of space; freedom of use; appropriation of what exists; smart relationships with the climate. Transformation offers this opportunity. To make-do with and to transform allows us to do much more with less.

**Welcome to Country:** Yvonne Weldon, Chairperson, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council

**Introduction:** Vice Chancellor, Prof Stephen Garton, University of Sydney

**Introduction:** Head of School and Dean, Prof Robyn Dowling, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning

**Moderator:** Catherine Lassen, Senior Lecturer, Rothwell Chair Coordinator, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning

**Panel:** Lacaton & Vassal, Catherine Lassen, Hannes Frykholm, Rothwell Postdoctoral Associate (from August 2021)

**Speakers:** Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal (FR), Garry and Susan Rothwell Co-Chairs in Architectural Design Leadership, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning



Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal, 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates, established Lacaton & Vassal in Paris (1987), and have since demonstrated boldness through their design of new buildings and transformative projects. For over three decades, they have designed private and social housing, cultural and academic institutions, public space, and urban strategies. The duo's architecture reflects their advocacy of social justice and sustainability, by prioritising a generosity of space and freedom of use through economical and ecological means.

*Photo courtesy of Laurent Chalet*

[Grand Parc](#), 530 Units Social Housing (with Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin), Bordeaux, France 2017 [A]

*Transformation of G, H, I Buildings, Grand Parc, 530 Units, Social Housing (with Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin). Photo courtesy of Philippe Ruault*



[Saint-Nazaire](#), France 2011 [B]

*53 Units, Low-Rise Apartments, Social Housing. Photo courtesy of Philippe Ruault*



(A) The three buildings within this 1960s social-housing development, range from ten to fifteen stories and include 530 apartments. In a similar manner to the transformation of Tour Bois le Prêtre (Paris, 2011), qualities of space and comfort were achieved by removing the building facade and extending the interiors outward to create new spaces, forming bioclimatic winter gardens or balconies. The result was the near doubling of size of some units and a dramatic visual reinvention that challenges the aesthetic conventions of social housing.

(B) This low-income social housing development consists of 53 units organised in a series of three-story buildings, each with six apartments. The units include private gardens for each ground-floor residence and balconies or winter gardens on those of the upper floors. The architects' use of transparent, retractable polycarbonate panels and insulating thermal curtains throughout the interior rooms create comfortable environments full of light that are also ecologically and economically responsible.

## Living in the city: re-thinking housing models – Victoria

What new typologies offer improved social, spatial, environmental and economical alternatives to the current familiar affordable housing modes? This session will present some contemporary local projects with shifted realisation strategies that have helped to promote more generous, community driven, well designed and affordable living conditions.

**Moderator:** Roderick Simpson

Roderick Simpson is an architect and urbanist. Until September 2020, he was the inaugural Environment Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission. Before that he was director of the Urban Design and Urbanism programs at the University of Sydney. He is currently an Adjunct Professor, Faculty of the Built Environment UNSW.

**Panel:** All speakers

**Speakers:** Clare Cousins (Clare Cousins Architects), Quino Holland (Fieldwork), Rob McGauran (MGS Architects)



Clare Cousins established her Melbourne practice, Clare Cousins Architects, in 2005. Engaged in projects large and small, the studio has a particular interest in housing and projects that nurture community. Clare is a Life Fellow and Past National President of the Australian Institute of Architects.

*Photo courtesy of Jes Lindsay*



Quino Holland is an award-winning architect and director of Fieldwork. Quino has worked in the industry since 2001, on large and complex mixed-use, commercial, multi-residential and cultural projects. From 2011-2019, he co-founded and was design director of *Assemble*, a real estate development group focused on projects where design, community and sustainability go hand-in-hand.

*Photo courtesy of Quino Holland*



A founding director of MGS Architects, Rob McGauran leads the masterplanning, design advocacy and urban design disciplines in the practice including award winning Urban, Campus and Precinct renewals and Affordable Housing, Heritage Renewal, Mixed-use and Local Government projects. He is a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne, an Adjunct Professor at Monash University and a board member of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

*Photo courtesy of Rob McGauran*



## [Nightingale Evergreen \(Melbourne\) \[1\]](#)

Photo courtesy of Thurston Empson

## [393 Macaulay Road Kensington \(Melbourne\) \[2\]](#)

Visualisation courtesy of Gabriel Saunders

## [VincentCare Victoria Resource Centre \(Melbourne\) \[3\]](#)

Photo courtesy of Trevor Mein





## Living in the city: re-thinking housing models

Which new housing typologies respond to inhabitants' expectations in terms of quality of life, environmental criteria and economy? This session will present interesting contemporary projects sustained by research into new typologies but will also refer to modernity through 'historical' examples that brought together both an innovative housing proposal and an 'enlightened' commission, for example in France, Ivry-sur-Seine housing by architects Gailhoustet and Renaudie.

**Moderator:** Kate Goodwin, Professor of Practice, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning. Head of Architecture and Heinz Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts

**Panel:** Lacaton & Vassal & speakers

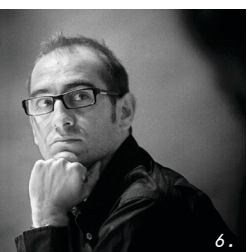
**Speakers:** Irénée Scalbert (UK), Sophie Delhay (FR), Christophe Hutin (FR)



Irénée Scalbert is an architectural critic and historian based in London. He has taught at the GSD, Harvard, the Politecnico in Milan and other universities. He recently returned to the AA School in London where he lectures in the Housing and Urbanism graduate programme.



Sophie Delhay Architecte strives to go beyond conventional housing models and typologies. Unit(s), a manifesto project of 240 rooms, establishes a dialogue between the large and the small scale. To surpass norms, the project de-assigns and deprograms rooms, allowing a freedom of uses.



Christophe Hutin is an architect and researcher at the Bordeaux National School of Architecture. He studied and documented townships and squatter camps near Johannesburg, published in *Learning from Soweto, Construct freely*, with Patrice Goulet. His research on housing in South Africa includes urban development in critical sites (informal housing, squat, etc.). In collaboration with Lacaton and Vassal (Grand Parc, Social Housing, Bordeaux, France 2017) he won the European Union prize & Mies van der Rohe prize in 2019. Christophe has been appointed curator of the French pavilion for the 2021 Venice Biennale focused on his project "communities at work."

## [Ivry-sur-Seine Social Housing](#)

Complex by Jean Renaudie and Renée Gailhoustet [4]

**Topic:** The idea of type was supported by the conception of a class-based society, by a fascination with industrial, serial production and by the priority given to economy. Later in the 20th century, it was strengthened by the study of types in history. The basis for this view evaporated in the 1970s. The repetitive mass housing which had exemplified social harmony and equality became a sign of oppression whereas difference came to be seen as a means to liberation. Today the idea of type lies in ruin. Difference matters more than ever.

*Givors Social Housing, complex by Jean Renaudie*



## [Unité\(s\)](#) [5]

**Project:** Considering housing as a collection of rooms of identical size, freely networked, without hierarchy and without assignment, offers an emancipated vision of living and human relationships.

*Photo courtesy of Sophie Delhay*



## [High Plateaux: structure and freedom](#) [6]

*Image courtesy Christophe Hutin*



## Living in the city: new propositions, questioning politics, planning and policy

What are some of the economic, planning and policy questions in proposing new architectural and urban designs for local affordable housing?

**Moderator:** Olivia Hyde, Professor of Practice, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning, Director of Design Excellence at Government Architect NSW

### Round table panel

**Speaker:** Peter John Cantrill, architect and Urban Design Program Manager, City of Sydney

**Topic:** 'The City of Sydney's alternate approach to the remaking of Waterloo estate'

**Speakers:** Joel Sherwood-Spring and Genevieve Zoe Murray, Future Method Studio

**Topic:** Indigenous Self-Determination and Spatial Dynamics of Resistance in the neighbourhoods of Redfern and Waterloo

**Speaker:** Professor Nicole Gurrán, Urban and Regional Planning, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning

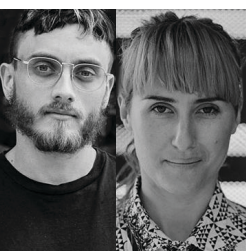
**Topic:** Nicole will outline key political and policy barriers to progressing affordable housing in the Australian context, and propose pathways for change.

**Speaker:** Matthew Bennett, architect, Bennett and Trimble

**Topic:** Matthew will discuss recent project experiences and the importance of developing robust urban and architectural strategies to balance development expectations with public domain opportunities that are designed to reconnect and re-integrate these estates with surrounding urban areas. These experiences foreground the possibilities and challenges in considering housing projects as city-making opportunities within our current policy, funding and planning frameworks.



Peter John Cantrill is Urban Design Program Manager in Strategic Planning and Urban Design at the City of Sydney where he leads the City's alternate approach to the remaking of Waterloo housing estate. He is the author of *Public Sydney - drawing the city* with Philip Thalys and has won State, National and International awards in architecture, planning and landscape architecture including the 2009 AIA NSW Presidents Prize for outstanding contribution to the profession.



Directed by Wiradjuri interdisciplinary artist Joel Sherwood-Spring and white settler Genevieve Zoe Murray, Future Method Studio works collaboratively on projects that sit outside established notions of contemporary art & architecture attempting to transfigure spatial dynamics of power through discourse, political activism, pedagogy, art, design and architectural practice. The studio is focussed on examining the contested narratives of Australia's urban cultural and indigenous history in the face of ongoing colonisation.



*Transformation of G. H. I Buildings, Grand Parc, 530 Units, Social Housing (with Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin). Photo courtesy of Philippe Ruault*



Nicole Gurran is an urban planner and policy analyst whose research focuses on comparative urban planning systems and approaches to housing and ecological sustainability. As Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, ADP, Nicole has led and collaborated on a series of research projects on aspects of urban policy, housing, sustainability and planning, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), the Australian Urban and Housing Research Institute (AHURI), as well as state and local government. Recent research has included AHURI Inquiries on affordable housing supply (2016-21).



Matthew Bennett is a director of Bennett and Trimble, contributing to architectural and urban projects in the public domain. A graduate of Harvard and the University of Sydney, Matthew serves on the Sydney Metro Design Advisory Panel and NSW State Design Review Panel. He has worked with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation to renew a series of large social housing estates within metropolitan Sydney. Such projects must balance a complex series of social, political, economic and planning constraints to redevelop neighbourhoods with designs that also support communities of social, affordable and market-driven residents.



## Living in the city: new propositions, questioning cost-per-square-metre and generosity

It is necessary today to rethink how we want to live. What do we expect from living space?

How can we find conditions to create innovative and affordable housing in cities (in the sense of the amount of space and the quality of life it provides), while many large cities are now demolishing existing housing in favor of unaffordable 'investment' housing? This session will highlight experiences from innovative and qualitative affordable housing solutions and innovative modes of realisation in Europe.

**Welcome:** Associate Professor Dagmar Reinhardt, Head of Architecture, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning

**Moderator:** Hannes Frykholm, Rothwell Postdoctoral Associate

**Panel:** Catherine Lassen, all speakers

**Conclusion:** Head of School and Dean, Prof Robyn Dowling, Sydney School of Architecture, Design & Planning

**Speakers:** Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal (FR), Andreas Hofer (DE), Florian Köhl (DE)



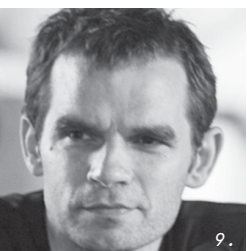
Anne Lacaton & Jean Philippe Vassal, 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureates, established Lacaton & Vassal in Paris (1987), and have since demonstrated boldness through their design of new buildings and transformative projects. For over three decades, they have designed private and social housing, cultural and academic institutions, public space, and urban strategies.

*Photo courtesy of Laurent Chalet*



Andreas Hofer studied architecture at the Swiss Institute for Technology (ETH) Zurich. In 2018 he was elected as director for the International Building Exhibition in Stuttgart (Internationale Bauausstellung 2027 StadtRegion Stuttgart), 100 years after the Stuttgart Weissenhofsiedlung. In Zurich he has worked as a consultant and project developer for innovative cooperative housing projects such as [Kraftwerk1](#) and [mehr als wohnen](#) (more than living).

*Photo courtesy of Sven Weber*



Fatkoehl architects is a Berlin based office founded by architect Florian Köhl in 2002. The studio searches for ways of relating people through architecture with their urban surroundings and spearheaded alternative architectural production models in the Berlin housing market in the early 2000s. They were instrumental in the development of a new building approach - co-housing - which foresaw major involvement of inhabitants. Florian Köhl has researched and taught at the Technical University of Berlin and the Bartlett School of Architecture, London. He is a co-founder of the NBBA (Network of Co-housing Architects in Berlin), Teameleven and Instant City, Berlin.

*Photo courtesy Florian Koehl*



[Cité Manifeste](#), Mulhouse,  
France 2001 -2005 [7]

*Photo courtesy of Philippe Ruault*



[More than Living](#), Zürich,  
2013-2015, sustainable  
housing cooperatives [8]

*Photo courtesy Flurina Rothenberger*



[Spreefeld Berlin](#), 2011 - 2013,  
Cooperative development for  
affordable housing and mixed-use [9]

*Photo courtesy Thomas Bruns*



“Transformation is the opportunity of doing more and better with what is already existing. The demolishing is a decision of easiness and short term. It is a waste of many things—a waste of energy, a waste of material, and a waste of history. Moreover, it has a very negative social impact. For us, it is an act of violence.”