KEYNOTES

Cultures, Communities & Design

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Willie J. Ermine, First Nations University of Canada
Alison Page, University of Technology Sydney, Australia
Chris Speed, University of Edinburgh, UK
PEOPLE & THEMES

Willie J. Ermine
Willie J. Ermine, (M.Ed) is an Emeritus Professor with the First Nations University of Canada. Willie is from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation in the north central part of Saskatchewan where he lives with his family. Willie has lectured in the areas of Education, Humanities, Indigenous Studies and research methods. He has published numerous academic articles and contributed reports to the Tri Council Panel on Research Ethics. He has presented at various venues nationally and internationally and various national knowledge symposiums on the topics of education, research and in particular the nature of Indigenous thought. Willie has worked extensively with Elders in his research and promotes ethical practices of research involving Indigenous Peoples with particular interest in the conceptual development of the ‘ethical space’ – a theoretical space between cultures and world views..

Alison Page
Alison Page is the founder of the National Aboriginal Design Agency and co founder of ZAKPAGE, a creative partnership between artists Alison Page and Nik Lachajczak, who co-create with indigenous communities in Australia and elsewhere. She teaches at the School of Design, University of Technology Sydney, and is also an Honorary Fellow at Deakin University’s School of Communication and Creative Arts. She has recently co-authored Design: Building on Country with the architect and anthropologist, Paul Memmott. Her talk will deal with participatory design and indigenous communities.
Chris Speed

Prof. Chris Speed FRSE, is Chair of Design Informatics at the University of Edinburgh where he collaborates with a wide variety of partners to explore how design provides methods to adapt and create products and services within a networked society. Chris directs the Institute for Design Informatics that is home to a combination of researchers working across the fields of interaction design, temporal design, anthropology, software engineering and digital architecture, as well as the PhD, MA/MFA and MSc and Advanced MSc programmes. He is Director of the Creative Informatics R&D Partnership and Co-I to the Next Stage Digital Economy Centre DECaDE led by Surrey with the Digital Catapult. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2020.

THEMES:

Ethical Spaces

Willie J. Ermine

There are spaces that are magnificent, majestic, cathedral-like and soul nurturing. There are also spaces that evade our perception, so minute, so mysterious, but influential nevertheless. Most of these spaces are ancient, pre-dating our presence in their midst. What they have in common is that they need our human presence to acknowledge them in their form. This acknowledgement is an interface, an interaction, and an engagement of disparity, an engagement with the other. How we approach this interface of beings determines its authenticity and enduring qualities of engagement. The ethics of a living universe in all its forms guides the animation of these interactive spaces that can either result in our competency or see disintegration of our intentions. The presentation will discuss issues of ethics and rules of engagement with the seen and the unseen matrix we are immersed in.

Don’t be second hand American – build on Country

Alison Page

In his 1960 book ‘The Australian Ugliness’, Australian Architect Robin Boyd warns of the growing visual pollution in the suburbs, which he described as ‘second hand American’. Sixty years later, Aboriginal Designer Alison Page proposes a radical intervention to these confused styles and mixed ideas that continue to dominate architecture globally and that is to listen to the culture of Country and build local identities. In the Indigenous worldview everything is part of Country, even all things man-made. There is land, sea and sky Country. Time is distorted in Country. The built environment is an extension of the land, houses are second skins, and our objects are seen as living entities. Therefore, an architecture that is coherent to nature is seen as an essential
biological element of society. To build on Country is a transformational perspective for designers and architects: to be part of a design ethos that views the creation of the built environment as an extension of our Creation Stories; that these ‘things’ could be sung into existence with a purpose of clarity that reinforces our connection to Country and our ecological responsibility to care for it. Alison will demonstrate how Aboriginal design principles of sophisticated function, sustainability and storytelling, refined over many millennia, are now being applied to contemporary practices.

From Countryside to Country-side

Chris Speed

Over twenty years ago, the Internet of Things was coined to describe the instrumentation of all things, from the natural to the manufactured, allowing distributed sensing and control. Today the Architecture Media Politics and Society conference recovers the term countryside to explore the parallels and mutual influences across urban-rural relationships. As data feeds (social, environmental and economic) continue to surface through new internet platforms, our entanglement with the countryside becomes more complex. Chris will explore how a series of recent projects reframe countryside as country-side through an agential realist framework's intra-actions (Barad). Agential realism is an onto-epistemology concerned with immanent, material knowledge. Material knowledge is entwined with the world's continuous differential becoming inseparable from observational and measuring apparatuses such as data feeds from people, devices, and the land. Fraught with the problems that all 'cartesian machines' bring with them, Chris introduces prototypes, including a coffee machine with its own wallet that needs your help buying the most ethical coffee beans, to a hairdryer that chooses the right time for you to blow dry your hair according to the needs of the environment, and an app that places you into smart contracts with earthquakes – anywhere in the world.

AMPS would like to thank keynotes in advance for their participation at the conference, and especially thank Fabian Neuhaus at the University of Calgary for coordinating these talks. If you would like to know more about the work and research taking place at the University of Calgary, visit their website (links below).

We would also like to bring your attention to the Indigenous Research Support Team (IRST) at the University of Calgary and the Urban Alliance.

https://research.ucalgary.ca/
https://research.ucalgary.ca/research/research-plan
https://research.ucalgary.ca/innovation
https://research.ucalgary.ca/engage-research/irst
https://research.ucalgary.ca/urban-alliance/home