

Asylum 2024



Designing Alongside Māori: Theorising Experiences of  
Relational, Place-Based Architectural Practice in Aotearoa

Abigail Temby-Spence

[Download the PDF](#)

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2024107>

Abstract

The research project “Designing Alongside Māori: New Possibilities in Practising Architecture as Tangata Tiriti” grew out of an observation of the lack of literature available for non-Indigenous architectural practitioners and students wanting to support Māori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) in Aotearoa New Zealand. Qualitative interviews were sought with non-Indigenous architectural practitioners identified by Māori architectural practitioners as having culturally sustaining architectural practice. A thematic analysis of these interviews explored the relational, place-based approach that allowed practitioners to remain in their own cultural traditions while centring Māori ways of being, behaving and perceiving the world. This deeply relational approach to people and place strengthened interviewees’ identities as tangata tiriti (people of the Treaty) in collective relationship with tangata whenua (people of the land), and through this, relationship with the whenua (land) itself. These relationships and connections to place are strong enough for interviewees to be able to face Aotearoa’s colonial settler history, harm caused by mainstream architectural practice, and to persevere even though they know they will make mistakes as they seek to practise architecture in culturally sustaining ways.

Designing Alongside Māori: Theorising Experiences of Relational, Place-Based Architectural Practice in Aotearoa by Abigail Temby-Spence is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

This publication may be cited as:

Temby-Spence, Abigail. Designing Alongside Māori: Theorising Experiences of Relational, Place-Based Architectural Practice in Aotearoa. *Asylum* 1( 2024): 255–268. <https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2024107>

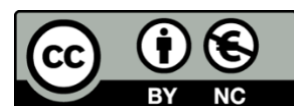
About this journal:

The aim of *Asylum* is to provide a platform for non-traditional research outputs that are generally underserved within the architecture field in New Zealand and Australia. We seek to create an outlet for staff and student research collaborations, contributing to the research culture of Unitec’s School of Architecture, as well as inviting submissions from other institutions. <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/index.php/category/publications/journals/asylums/>

Published by ePress and  
Unitec School of Architecture

[epress@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:epress@unitec.ac.nz)  
[www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/](http://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/)

Unitec  
Private Bag 92025  
Victoria Street West  
Auckland 1142  
New Zealand



ISSN 2463-4190