

## **'Ernest Fooks - The House Talks Back'**

Between the Savage and the Scientific Mind

**Alan Pert**

The University of Melbourne

**Philip Goad**

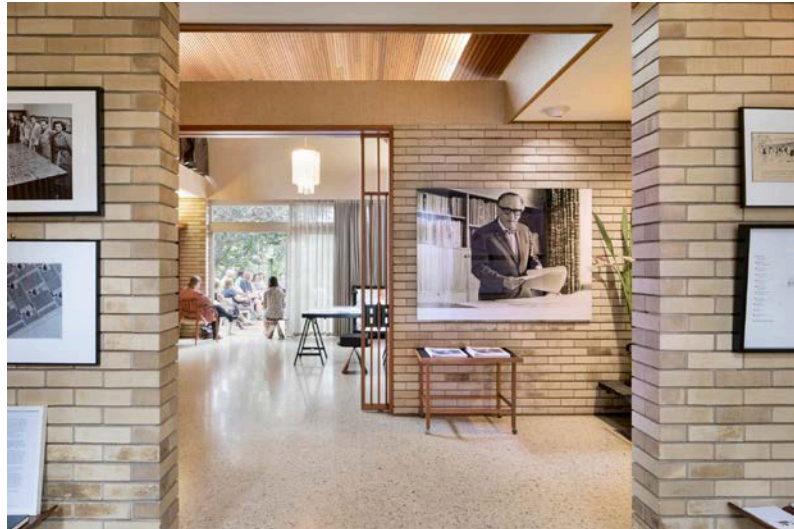
The University of Melbourne

### **Abstract**

*In December 2016, the exhibition 'Ernest Fooks – The House Talks Back' was staged at the Fooks House at 32 Howitt Road in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield. For the first time disparate archives were assembled in the one space while simultaneously the work of Viennese émigré architect Dr Ernest Fooks (1906-1985) was dissected so that each architectural project could be examined and the impact of his ethnographic interests, travel and writing superimposed upon his architecture could be revealed. The house, owned and designed by Fooks, also became an integral part of the exhibition. Together, with various collected artefacts, newly recreated Fooks objects and fragments, and a vast array of archival documents, it became a mouthpiece for a different form of architectural biography. This paper examines one unexpected outcome of the exhibition: an insight into the design strategies of Fooks that only became evident with the concentrated collection and installation of various materials related to his professional and personal life. It revealed a persona, comfortably crossing, as Claude Lévi-Strauss might have it, between the savage and the scientific mind that only became possible through the matching of a conventional archival collection with its re-presentation in a non-standard exhibition setting, in this case, the architect's own home. As such it unearthed fruitful speculations that ultimately might suggest different ways of undertaking conventional architectural history research.*

## Introduction

Art, as Claude Lévi-Strauss points out, “lies half-way between scientific knowledge and mythical or magical thought.”<sup>1</sup> For Lévi-Strauss, the human mind operates according to two modes of knowledge: that of the savage mind and the scientific mind, represented respectively by the bricoleur and the engineer. The scientific mind is a functional mind, attempting to explain reality in quantitative terms: its goal is efficiency. The savage mind, on the other hand, is a “science of the concrete” which attempts to “fit together”, to grasp the world as a network of relations and correspondences.<sup>2</sup> These quotations are drawn from Claude Lévi-Strauss’s book, *The Savage Mind* (1962, English translation 1966), which formed part of an extensive collection of books owned by Viennese architect Ernest Fooks (1906-1985), who emigrated to Australia in 1939 and made his career there until his death in 1985.



**Figure 1.** View from the entry hall, Fooks House, North Caulfield, Victoria (1964-6) during the exhibition, ‘Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back’, December 2016. Photograph - ©Tatjana Plitt

Lévi-Strauss’s book featured, albeit discreetly, on a bookshelf at the exhibition, “Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back” staged in December 2016 at Fooks’ own house (1964-6), which he had designed for himself and his wife Noemi at 32 Howitt Road in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield. The exhibition, which laid bare Fooks’ life and his work, was curated by the authors of this paper with the help of students from the Melbourne School of Design at the University of Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> For the first time disparate archives were drawn together, catalogued and assembled in the one space while simultaneously Fooks’ body of work was dissected so that each architectural project could be examined and the impact of his ethnographic interests, travel and writing superimposed upon his architecture could be revealed. The house, as exhibition, with its architectural fragments, its archives, its artefacts, its objects and its collection of books with underlined and marked passages, dog-eared pages, and marginalia suggested a disparate collection of ideas or a kind of autobiographical debris, which Fooks successfully glued together as architecture.

The exhibition told a remarkable story about the life of an architect, town planner, collector, artist and writer and provided a lens through which to test some assumptions and explore alternative perspectives on Fooks, his architecture, his town planning work and his writing. For example, Fooks’ personal book collection was reassembled after being unceremoniously cleared from the shelves of Howitt Road at the time of its auction in 2014. The reassembled collection opened up a very different reading of Fooks’ architecture. Out of the gaps in previous knowledge of Fooks one was taken on a detour through pages of underlined text, newspaper clippings inserted into pages, sketches and notes scribbled across pages of books as if Fooks was thinking out loud, all offering a more intimate understanding of Fooks beyond the pages of his published writings and his built work. Ernest Fooks is

often referred to as a “modernist” but this generalised term for the new architecture emerging in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s does not always allow for conceptual detours and new narratives to take shape.

For example, while Fooks’ architecture from the 1940s to the late 1970s can be read in relation to the impact in Australia of California Modernism, Alvar Aalto and Scandinavian Modern, as well as his roots in Viennese Modernism, not so obvious at first sight is the influence of his better known colleague, the architect Bernard Rudofsky (1905-1988) and his interpretations of modernism through the vernacular. The exact nature of Fooks’ relationship to Rudofsky remains unclear. The men knew each other, shared many similarities and for a time mirrored each other’s career trajectories. Described by Ada Louise Huxtable as the “master iconoclast of the modern movement,” Rudofsky became an architect, artist, writer, designer, traveller, curator and scholar.<sup>4</sup> He migrated with his family to Vienna, two years prior to Fooks. He studied architecture and received his doctorate in architecture a year earlier than Fooks from the same institution, Technische Hochschule (now TU Wien). Both shared the same teachers and also the same thesis supervisor, Professor Siegfried Theiss.<sup>5</sup> Both worked for their professor’s successful architectural practice Theiss & Jaksch in the early 1930s, and both worked on that firm’s major contribution to Viennese modernism, the Hochhaus Herrengasse (1930-32), then the city’s tallest building and located right next door to Adolf Loos’ Haus Goldman & Salatsch (1911) on Michaelerplatz. Even Fooks’ travels through the 1920s and following 1948 seem, at times, to echo routes taken by Rudofsky. Fooks, through his lectures and personal notes, makes consistent reference to Rudofsky, and at 32 Howitt Road, Fooks amassed Rudofsky’s entire bibliography.<sup>6</sup>

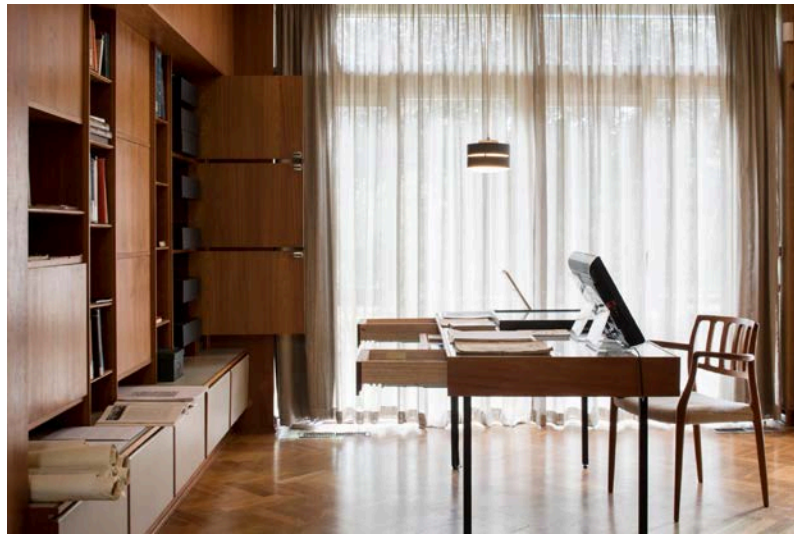
The discovery of the entire Rudofsky collection alongside over one hundred travel books and guides owned by Fooks takes us on an unforeseen journey through parallel interests in ethnographic research. This collection was housed at the Fooks house as opposed to the shelves of the practice. The distinction here is that this material recovers an interest beyond generic architectural journals and case study houses so often referred to throughout architectural history. What we discover through this personal collection are the origins of alternative ideas. The collection reads like the footnotes to the practice portfolio that only Fooks himself could properly cite. The Rudofsky collection hints at another layer to Fooks’ architecture, which is born from the inhabitants of the house. This was just one of the new narratives made possible by the exhibition.

Domestic rituals, details, furniture and a deliberate, almost over-conscientious attitude to storage suggest that Fooks’ interest go far beyond obvious and predictable outside influences. There are flavours of Japan, Scandinavia and Viennese modernism, as well as fragments of Alvar Aalto and drawings imitating buildings or parts of buildings by Kenzo Tange and Richard Neutra with an underlying sense of Viennese modernism. But the totality of the house at Howitt Road has a character that is much more complex than first impressions would suggest. What if the “Ballast of the Home” (a Rudofsky expression for the importance of storage as an organizing principle of domestic life) derived more from Rudofsky than Aalto, and what if one reconsiders Fooks’ architecture as to be necessarily read from the inside out?

### **Assembling ‘The House Talks Back’**

To do this, one needs to recreate the house as Fooks might have occupied it, or at least a semblance of his occupation. As part of “Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back,” a desk was reconstructed from archival drawings. The desk was built with a black steel sub-frame, supporting a deep timber top made with black bean wood that housed three drawers with a structural glass bevel edged inlay painted white. The desk was a reproduction of the previous desk, which occupied the library and study from 1966 until 2013. Hung on the wall of the main room facing back towards the study was a large acrylic bonded black and white photograph (1967) by Bryan V. Ruffan. The image captured Fooks working at the desk and surrounded by his meticulously set out timber shelving housing part of

his personal book collection. Taken as a set, Ruffan's photographs give a forensic insight into the tribal artefacts, books, objects, paintings, sculpture and furniture, which occupied the house as well as a glimpse into the domestic world of Ernest and Noemi Fooks.



**Figure 2.** Study with reconstructed desk, Fooks House, North Caulfield, Victoria (1964-6) during the exhibition, 'Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back', December 2016. Photograph - ©Tatjana Plitt

The library and study space at 32 Howitt Road is a fragment, just one part of the house, and the desk itself is a fragment of Fooks' previous life in Vienna before he arrived in Australia in May 1939. The desk was originally designed by Fooks for his architectural office in Vienna and was left there when Fooks fled the city in 1938. When Fooks built his house in Caulfield in 1966 he commissioned Jewish furniture maker Schulim Krimper (1893-1971) to recreate the original desk left behind in Vienna as the centrepiece of his library and study. Tragically, the Krimper-made desk, along with the majority of loose contents of the house were dispatched to distant family in Canada or otherwise sold at auction after the passing of Noemi Fooks in early 2013.

In the early 1990s Noemi Fooks split Ernest's archives across five institutions including The State Library of Victoria, The University of Melbourne, RMIT Design Archives, The Holocaust Museum and The Jewish Museum of Australia. Over five thousand drawings, four thousand slides, scrapbooks, lecture notes, magazines, notes and the entire architectural practice library had been lying dormant all these years and the 2016 exhibition became an opportunity to reunite the various collections.<sup>7</sup> All that was left over after the estate was sold were twelve boxes of books, packed sitting at the entrance to the house and ready to be transported to the local charity shop. "They are just a collection of old travel books," declared the executor of the will when it was suggested that they stay in the house.<sup>8</sup> The executor was at 32 Howitt Road preparing to clear the last of the house's contents before auction.

The books remained and along with the exhibition they presented a glimpse into the world of Fooks displayed through material gathered together from the various institutions and brought together for the first time to be presented at the house. For a short period of time the Fooks House became an example of the pre-Enlightenment origins of the museum, the *wunderkabinett*, a space of intimate curiosity, a kind of autobiographical pursuit (but here orchestrated by others) and an uncovering of Fooks' prolonged interest in ethnographic research. No attempt was made at classification or completeness, instead the exhibition focused on "searching and researching," "curiosity and collecting" and drawing both in the literal sense and metaphorical sense. Fooks' personal book collection was reassembled on the library shelves and the discovery of a list of 185 practice books

allowed many of these to be reassembled after thirty years of dispersal throughout the shelves of the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne. 3,500 drawings were exhumed for inspection, scrapbooks, letters, lecture notes, slide collections, writings and paintings were all been made available for inspection. This was an archival process, a chance to catalogue forgotten works and the antithesis of approaches to contemporary museology. It was an exhibition without a beginning, middle, and end. Instead fragments from history and glimpses into Fooks's life were revealed. Cupboards were thrown open, hidden compartments revealed and the content of drawers reinstated as original archival material. Storage became display and 'lived-in' rooms revealed that everything had its place. By placing lecture notes, travel journals and slides alongside case study projects, attempts were made to provoke debate about the origins of Fooks' architectural ideas. The brick walls were brought back to life with the "stuff of architecture" as selected design works by Fooks were hung from the picture rails. Scrapbooks were assembled on coffee tables, while the study was given over to Fooks' 1946 book, *X-Ray the City*. The bedroom made reference to his fascination with Japan while the dining table invited visitors to inhabit the exhibition with an invitation to dinner. If the house was conceived as a form of domestic theatre, was Fooks himself presenting his own house as his *gesamtkunstwerk*?

While the combined research of the curators and students provided evidence to suggest that Ernest Fooks was heavily influenced by the work and the writings of Lewis Mumford, Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra, and Le Corbusier, it is the impact of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and of Japan that is most acutely visible at 32 Howitt Road. The wave-form ceiling of the Howitt Road living room can be found in Alvar Aalto's *Maison Louis Carré* (1959) on the outskirts of Paris but it is at Aalto's *Viihuri Library* (1935) in Russia that the Fooks House can be best understood. Aalto's drawings and acoustic diagrams of the conference room suggest the shape of the timber wave-form roof is calibrated to the human ear. He manages to merge scientific reasoning and artistic imagination through the architecture. Fooks designed a pull-down projection screen that was fixed into the pelmet of the built-in book-case that sits directly beneath the living room's curved ceiling. When down, this space would transform to become Fooks' lecture room and the stage for his infamous slide nights recounting his and Noemi's recent overseas travels. Fooks would stand, lecturing to his invited audience, while the ceiling profile above could be read as a fragment of Aalto's library or the curved wood detailing of Aalto's *Model 39 lounge chair*.<sup>9</sup>

Fooks was able to assimilate Scandinavian and Japanese influences and these were then fused with an underlying architectural expression born from the Los Angeles Case Study House Program (1945-1966) via the European émigrés who had settled there before World War II. Fooks travelled to the United States in 1949 and it is assumed that he visited various well-known Californian modernist houses including Schindler's *Kings Road* and the *Lovell Beach Houses*. Fooks has a copy of *Time Magazine* (dated 15 August 1949), in his book collection. The front cover features Richard Neutra (another Viennese émigré like Fooks) while inside there is a double-page spread of significant modernist houses across the US, many of which Fooks studied on his US tour. Additional books and archival material suggest Fooks was significantly influenced by the Case Study Houses program: the first six Case Study Houses were built by 1948 and attracted more than 350,000 visitors and one can assume that Fooks would have been one of these visitors when he toured the US the next year. Clear influence can be seen in two coastal houses at *Mount Eliza* (1954) and *Lorne* (1957) but there are also detectable influences in the *Bruce House*, Hawthorn (1949) and *Slezak House*, Kew (1959).

Fooks' talent was his ability to synthesize ideas and, through a strong sensibility for interior ambience and design, he was able to define a house's intimate character. The propitious details of Fooks' houses – the curve of a garden wall, a pergola, the use of natural light, a kitchen, a bed, a cabinet, a dining table, or a decorative screen – were modelled on contemporary ways of life and domestic activities: "our homes of yesterday do not meet the requirements of today's life, of our social life, our private life, our family life" stated Fooks in a lecture titled 'The Home of Our Age' and dated 7 July



1949,<sup>10</sup> following his return from the United States. As an example, these detailed fragments – evident at the Fooks House - are able to create those small and tranquil effects of intimacy that characterise almost all of Fooks' houses and suggest that the most radical developments of all come in the designs of his interiors and their relationship to the outdoors but more importantly in relationship to the lives of their inhabitants.

32 Howitt Road was designed to be unassuming from the street - the drama unfolds in the interior layout and detailing - but it also stands out as unusually welcoming and open in the context of a street that has changed over recent years with the erection of defensive boundary walls and security entrance gates. The flow from the front (west) to the rear (east) is through a series of spaces, which vary in their degree of enclosure. One enters from the street via a front garden with a winding path of slate slabs with dark grey pebbles inset between, a curved broken brick wall, and then into a covered courtyard space which Fooks referred to as an “outdoor” gallery.<sup>11</sup> This courtyard, with rockery and pond on one side and shelves for planting on the other, leads via a “primitive” main front door into a tiled entrance lobby and then onto the ‘indoor picture gallery’ or anteroom, which allows for a space to pause. This anteroom experience is reinforced by Japanese-influenced timber mesh screens, which are hidden in the brick walls flanking the entrance to the main living space.



**Figure 3.** Living room, Fooks House, North Caulfield, Victoria (1964-6) during the exhibition, ‘Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back’, December 2016. Photograph - ©Tatjana Plitt

Like a piece of domestic theatre, the timber screens open to unveil what Fooks describes as, “a vast living room that encompasses dining room, study, through glass doors, the pools main patio area.”<sup>12</sup> This main living space is characterized by the Aalto-inspired timber clad curved profile roof, which sweeps upwards to catch the midday sun. The overall design is enriched by the complexity and variety of finishes, with the floors of the different spaces changing from terracotta tiles at the entry foyer to an off-white terrazzo continuous hard landscape which connects the picture gallery, the living and dining spaces, the bar and the guest room at the rear.

Fooks suggested that: “The function of the living area is to represent the community involvement aspect of the lifestyle,”<sup>13</sup> and the terrazzo suggests a kind of publicness to these areas where guests and the community would be entertained with slide nights and lectures. The Fooks’ collection of modern art was hung on the walls, while the oiled teak built-in joinery throughout displayed their collection of “pottery and sculptures as well as tribal artifacts from all over the world.”<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere floor surfaces are more intimate with herringbone patterned parquetry of the study/den and carpet in the master bedroom and reading room. The kitchen is utilitarian with vinyl tiles throughout though only

now showing signs of deterioration in built in cabinets, finishes and appliances. The house was carefully detailed and exquisitely crafted: 83 drawings were produced for the project.



**Figure 4.** View from the dining room looking across the living room with the study beyond, Fooks House, North Caulfield, Victoria (1964-6) during the exhibition, 'Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back', December 2016. Photograph - ©Tatjana Plitt

### **An Exemplar from Many**

The Fooks House needs to be understood as an exemplar amongst a much broader oeuvre. A sampling from over 350 projects with drawings housed at the State Library of Victoria and at RMIT Archives, which span the early 1950s through to the early 1970s demonstrates three distinctive periods of architectural output. Fooks' earliest houses were characterized by conventional forms (e.g. hipped and gabled roofs) and conventional materials (e.g. cream brick, terracotta tiles), largely due to wartime restrictions that were not relaxed until the early 1950s. Subsequently, and for the remainder of that decade, Fooks returned to his European roots with houses designed in a stark hard-edged modernist fashion, characterized by block-like expression, flat roofs with broad eaves, window walls, balconies and sun decks. Later following his trips overseas in 1958 (a world tour that included Europe, Scandinavia, and Russia), 1960 (Israel), 1963 (Israel and Canada) and 1965 (Japan), his hard-edged modernist style began to be layered with strong Scandinavian and Japanese influences both inside and out. Fooks began to experiment with stark planar walls, floating flat roofs, profiled living room ceilings, north facing roof-lights, screens, fixed furniture, loose furniture, Japanese gardens, pergolas and swimming pools. Over forty-four private houses were built in the 1960s (many have been demolished) and examination of their drawings demonstrates the intensity of Fooks's evolving domestic architecture.

32 Howitt Road does not appear to have been integrated by a commanding architectural idea. The design reads like one of Fooks' archival scrapbooks; a collage of thoughts and ideas, which amalgamates basic principles of the modern movement (brick planar walls, flat roof, sliding glass walls and open plan spaces), personal interior inventions and suggestions of anonymous vernacular tradition. Japanese architecture, Scandinavian influences, themes drawn from Bernard Rudofsky's *Behind the Picture Window*, Adolf Loos's thoughts on built-in furniture and Richard Neutra's blend of art, landscape, and practical comfort are all combined. The scrapbook principle of Fooks allows the fusion of contradictory elements: images of modernity and the peasant past, continental avant-garde and primordial constructions, primitive simplicity and extreme sophistication of details. A particular aspect of the collage approach is the distinctly Japanese atmosphere, which is evident in the combinations of materials and refinement of details, the juxtaposition of regular and irregular rhythms,

etc. The house has been thoroughly composed and, regardless of the numerous influences and incongruities, the whole is firmly held together by a coherent atmosphere, which Fooks has carefully choreographed.

The executed design for 32 Howitt Road appears to be a refinement of a series of projects and reference points which had evolved around a few basic ideas: the house as gallery; the clear articulation of living spaces and the integration of art and artifacts with residential functions; the integration of art collections with the patterns of daily life; outdoor rooms and free standing garden walls, pergolas and eaves extending the home into and connecting the home out to the landscape; and clustering spaces around the main living space, thus emphasizing the social and private aspects of the house. This is a design, which turns into a very personal credo and, as it were, a mocking criticism of the narrowness and orthodoxy of the prevalent modernist manner.

Fooks appears to have reached a scheme at 32 Howitt Road, which was relaxed and open enough to incorporate all his architectural interests, improvisations and whims. Whereas the idea of continuous space of modern architecture had usually been purely an ideal of architectural space, the spatial character of 32 Howitt Road seems to be more concerned with links to nature – the house is a flowing space and feels associated with the limitless space of nature, which is turned into specific localities only through human experience. The home is also bound to notions of nature on many levels: the use of natural materials and textures, forms suggestive of natural processes and rhythms as well as explicit metaphors of nature in the wave-form roof.

### Conclusion

At one level, the exhibition “Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back” offered valuable research into the value of object based learning and modernist conservation and heritage studies.<sup>15</sup> Little has been written or researched about Fooks’ work,<sup>16</sup> and this curatorial project offered a unique opportunity to explore disparate collections of drawings, manuscripts, slides, lecture notes, details, rare books and artefacts that cast new light on Fooks’ work. Such research is strongly linked to pedagogies of active and experiential learning, which encourages hands-on engagement with the existing house and the remaking of selected artefacts. The use of these objects provided new knowledge about Fooks and his way of working.

At another level, 32 Howitt Road might be considered an “Off-Modern” House, to use Svetlana Boym’s term.<sup>17</sup> What we are left with is an architectural language derived from a culture of quoting and of the remake. But it is also a culture of intervention and reinvention of others ideas achieved via ephemeral bricolages and assemblages. Ernest Fooks was an accomplished artist and town planner but it is in his architecture that we find what Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter refer to as a “middle ground”; “somewhere between the scientific engineering and the ad-hoc bricolage,”<sup>18</sup> where in Fooks’ case he produces solutions which are “modern,” efficient, but flexible enough to move with the times (and across them) and adapt to future situations. At one level, Fooks constructs new possibilities out of the handed-down raw materials of an architectural elite. At another, his use of materials frequently shunned by professional colleagues – such as tan wire-cut modular bricks – though frequently adopted by Melbourne’s migrant communities in standard sizing - suggests a strange but knowing adoption of a contemporary vernacular. He attempted to create meaning, as Anne-Marie Boisvert would have it “through reassembly, by (re) organising and weaving meaningful relationships among apparently heterogeneous objects,”<sup>19</sup> in this case, architectural fragments.

32 Howitt Road can thus be read as a series of components with diverse and subtle relationships. Fooks’ architecture has not been conceived so much as the reproduction of an existing model by applying a tried-and-true technique. In other words, Fooks is not copying a Richard Neutra house from California. Instead his architecture is “a creative process wherein emphasis is placed on the execution itself (‘communication with the materials’) and/or the intended purpose (‘communication



with the user).<sup>20</sup> Evident in 32 Howitt Road and in Fooks' other houses is the attention he paid to the fundamental, even primal, needs of those for whom he designed, and to the ways that people react to their environment.<sup>21</sup> It is possible his early studies in psychology were instrumental in this approach. It was likely also impacted by his exposure to Viennese *Neues Bauen*, which, in contrast to the German inflection of this style, was a gentler approach to modernism that prioritised scale, context and the occupants' experience.<sup>22</sup> Fooks regarded the German *Neues Bauen* and also the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) as cold, inhumane and ahistorical. This view was in accord with many of his teachers and contemporaries, such as Josef Frank and Bernard Rudofsky. Fooks' commitment to the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total work of art, or work of art that makes use of many art forms in its production) that was prevalent in interwar Vienna, is evident in his later work in Australia. In architecture this translated into the architect, often in association with artists, designing the whole building: its shell, furnishings, accessories and landscapes. Fooks frequently collaborated with artists and craftsmen such as fellow émigrés Schulim Krimper and sculptor Karl Duldig (1902-1986) to produce carefully crafted buildings in which every detail was considered, but at the same time providing spaces which could also accommodate the further overlay of the aesthetic or collecting desires of their inhabitants. Or, the living room of the Fooks House might be considered as an echo or even reinterpretation of the traditional focus of the courtyard house – the key space of a vernacular housing type that has persisted since ancient times. The scientific precision of the *gesamtkunstwerk* – the complete design – might accommodate the 'savage' intuition of the intimate, the personal and the archetypal. In this way, Fooks was looking for, as Levi-Strauss suggests, 'messages' and as Rudofsky was also doing:

Those [messages] which the 'bricoleur' collects are, however, ones which have to some extent been transmitted in advance – like the commercial codes which are summaries of the past experience of the trade and so allow any new situation to be met economically, provided that it belongs to the same class as some earlier one.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps, Fooks, like Rudofsky, was looking to anthropology for answers to an architectural way forward or to simply remind others of the critical role of culture as opposed to the universalism of technique. In some ways, as Marie Stender suggests, this exhibition had the unintended consequence of demonstrating "How to Interview a House."<sup>24</sup> That such a conclusion might be broached was only made possible by allowing 32 Howitt Road to "talk back": that is, by collecting through archival research as much material as possible and, in the manner of the bricoleur, reassembling it in the form of an exhibition and seeing what might happen. This is not conventional empirical research but it was informed by careful and detailed archival assembly and collection. It was, as Dana Arnold et al, have advocated, an alternative mode of thinking about the practice of architectural history as "the stepping stone into various ways of interpreting and understanding the past,"<sup>25</sup> and as Andrew Ballantyne argues, the need to answer a demand for searching beyond material evidence (the building) which may not be enough in itself<sup>26</sup> – to look for something more. The aim therefore was not only to determine historical fact and catalogue the works but also to understand – through the experimental medium of the exhibition – more broadly the work of an émigré architect omitted from the historiographic canon and whose house remains as the testament of a gifted and committed design intellectual.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962 [1966 English translation]), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> The cataloguing of the various archival collections and the design of many of the installations for the exhibition “Ernest Fooks: The House Talks Back” were undertaken by M. Arch students enrolled in the subject, ABPL90367 Critical and Curatorial Practices in Design, Semester 2, 2016, under the supervision of Alan Pert and Philip Goad in the Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne.

<sup>4</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, “Shows with a Personal Vision,” *The New York Times* (11 January 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Student Records for Ernst Fuchs (Ernest Fooks) and Bernard Rudofsky, held in the collections of the Archivs der Technischen Universität Wien, Vienna. The authors acknowledge the expert assistance of Dr Paulus Ebner, Director, TU Wien Archives.

<sup>6</sup> The Rudofsky books owned by Fooks and which were housed at 32 Howitt Road, included: Bernard Rudofsky, *Are Clothes Modern?* (1947); *Behind the Picture Window* (1955); *Japan: Book Design Yesterday* (1962); *Architecture without Architects: A short introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (1964); *The Kimono Mind: An Informal Guide to Japan and the Japanese* (1965); *Streets for People: A Primer for Americans* (1969); *The Unfashionable Human Body* (1971); *The Prodigious Builders: Notes Towards a Natural History of Architecture with Special Regard to Those Species that are Traditionally Neglected or Downright Ignored* (1977); and *Now I Lay Me Down to Eat: Notes and Footnotes on the Lost Art of Living* (1980).

<sup>7</sup> An exception was the exhibition curated by Helen Stuckey at the Jewish Museum, Melbourne, October-November 2001. See Harriet Edquist, *Ernest Fooks: architect* (Melbourne: RMIT, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with Alan Pert, October 2013. Pert had arrived at the house in October 2013 to meet the new owners who were looking to rent the property.

<sup>9</sup> Yet ironically, Fooks did not own any item of Aalto furniture.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Fooks, “The Home of Our Age,” typescript of lecture, dated 7 July 1949. Fooks Collection, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>11</sup> Design Drawings, Fooks House, 32 Howitt Road. Fooks Collection, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>12</sup> Ernest Fooks, Statement produced to accompany submission of 32 Howitt Road, Caulfield for the RAA Victorian Chapter Awards in the 1970s. Ernest Fooks Collection, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Fooks, Statement produced to accompany submission of 32 Howitt Road, Caulfield for the RAA Victorian Chapter Awards in the 1970s. Ernest Fooks Collection, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>14</sup> Ernest Fooks, Statement produced to accompany submission of 32 Howitt Road, Caulfield for the RAA Victorian Chapter Awards in the 1970s. Ernest Fooks Collection, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>15</sup> Outside the scope of this paper is the question of heritage and the modernist house, especially as it relates to the question of the émigré architect, diaspora and the story of a transplanted and transformed modernism. The Fooks House is an example of a structure that has been listed by a statutory authority for its links to the life and career of a significant émigré modernist practitioner. Yet how that significance is ‘told’ or transmitted to the broader community remains an untheorized or consciously understood process.

<sup>16</sup> The most detailed biographical and career accounts of Fooks’ work to date are found in Ronnen Goren (ed), *45 Storeys: A Retrospective of Works by Melbourne Jewish Architects from 1945* (Prahran, Vic.: Jewish Festival of the Arts, 1993); Catherine Townsend, ‘Architects, exiles, “new” Australians’, *Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (1998): 379-87; and Harriet Edquist, *Ernest Fooks: architect* (Melbourne: RMIT, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Svetlana Boym, *Architecture of the Off-Modern* (New York: Buell Center, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Ed Cutler, “Colin Rowe (1920-1999) and Fred Koetter: Collage City: A Critique,” see <http://architectureandurbanism.blogspot.com.au/2010/04/colin-rowe-1920-99-and-fred-koetter.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Anne-Marie Boisvert (translated by Timothy Barnard), “On Bricolage: Assembling Culture with Whatever Comes to Hand,” *Horizon<sup>o</sup>: Digital Art and Culture in Canada*, Issue 08, see <http://www.horizonzero.ca/textsite/remix.php?tlang=0&is=8&file=4>.

<sup>20</sup> Anne-Marie Boisvert (translated by Timothy Barnard), “On Bricolage: Assembling Culture with Whatever Comes to Hand,” *Horizon<sup>o</sup>: Digital Art and Culture in Canada*, Issue 08, see <http://www.horizonzero.ca/textsite/remix.php?tlang=0&is=8&file=4>.

<sup>21</sup> “Looking Back and Looking Forward. Dr Ernest Fooks at 60,” *The Australian Jewish News* (7 October 1966).

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<sup>22</sup> See also Philip Goad, "Das Wachsende Haus und Fuchs: The Growing House and Fooks," *Ernest Fooks – The House Talks Back*, exhibition catalogue (Parkville, Vic.: Melbourne School of Design, 2016), 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Marie Stender, "Towards an Architectural Anthropology – What Architects Can Learn from Architectural Anthropology and Vice Versa," *Architectural Theory Review*, 21 (2017): 27-43.

<sup>25</sup> Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut, and Belgan Turun Özkaya (eds) *Rethinking Architectural Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2006), xvi.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Ballantyne, "Architecture as Evidence," in Arnold et al, *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, 36-49.

