Fredrick Romberg: an architectural survey

One outcome of the project, this special issue of the RMIT Design Archives Journal is presented as a collection of posters that can be read together or separately. It does not draw conclusions; it simply implies that the messy resolve of a life can be brought together on one page. Escaped down from Romberg’s own account of his life and work, and his travel scholarship papers, Ausdauer’s journey 1938-1939 addressed his early life as an architectural student in Zurich to his passage to Australia from Europe. The project is accompanied by detailed three dimensional examination of selected buildings.

The second output of ‘Fredrick Romberg: an architectural survey’ is a film by Keith Deverell who has also sought the framework for his project from among the printed material, scrapbooks, photographic album and correspondence plans of records and personal papers that from the Romberg Collection. The architect produced by the project will in turn be brought into the RMIT Design Archives, contributing a collection within a collection. This collaboration will serve as an evidences of the extraordinary life of an archive.

Project members:

Keith Deverell: film

Stephen Banham: graphic identity

Harriet Edquist: architectural historian

Michael Spooner: guest editor

Project members:

Fredrick Romberg (1937) on his BMW motorbike which was transported to Melbourne in 1938

Melbourne: RMIT University Press, 2000

Frederick Romberg: The Architecture of Migration 1936–1975

Since its beginning the RMIT Design Archives has actively sought methods of engaging contemporary design practitioners in contributing to its innovative approaches to collecting and research.

The Romberg Collection, deposited in 2000, documents the practice of eminent Melbourne architect Fredrick Romberg. It has been over ten years since the first public exhibition on Romberg’s output was held at RMIT Gallery. That exhibition and subsequent publication Fredrick Romberg: The Architecture of Migration 1936–1975, continue to serve as the most complete public record of his work to date. Fredrick Romberg: an architectural survey is a collaborative interdisciplinary project that has approached the Romberg Collection with the intention of meaning not only for architectural output but the many ways in which the collection might be seen to work and have implications for contemporary discourse on design. It has sought from the nuances of a collection - the frayed edges, the insistent folds – an active archive.

Four pieces from the collection form the focus of the Romberg project: a poignant tin box that contains Romberg’s student portfolio which he brought with him on his journey to Australia; a presentation photograph album of his early work; a red cloth album documenting a return journey to Europe; and a large green scrapbook that collages the work from Romberg’s career and clearly exhibits the hand of the architect in its creation.

Project members:

Kaye Advertisement project management

Stephan Bensch graphic identity

Keith Deverell: film

Harriet Edquist: architectural historian

Michael Spooner: guest editor

Fredrick Romberg monogram

Albums from Romberg Collection,