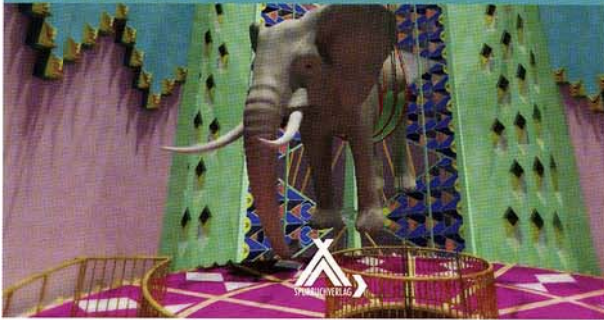




Michael Spooner  
**A Clinic for the Exhausted**  
*In Search of an Antipodean Vitality*  
*Edmond & Corrigan and an Itinerant Architecture*



# BOOK REVIEW

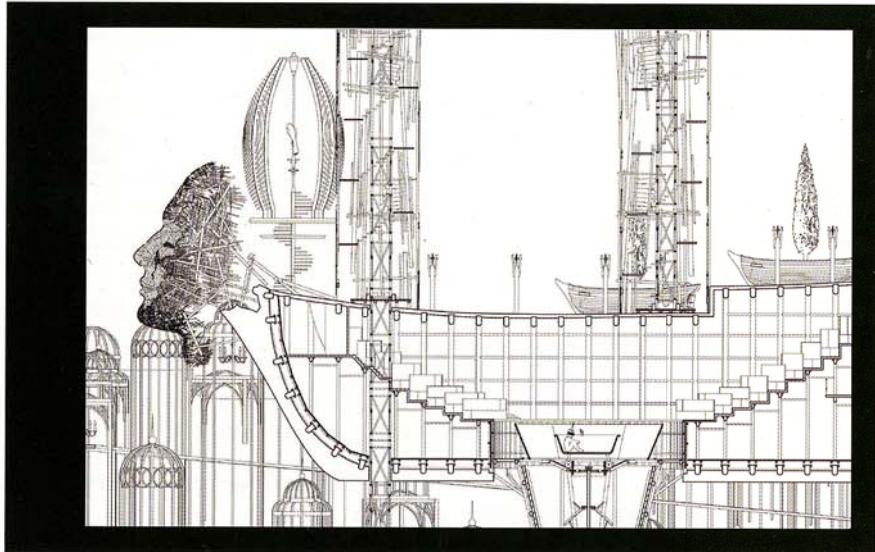
## A CLINIC FOR THE EXHAUSTED

*In Search of an Antipodean Vitality*  
*Edmond & Corrigan and an Itinerant Architecture*  
 2013  
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 By Michael Spooner

**IN A CLINIC** for the Exhausted we are asked to perform many labours, and discharge them with the understanding that we won't enquire as to why. This evasive form however, provides great propulsion forward - soon we realise we're at sea, quite possibly rowing a life boat - it's only later that we realise the tiller was turned and we've completed a circular voyage. To what end you might ask? I am tempted to recall the afterword to Nabokov's *Lolita* "... [the author] when asked to explain its origin and growth, has to rely on such ancient terms as Interreaction of Inspiration and Combination - which, I admit, sounds like a conjurer explaining one trick by performing another."

This erudite work seeks to take us on an immersive journey that begins on Melbourne's Swanson St outside Edmond & Corrigan's newly finished Building 8 with a drunken scrap of correspondence linking two architects flapping in the wind, to places and buildings hitherto unknown. The notional journey allows Spooner to propose his precocious yet cogent methodology of architectural invention and design as the scrap of paper flies away in the stiffening breeze and Building 8 sets sail.

The design research is at worst original, but at best ecstatic - proposing through writing, drawings and collected images an architecture that is highly fanciful yet palpably existent. The methodology, buoyed upon literature, philosophy, architecture, a current of humour, an overwhelming visual sumptuousness, the



corporeal and a myriad of hints and allegations to alight at a point outside one's knowing, damp with déjà vu. In Montaigne's essay, That to philosophise is to learn to die, we contemplate the life outside the body, kept busy with thoughts and ideas. This time spent traversing the world unknown beyond the body in essence is as death might be imagined. Practicing this, we no longer need fear death, a persistent question for which an answer is not forthcoming. Much like Nabokov, Spooner fends off the question by providing a sumptuous journey full of answers to other questions unasked but wholly necessary. A voyage worth the blisters.

WORDS

Marie Lecef