

Renzo Piano World Tour 2019 [in progress] Australia and Japan in comparison

Kyoto vs Noumea and Sydney vs Tokyo

On the other side of the world, the RPWT's 20-day journey has commenced. The two groups of young architects, one in Japan and the other in Australia, present us with opposing natures and urbanity: from the stylistic precision of Japanese gardens to the wild nature of New Caledonia, from the frenetic rhythm of Tokyo to the landscape views of Sydney.

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Just as in music a break between two notes is necessary to create a rhythm, so the Renzo Piano World Tour, after the intense [European stage](#) and before the American adventure, finds a new speed on the other side of the world; more introspective, with fewer visits booked and more freedom of organisation, which gives the youngsters time to **learn from everything, even from the silence of nature.**

Thus, through their notes, sketches and countless shots—posted on [Instagram](#) e [Facebook](#)—we can put together **a travel story based on comparison**, namely the comparison of two continents in opposite hemispheres in which the antithetical way of interpreting nature and urban development pushes young designers to a broader reflection on architecture and landscape.



Lukas from the heights of Noumea

Kyoto and Noumea. The stylistic precision of Japanese gardens and the wild nature of New Caledonia

The story of the East, for both groups, is intertwined with that of nature and leads them to explore, shot after shot, the **landscapes enclosed** within the walls of Japanese temples, and those **without borders** that embrace the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea.

On the one hand enigmatic and controlled compositions of vegetation, water, rocks and gravel; on the other, a wild nature made of red earth, dishevelled shrubs and waves broken on the rocks.



Imperial Villa in Katsura, Kyoto



RPBW, Tjibaou cultural centre, Noumea

Kyoto. From Kansai Airport to miniature landscapes, nature tamed by mankind

For Eirinaios, Paul Antoine and Valentina arriving in Japan begins when they land on the **spectacular "floating" airport of Kansai**, an artificial island in Osaka Bay designed by RPBW to withstand the region's violent earthquakes. From here, with a series of buses, they reached **Kyoto**, *"a city with modern buildings, with rather rigid urban layouts and then the incredible green oases that are the temples and gardens"*.

And they visited a great many gardens, from the "dry" garden of the **Ryoan-ji temple** to the green garden of the **Imperial Villa in Katsura**, to the famous zen **Kinkaku-ji** temple covered with gold leaves and the changing landscape of **Ginkaku-ji** where nature makes *"the different pavilions appear and disappear"*.

And then spectacular gardens of water, stones and plants, in the **Nijō castle** among tatami rooms and tunnels of red and black torii, in the **Shinto Fushimi Inari-Taisha** sanctuary and in the heights of the **Kiyomizudera** temple for a final farewell to the city.

What they have in common, according to Valentina, is their *"intimate and reserved"* character; their vocation is not public or social, but rather they represent immutable and perfect worlds in which *"you can't even find a bench to sit on!"*.



Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine in front of the Kinkaku-ji temple



Eirinaios and Paul Antoine

Noumea. Walks, sunsets and finally the Tjibaou Cultural Centre

In the southern hemisphere, Andrea, Raül and Lukas lived for three days in the wilderness of Nouméa, the capital of the archipelago of islands that make up New Caledonia.

As explorers—but of this millennium—armed with smartphones, SLRs and notebooks, they moved zigzagging around the island, from the hills to the ocean, by car and on foot, covering almost 200 km in search of the best landscapes to be immortalised. They set off from Mont-Dore, to admire the "Martian" landscape of red and black earth that surrounds the Lac de Yaté, and then up and down the hills to the small village of Yaté and south to Port-Boisé.

And it is only on the last day that a building emerges from the wild nature of their shots, the **Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre** commissioned by François Mitterrand to honour the memory of the Caledonian political leader murdered in 1989. A structure of villages and tree-lined squares, designed by RPBW and the winds, *"delicately integrated into the landscape"*, to pass on to the world the history of the kanak people.



Raül drawing, Noumea



RPBW, Tjibaou Cultural Centre - view from the east, Noumea



RPBW, Tjibaou Cultural Centre - facade detail, Nouméa

Sydney and Tokyo. A comparison of urban landscapes

If in Sydney you can breathe the sparkling air of the ocean immersed in the comfort of a big city, Tokyo, in its orderly chaos, is the metropolis of the future that emerges between neon lights and a frenetic pace.

On the other side of the world, both groups debated on the metropolitan area and its different connections. However, one aspect that impressed them most was this: **the hierarchy between public and private spaces, a changing balance defined in an opposite way by the two cultures.**



Shinjuku District, Tokyo

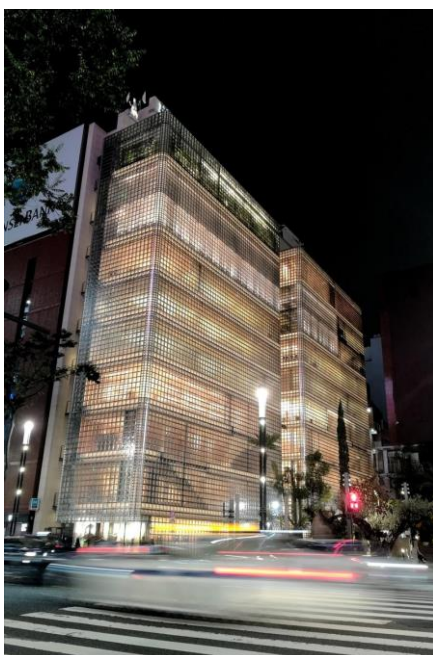


View from the Sydney Tower Eye

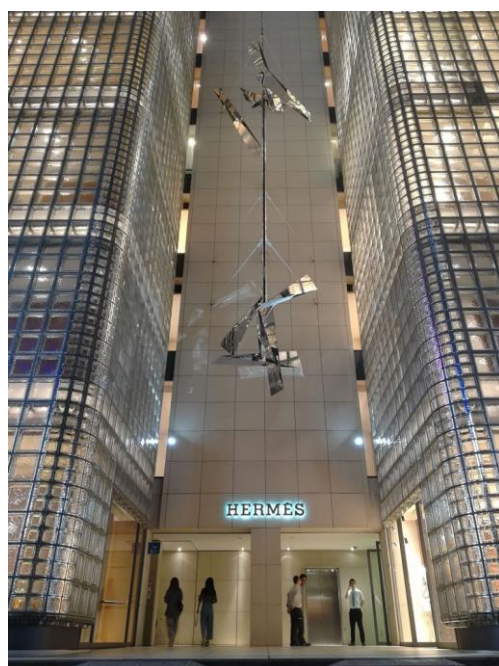
Tokyo. A succession of "reserved" architectural works amongst neon and luminous signs

With designer buildings and iconic architecture by day, and the physical backdrops of vibrant neon light and advertising signs by night, Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine spend three hectic days in Tokyo.

Here the buildings change with the passing of the hours and force them to visit the same architectural work twice, as happened with the **Maison Hermès** of the RPBW, *"one of the most unique buildings in the area"*, a "lantern" that comes to life at night illuminating itself and the centre of Ginza with over 13,000 glass bricks.



RPBW, Maison Hermès, Tokyo



On the social profiles of the RPWT, the youngsters' daily photographic story thickens with the intention of transmitting to us, shot after shot, the passage of time in Japanese architecture. One story after another, and we see the brutalism of the **National Museum of Western Art** of Le Corbusier [1959] and the **Tokyo Bunka Kaikan** of Kunio Maekawa [1961], the visionary metabolism of the **Shizuoka Press and Broadcasting Center** of Kenzo Tange [1967] and the **Nakagin Capsule Tower** of Kisho Kurokawa [1972], and the contemporary side, with the **21_21 Design Sight** museum by Tadao Ando [2007], the **Asakusa Info Centre** [2012] by Kengo Kuma, the **Shibaura House** [2011] and the **Sumida Hokusai Museum** by Kazuyo Sejima (SANAA) which opened in 2016.

What connects these works, which are very different from each other, is the character of confidentiality and introspection already found in Kyoto. *"The most beautiful and attractive buildings we have seen are a long way from the concept of openness to the public to which we are accustomed; I think they have a more "sculptural" architectural character, which relates to the public almost solely through the quality of the facade - says Valentina - there are no real public spaces for socialising. The only contexts of aggregation are the restaurants".*



Kunio Maekawa, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Tokyo

Sydney. From the skyscrapers designed by Piano to the bolt of lightning that is the Opera House

In complete contrast, Sydney is a city that succeeds in the difficult task of *"balancing public and private spaces, nature and new buildings"* - according to Andrea, for example - *"the Royal Botanical Gardens make you almost forget that you are in a city, but then you turn around and there are the skyscrapers!"*

And it is precisely with this alternation of suggestions in mind that the young people passed their days in the Australian city.

They reflected on the skyline, visiting with Adam Guernier the **One Sydney Harbour**, a project still in the pipeline of the RPBW that will transform the face of Barangaroo in the coming years, with three residential towers. Then, led by Ken McBryde, they went up to Renzo Piano's first "high" project in the Australian city, **Aurora Place**, two buildings overlooking a public space surmounted by a glass roof that creates a dialogue with the context and the nearby Opera House.

The next day, without having any visits booked, they spent the day as tourists, walking in the **Chinese Garden of Friendship** and **The Rocks** district, in the **Central Business District** (CBD) and in the **Royal Botanic Gardens**, and observing the bay of Sydney from the **Harbour Bridge** and the **Sydney Tower Eye**.

But amongst the many architectural works they visited, the real bolt of lightning was the **Sydney Opera House**. Whatever itinerary they followed, day or night, east or west, with the sunset or the fireworks, they always found her there, resting on the water, ready to be photographed again.



Raul, Andrea and Lukas in Sydney



RPBW, Aurora Place, Sydney



Jørn Utzon, Opera House, Sydney

Soon news from the United States of America!

Architectures RPBW visited

Japan OSAKA - [Kansai International Airport Terminal](#) [1988 - 1994]

Japan TOKYO - [Maison Hermès](#) [1998 - 2006]

Australia SYDNEY - [One Sydney Harbour](#) [in progress]

• [Aurora Place, Office and Residential Buildings](#) [1996 - 2000]

New Caledonia NOUMÉA - [Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center](#) [1991 - 1998]

the journey continues..

on instagram [@rpwt_40days](#)

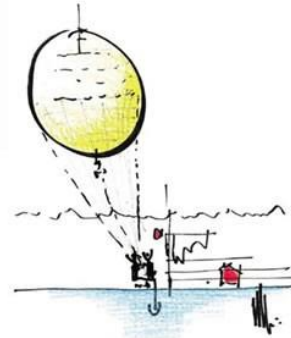
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RPWT 2019 Renzo Piano World Tour in 40 days

Award Art of Construction: the importance of structural details



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