

## **Peter Russell Corrigan AM**

### **Citation for Doctor of Architecture *honoris causa***

Peter Russell Corrigan AM is an internationally renowned architect, theatre designer and academic. Throughout his career, he has exerted considerable influence on architectural practice and education in Australia and has been widely recognised for his work, being described as “the engine of postmodern architectural change in Australian architecture” in a 2005 issue of *Fabrications*, the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ).

Corrigan’s architectural career began at the University of Melbourne where he completed a Bachelor of Architecture in 1966. During his studies he was heavily involved in student theatre and this engendered a longstanding interest in theatre set design. In 1963, he spent time touring South-east Asia and Japan to expand his knowledge of theatre and architecture. From Melbourne, Corrigan went on to study in the United States, graduating with a Master of Environmental Design from Yale University in 1969.

In the US, Corrigan worked for influential design architects including Paul Rudolph, Ulrich Franzen, Cesar Pelli and Kevin Roche, and his time at Yale enabled him to have greater contact with the vibrant United States theatre scene, leading to engagement with Antonin Artaud’s theatre of the absurd, Bertolt Brecht’s street-theatre ideas, and Jerzy Grotowski’s theatre of the poor. He also had increasing contact with several leading theatre and visual arts figures in Australia, notably Patrick McCaughey, Jack Hibberd and Graeme Blundell, and it was through these relationships that he was enticed back to Australia in 1974, designing a controversial set for *Don Giovanni* at the Sydney Opera House. He has since worked extensively in stage and set design on over 100 productions for organisations including Opera Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Victorian Opera, La Mama, Gilgul Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare Company, Komische Oper (Berlin) and Graz Oper (Austria).

Following his return to Australia, Corrigan began collaborating with Melbourne architect, Maggie Edmond, and in 1974 they established the firm of Edmond and Corrigan. The firm’s buildings, especially an early series of Catholic churches, as well as houses, schools, fire stations, community, university and college buildings, have challenged orthodox architectural taste and celebrated the humble architecture of the suburbs. The practice has won numerous high profile awards including 35 RIAA state awards, three Victorian Architecture Medals and four National RIAA Architectural Design Awards, and was recognised in 1982 with the National ACI Architecture Award. The firm’s work has been exhibited internationally in 1991, 1999, 2002 and 2010 at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

As well as being active in architectural practice and publishing an extensive collection of writings in books, magazines and journals, Corrigan has contributed extensively to architectural education. He has been Visiting Professor at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design (1983-4), the Politecnico di Torino, Turin (1991), and in the Master of Architecture program at the University of Melbourne (1993). He has taught architectural design at RMIT University for over 35 years, and in 2013 he was awarded the AIA Neville Quarry Architectural Education Prize for exerting “a profound and long lasting influence on the architectural profession in Australia through his practice, writing and commitment to teaching design.”

Throughout his career, Corrigan has served on boards and committees for the RIAA Victorian Chapter (1976-84), Phillip Institute of Technology (1981-5) and RMIT University (1989-90), as Jury Chairman in the RIAA Victorian Chapter Awards in 1976, 1990 and 1996, and as a panel member in the 1990 Arts in Industry Design Awards, as well as numerous appearances as guest critic and speaker at conventions, seminars and conferences across the world.

In 1989 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Architecture from RMIT University, and gained the title of Adjunct Professor of Architectural Design at RMIT that same year. He was appointed Professor of Architectural Design at RMIT University in 2008. He has been a Life Fellow of the RIAA since 2004, and in 2003 he was awarded the RIAA Gold Medal, the highest accolade of the Australian architecture profession. In 2008, Peter Corrigan was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to architecture as an academic, educator and practitioner and to the arts, particularly through theatre production design.