

TINA TZIALLAS

## Temporary design A philosophy, not an aesthetic

Sometimes, when you hear someone talk about the design of their new home, you might hear them say "I want it to look modern..." or even "I don't want it to look modern".



That is because often people associate a certain aesthetic with being 'modern' or 'contemporary'. Modernism was in fact an architectural movement (which was strong in Australia in the 1950's and 60's)... a philosophy rather than just an aesthetic. Modernism coincided with a strong shift in construction technology and a new way of thinking. The result of both these changes was a new form of expression in architecture, away from the traditional building form of heavy masonry walls, small openings and small rooms, and towards an architecture of framed buildings, large expanses of glass and open plan spaces. This could now be achieved because of advancements in engineering and materials, but more than that, because architects at the time were prepared to think of architecture differently. They maximised the opportunities that were presented to them. It wasn't about creating a new aesthetic, but more about an expression of strong architectural ideas. About maximising the possibilities.

Modernism is not dead, in fact, it has influenced many architects and the work they have done between the mid 20th century till today. It is still a relevant way of considering architecture as we are still being challenged with new technology, new materials and advancements in engineering and we are still experimenting with new forms of architectural expression. However, what was commonly happened is that some architects, and some clients, have chosen to represent 'modern' architecture as just an aesthetic... one of white walls, minimal interiors, steel, glass and concrete. The architectural intention of the modernist movement has, in some cases being ignored. We see that in residential examples all around us, and this means that far too often 'contemporary' buildings fall short of being architectural gems, and instead are nothing more than just stylised boxes.

Tina Tzialis of tina tziallas \ architecture studio has her own thoughts on this "watering down" or contemporary design, and the way that it affects our love, or our hate, of contemporary architecture. Tina says that all too often we associate con-

temporary design with the very poor suburban examples that often surround us in our build environment.

"The vast majority of the general public are not looking at contemporary architecture in the same way as designers, or even design lovers are... they are not seeing the truly magic examples of contemporary architecture that are scattered amongst the 'fakes'. Sounds a little too harsh, but Tina believes that too often contemporary architecture is despised because it is thought of as 'cold' 'stark' and 'boring'. There are some wonderful examples of contemporary residential architecture that are the exact opposite... they inspired us to once again consider the possibilities available to us by current technologies, materials and engineering. There are examples that use steel, glass and concrete together with brickwork, timber and stone to create wonderful compositions of space and form, interior spaces to lust over, and exteriors that still manage to work within the average suburban setting".

Every architect approaches design in a unique and individual way... and this design process says a lot about the kind of architecture that they are interested in creating. Tina says that her design process focuses on dissecting the client's brief to its core components, getting a good understanding of the site, and what inspires her clients before she puts pen to paper. It is these things, together with an idea of the project budget, that start to inform the design. Tina says the most important thing to her is considering the structural system from the beginning. A steel framed building results in a very different architecture to a load bearing masonry one, and considering the options early on it the design process lets the building take on its final form in a very natural way, without having to force the final building to be something or not. Once the design starts to take shape, the building starts to take an appropriate architectural form. Tina says that creating good contemporary architecture is not about conforming to 'fashion' or 'style'... of course architects are, and should be, inspired by materials and products that are available, and we grab hold of the possibilities that these offer to each project, but 'tacking on' a certain finish or material because it is trendy at the moment is a shallow way to design, and results in a building that goes out fashion quickly.

Article from The Leader

## A little bit of opera in Kogarah

KOGARAH Council launched its Music at Twilight series on Wednesday. Kogarah Mayor Nick Varvaris said a demand for music and cultural events was revealed in council's research for its community strategic plan. Opera bass baritone and pianist Steve Watson will accompany recent Sydney Conservatorium of Music opera graduate, soprano Simone Easthope, and tenor Warren Fisher, who works with Opera Australia in the series opener, called Highlights of Opera. "Both are outstanding performers. It will be entertaining and easily enjoyed by everybody," Mr Watson said. The trio have also performed at Sydney Town Hall and Sydney Opera House. The performance will include music from well-known operas Rigoletto, Turandot, Gianni Schicchi, La Traviata, The Merry Widow, Porgy and Bess and The Phantom of the Opera. Mr Watson, principal conductor of Sydney Concert Orchestra and formerly the director of the University of Western Sydney's Academy of Music, said some arias were as popular as 200 years ago. There will also be a one-hour talk on the background of some of the best-known opera arias and their composers, and a half-hour discussion with the artists after the concert. A second show will be on March 31 followed by The Magic of Mozart later in the year.

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