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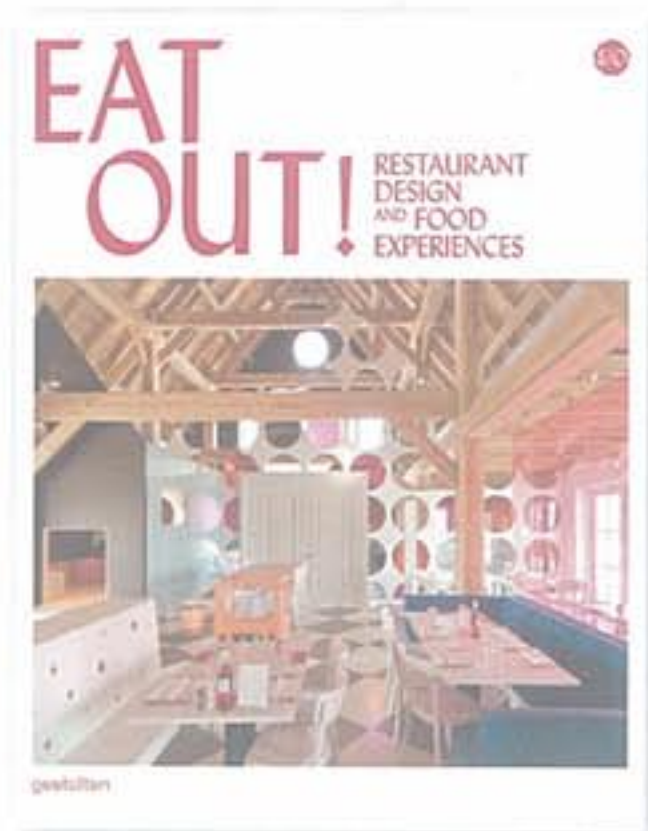
INTERIOR / ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN / OBJECTS / PEOPLE

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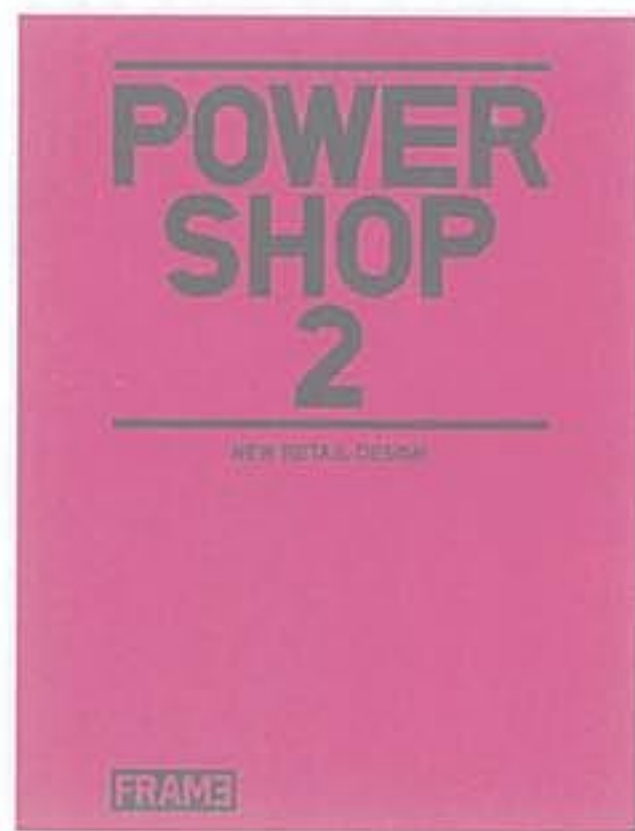
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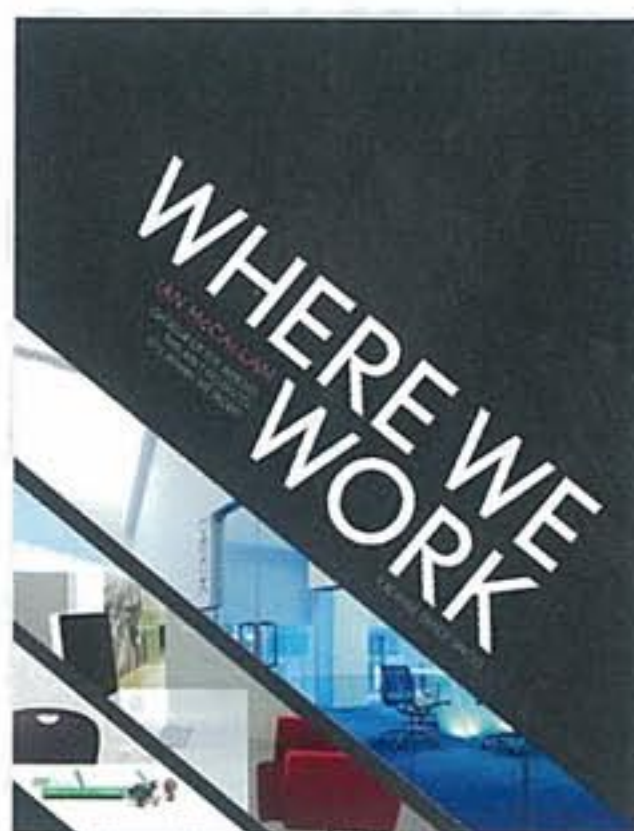
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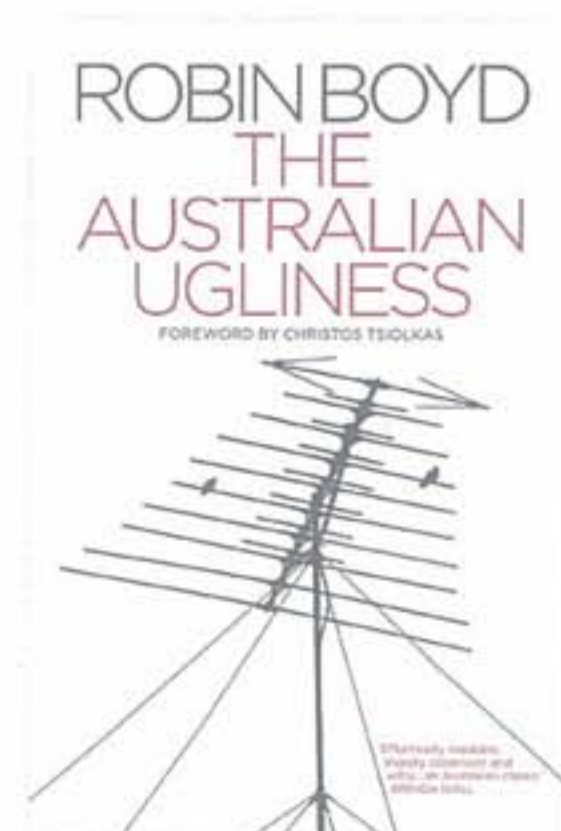
EAT OUT! RESTAURANT DESIGN AND FOOD EXPERIENCES
BY R. KLANTEN, S. EHMANN AND S. MORENO (EDS.)
(GESTALTEN, 2010) 288 PP \$120



POWERSHOP 2: NEW RETAIL DESIGN
BY M. VAN ROSSUM-WILLEMS AND S. SCHULZ (EDS.)
(GESTALTEN, 2010) 640 PP \$285



WHERE WE WORK: CREATIVE OFFICE SPACES
BY IAN MCCALLAM
(COLLINS DESIGN, 2010)
272 PP \$50



THE AUSTRALIAN UGLINESS
BY ROBIN BOYD
(TEXT PUBLISHING, 2010)
286 PP \$34.95

Eating as both necessity and luxury is explored through the nine themed sections of *Eat Out!*, an ode to the places we devour food in. In "Pop", Snog is a paradoxically warm space, inviting Londoners in from the cold to eat frozen yogurt. The projects in "Rustic Chic" look to the past, chock full of items laden with history, even if the restaurant has only been open five minutes. "Straightforward" is about getting down to business and the cafeteria-style eating halls that have grown in popularity as more people wish to eat out, but have less time to make it a special event. Choreographed dining experiences have become standard events at design festivals, encouraging diners to be both audience and player. Alcoholic Architecture, a temporary London bar with an atmosphere literally infused with gin and tonic, is one of the spaces in the chapter "Perform" that brings a sense of delight to an everyday act. When you don't want to be seen as doing the same thing as everyone else, private dining is the only option – "Open and Shut" showcases various up-market small-scale dining experiences, the opulence only matched by the projects in the following chapter, "The New Grandeur." The section on "High-tech" returns the fun with wacky restaurants that make the most of new materials and scientific wizardry, while "Juxtapose" is as its name suggests, a chapter dedicated to opposing elements and the resulting riotous confusion. "Graphic Spaces" celebrates the feature wall and the creation of optical illusions – a literal feast for the eyes.

With the assertion that we now lead lifestyles rather than lives, the editors of *Powershop 2* have set about gathering examples from around the world of retail design projects that are larger than life. Presenting over two hundred retail environments, the focus is on how the brand has been translated into an experience – or at least a tangible space for shopping. Acknowledging that shops are no longer simply for purchasing, *Powershop 2* showcases book stores that are cafes and libraries, and music stores that are like living rooms, where the customer can pick and choose the tunes they listen to. Some shops dedicate barely any space to the actual product – taking their lead from Apple, a company who are happy to make their retail spaces as un-shop-like as possible, knowing that many customers will enjoy the experience, then go home and order Apple products online. The projects are accompanied by eight essays on various aspects of retail design, some of which suggest that retail is a reflection of society, while others go so far as to advocate that it is the very essence of life. Through the use of generous images and the inclusion of floor plans, *Powershop 2* shows and analyses a huge variety of stores such as Mad Child's Dollhouse, based on classic optical illusions with a surplus of mirrors and a pop palette; CA4LA, a hat retailer that looks to the rich history of millinery; and Paulette Macaroons where the product is the star – a rainbow of freshly baked macaroons sails through the store. An invaluable resource for interior designers.

Based on the website This Ain't No Disco, *Where We Work* is a book of interiors for creative agencies. In the business of selling ideas, these agencies don't have a product to display – except themselves. Some of the spaces are so successful at camouflaging their initial purpose (work) that they have become sites for parties, exhibitions and book readings. Unusual for books of this kind, the accompanying text is plentiful and insightful, looking at how each project has come together and the intention behind each intervention. For that is what these projects are – interventions in the nine-to-five grind, a reminder of palettes other than grey, and a relief from the homogeneity of Ikea and its ilk. Common across the projects is a lack of walls – there are partitions, plants and shelves, but essentially the offices are open-plan spaces, as the agencies practise what they preach in the art of collaboration. Carpets at Amsterdam Worldwide spill over tables and snake through rooms, and the conference table, designed by Tjep, is a collision of seven smaller tables. A sense of fun pervades each space – at Ippolito Fleitz Group pendant lamps hang above desks, operated by individual dangling ribbons, while Trust Creative Society, housed in an old cotton factory, features a field of swings. While its name connotes a stripped-back approach, Naked Communications in Sydney inverts the idea of transparency. A secret door hidden behind a swinging bookcase, reminds that one of the major aims of the creative agency is to surprise, as does this book.

Originally published fifty years ago, *The Australian Ugliness* was a bestseller and is still remarkably apt today. This edition includes a foreword by Christos Tsiolkas, an afterword by John Denton, Philip Goad and Geoffrey London, and a cover design by W.H. Chong, which executes a polite nod to the book's original cover by Alison Forbes. A commentary on what it is to be (an urban) Australian as much as a dissection of a national style of architecture (most likely to be found in "the droop of a roof"), *The Australian Ugliness* is the kind of invigorating critical writing we crave. Taking a lead from the mother country, Australian society is unfailingly polite. Proud of our easygoing larrikin nature, we just get on with it, unwilling to disrupt the status quo. Sticking to the surface, we are wary of what may be found if we dig too far beneath. Generalizations, perhaps, but there is always truth in stereotypes, and once we start believing our own myths we cannot help but perpetuate them. Boyd's manifesto was everything our identity is not. Direct and never polite, he said exactly what was on his mind without dressing it up in niceties. For this is exactly what Boyd railed against – the veneers and facades of what he called Australian Featurism. While Boyd's ideas of what constitutes good design may appear somewhat dated, he encourages us to be critical of our built environment, to not let developers shape our cities and our suburbs, to take part in the design of our environments, and to stop being so apathetically polite.