ETHNICITY: EXPLORING DIVERSITY IN THE SUBURBS OF GLOBALIZED SYDNEY
Presenter: Dr. Dijana Alc
Date: Wednesday, October 31
Synopsis: Metropolitan Sydney is home to diverse range of immigrants who, over time, have built their clubs, religious buildings and other structures in order to facilitate community gathering, interaction and celebration. This talk explores the complex relationship between immigrant groups and the architecture of ethnic community buildings. The discussion reflects on the experience of final year architecture students of UNSW as they have explored the capacity of urban and architectural form to engage with the creation and expression of diverse identities within the global city. This capacity of cultural building to represent specific identities is considered in relation to the contrasting but widely promoted assumption that modern and contemporary architecture of ethnic community buildings. The discussion presents a gap with regards to the examination of the role of this element, its symbolic meanings and, most notably, of how the core and its form are linked to the group’s background and conceptual basis. In this talk I will propose a reading of the structural core as a “totemic” figure. Alluding to the Shinto notion of “regeneration” — the iterative process of construction and destruction captured in the famous cyclical rebuilding of Ise Grand Shrine — the structural core is “artificial land,” an idealized territory on which a modern Japanese identity is reformulated.

THE STRUCTURAL CORE AS TOTEM: REFLECTIONS ON FORM AND SYMBOL IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF METABOLISM
Presenter: Dr Marco Pompili
Date: Friday, November 02
Synopsis: The Metabolists (Kyonori Kikutake, Kisho Kurokawa, Masato Otaka, Fumihiko Maki and the critic Noboru Kawazoe) devised an architectural prototype, the form of which centred on a structural core. Cylindrical and, more rarely, quadrangular structural cores are the backbone of the group’s architectural inventions. Existing literature presents a gap with regards to the examination of the role of this element, its symbolic meanings and, most notably, of how the core and its form are linked to the group’s background and conceptual basis. In this talk, I will propose a reading of the structural core as a “totemic” figure. Alluding to the Shinto notion of “regeneration” — the iterative process of construction and destruction captured in the famous cyclical rebuilding of Ise Grand Shrine — the structural core is “artificial land,” an idealized territory on which a modern Japanese identity is reformulated.

THE ALELLGY OF THE CAVE: SPECULATIONS BETWEEN INTERIOR AND LANDSCAPE FOR THE BARANGAROO HEADLAND CULTURAL FACILITY
Presenter: Dr. Sing D’Arcy
Date: Thursday, November 01
Synopsis: In 2011, final-year students from the Bachelor or Interior Architecture, University of New South Wales, were asked to speculate on the potential of a new typology, one in which landscape, and not architecture, conditioned the relationship of the interior to the exterior. Each student was required to develop a brief and then a spatial response to the proposed cultural facility embedded within the Barangaroo headland park. Unchained from the confines of its Allegorical Cave, the traditional role of the interior as a venture incapable of independent action or force for change is challenged in the range of projects developed by the students. Through an analysis of a selection of student projects it will be argued that the opening of dialogue between landscape and interior offers a new way of developing the practice of interior architecture in light of the supermodern paradigm and the new flows of space and form that it invites.

HOUSE BUHRICH II 1972
Presenter: Catherine Lassen
Date: Tuesday, October 30
Synopsis: From 1968-72, Hugh Buhrich designed and built a house for himself in Walter Burley Griffin’s planned north shore suburb of Castlecrag, incorporating a very small Griffin ‘knitlock’ structure into the resulting building. In this complex architectural work, overly singular conceptions of natural and constructed, building and landscape are deliberately questioned. Via construction techniques, material exploration, geometries, structure and a tightly organized sequence of living and spatial conditions, Buhrich precisely blurs easy distinctions between nature and artifice creating subtle conversations between the house and its bush setting. Categories of constructed and “as-found” are confounded. Through a close reading of the project, this talk will start to examine relationships between the architecture and its situation; between suggested modes of inhabitation and this particular site.