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MOREAU KUSUNOKI AND GENTON WIN POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION



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- **Winning proposal praised by Jury as a standout, delicate and elegant design with a ‘sense of joy’ that will create a landmark cultural destination**
- **Winning team includes a diverse collaboration between much-admired French/Japanese studio and accomplished Australian practice**
- **Seventy-four teams (including 529 individual firms) entered the open two-stage competition**



Australia's New South Wales (NSW) Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin, today [17/16 December 2019] announced that the team led by Moreau Kusunoki (lead design architect) and Genton (local design architect) has won the international design competition for the new Powerhouse Parramatta, Sydney.

The creation of the Powerhouse Parramatta will mark the largest investment in arts and culture in NSW since the Sydney Opera House. Conceived as 'welcoming and inclusive to the diverse communities of Greater Sydney', the Powerhouse Parramatta will transform and renew the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, relocating one of Australia's oldest and most important cultural institutions.

The Powerhouse Parramatta signifies a major shift in how Sydney thinks about itself, its culture and its communities – for the first time, a major cultural institution will be sited in Western Sydney, in Parramatta, at the metropolis' geographical heart.

The winning French/Japanese and Australian team, Moreau Kusunoki and Genton, beat 73 teams (including 500+ individual firms) to triumph with their multi-faceted Powerhouse design concept, which re-connects the river with the city, creates generous open space where nature and people can interact, and presents the museum as an innovative cultural platform.

The distinguished Jury (see members below) was unanimous in their decision and commended the proposal for its elegant design and strong identity. The Jury commented that the generosity of space, transparency and lightness of the structure will create a 'sense of joy' that encapsulates the ambitions of the Powerhouse Parramatta.

New South Wales Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin, said:

'This announcement signals the next stage in the transformation and renewal of one of Australia's oldest and most important cultural institutions. Moreau Kusunoki and Genton will develop an exceptional design to carry forward the great legacy of the Powerhouse and its collection for future generations.'

Jury Chair, Naomi Milgrom AO, said:

'Moreau Kusunoki and Genton have designed an exceptional and ambitious project. We see it reflecting the diverse and engaged communities of NSW, providing exceptional public spaces and establishing the Powerhouse Parramatta as a national and international destination.'



Powerhouse Trust President, Professor Barney Glover AO, said:

‘Through the new Powerhouse Parramatta, our communities and global visitors will be able to engage with world class exhibitions and education programs across science, technology and culture. The inclusion of 60 creative residential studios will attract leading researchers, scientists and creatives from across Australia and around the world, while also providing ongoing opportunities for students from across regional NSW to have increased access to Powerhouse programs.’

Competition Director, Malcolm Reading, said:

‘The Jury’s decision was unanimous. This was the most sophisticated and assured proposal, absolutely of its time, attuned to the Australian cultural landscape and dexterous in the way it balanced the Powerhouse’s and local community needs.

‘Moreau Kusunoki is a studio with a global reputation for seriousness about their work and personal modesty. Their Australian partners, Genton, also impressed the Jury with their authenticity and rigour. This is a sound, grounded team for an ambitious project which we expect to become a global landmark.

‘We would like to thank all of the finalists for their hard work and commitment; this was a demanding process, which attracted a strong field.’

Moreau Kusunoki said:

‘Moreau Kusunoki, and our local collaborators at Genton, are grateful and thrilled about the opportunity to design the Powerhouse Parramatta.

‘This is a very significant moment for the Powerhouse Museum and for the city, and we aspire to create a place that is inclusive and welcoming, in touch with the river, landscape, and Country.

‘We envisage the Powerhouse Parramatta as a hyper-platform, a building with limitless potential which continuously evolves. The built form treads lightly on the site, creating a porous ground plane. The architecture connects the city with the river, providing generous public space and creating an open 24-hour precinct that engages locals and visitors.



‘The flexible and dynamic presentation spaces are linked through transparent connecting spaces, which offer a quiet place for reflection, a lively place for interaction, a safe, neutral space for meetings and the creation of new shared memories. The Powerhouse will transcend scale to exist simultaneously as both intimate and iconic.’

Winning Proposal

Moreau Kusunoki and Genton’s museum proposal features a delicate latticed exoskeleton that will allow the public to see glimpses of the exhibitions and collection from the outside and give museum visitors spectacular views of the city and river.

The structural steel lattice amplifies the building’s efficiency, minimising its weight and carbon footprint, and the façade pattern evolves layer by layer – with the highest lattices created from structural timber, giving the impression of the Powerhouse dissolving into the sky.

Inspired by the site’s long history as a gathering space for cultural exchange and conviviality, the new Powerhouse Parramatta is orientated towards the riverfront, creating a shaded and green ‘breathing space’ for visitors and locals alike.

The 24-hour precinct will fluidly connect the museum with the surrounding streets and provide, in Moreau Kusunoki and Genton’s words, a ‘transparent urban lounge’ where visitors can re-connect with nature but also experience Parramatta’s lively social scene and cultural treasures, as it redefines itself as Sydney’s Central River City.

Challenging the perception of a conventional museum, the Powerhouse Parramatta is envisaged as a multi-functional ‘hyper-platform’, at the core of which will be seven flexible Presentation Spaces. These will enable the museum to showcase its internationally-significant collection and host a dynamic program of changing exhibitions and immersive experiences.

Between the Presentation Spaces and the latticed exoskeleton will be an additional layer of space, inspired by the Japanese concept of ‘mâ’ – an in-between space which is activated by its users depending on need, enriching the spatial organisation of the museum. Interspersed throughout the building, these will be places for rest, relaxation and reflection and will be enhanced by museum activities and programming.



Winning Team

The winning architectural team, selected unanimously by the Competition Jury, comprises French architecture practice Moreau Kusunoki as lead design architect and Australia's Genton as local design architect.

Paris-based Moreau Kusunoki (MK) draws dual inspiration from Japan and France, producing designs which display a passion for detail. Best known for winning the competition to design the Guggenheim Helsinki, their recent projects include the Brest National Lighthouse Museum and the Paris High Court Plaza.

MK's founders have previously worked with the world's most iconic architects – Nicolas Moreau's early career involved spells at Japanese studios, including SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates) and Kengo Kuma and Associates, while Hiroko Kusunoki's past experience includes time at Shigeru Ban Architects in Tokyo and working for Hala Wardé at Atelier Jean Nouvel in Paris.

Multi-award-winning Australian collaborators, Genton, have offices in Sydney and Melbourne, and focus on creating complex spaces that showcase the value of connection. Genton won the Frankston Station design competition in 2017; their community hub at Kinglake Village in Melbourne is much anticipated, and awards include a commendation in the Australian Institute of Architects Public Architecture category, as well as the Gold Award for Urban Design and the Silver for Architecture in the Melbourne Design Awards.

Design Competition

The high-profile Powerhouse Parramatta competition, which launched in January 2019 and drew an online audience from 131 countries, actively encouraged creative and intellectual collaborations between established and emerging talent, and international and Australian architects.

The other teams shortlisted at the competition's Stage One were (in alphabetical order):

- **AL_A** (UK) and **Architectus** (Australia)
- **Bernardes Architecture** (Brazil) and **Scale Architecture** (Australia)
- **BVN Architecture** (Australia) and **Carlo Ratti Associati** (Italy)
- **CHROFI** (Australia) with **Reko Rennie** (Australia)
- **Steven Holl Architects** (United States) and **Conrad Gargett** (Australia)

The **Competition Jury** included:

- **Jury Chair, Naomi Milgrom AO**, Business Leader and Arts Patron
- **Kim Crestani**, City Architect, City of Parramatta Council
- **Jeanne Gang**, Principal and Founder, Studio Gang Architects
- **David Gianotten**, Managing Partner – Architect, OMA
- **Lisa Havilah**, Chief Executive, Powerhouse Museum
- **Wendy Lewin FRAIA**, Principal, Wendy Lewin Architect
- **David Riches**, Former Head of Projects, Infrastructure NSW.

Competition Director, **Malcolm Reading**; **Sarah Lynn Rees**, Indigenous Advisor, Architecture and Design; and **Annette Pitman**, Head of Create Infrastructure were **Special Advisors**.

The honorarium for Stage Two was AUD \$150,000. The competition process was endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA).

The competition was organised by independent specialists Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC). For further detail, please see the [competition website](#).

ENDS

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IMAGES

Images can be downloaded here:

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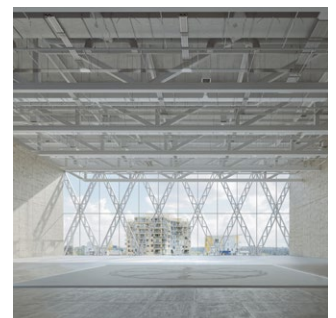
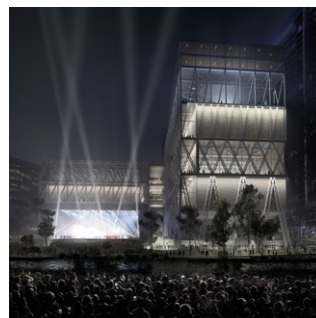
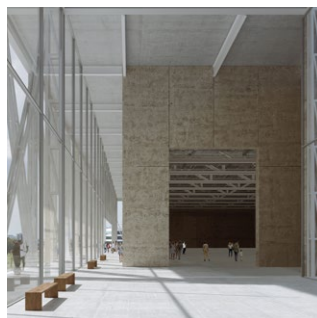
POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Moreau Kusunoki (France) and Genton (Australia)

A fresh architectural collaboration between Paris-based Moreau Kusunoki and Sydney locals Genton is the core creative team to forge the Powerhouse Parramatta. Culture and community are the core of delicate and clean design strategy. Moreau Kusunoki's Franco-Japanese roots grant a diverse international design culture, complemented by Genton's proven track record for successfully delivering complex projects locally. The team is both accomplished and dynamic, harnessing established experience and liberating emerging talent. To realise the full potential of the new Powerhouse Parramatta, the team will challenge the conventional programme of the modern-day museum to create a place of collective memory, reflection and community.

moreaukusunoki.com

genton.com.au

About the Powerhouse Precinct at Parramatta International Design Competition

An open two-stage competition, endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) that welcomed both Australian and international design teams and actively encouraged creative and intellectual collaborations between established and emerging talent.

Full details of the competition are available on the [competition website](#).

About Malcolm Reading Consultants

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic consultancy that helps clients to imagine and define contemporary environments, both built and natural. MRC is the leading specialist in devising and managing design competitions internationally. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration.

Recent work includes competitions for Houston Endowment (US); the Illuminated River Foundation (London); Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre (Lithuania); the Cambridge to Oxford Connection (UK); the Royal College of Art (London); the V&A (London); the Mumbai City Museum (India); and new buildings for the UK's New College, Oxford and St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

Malcolm Reading currently advises the Royal Household; the British Library; the National Gallery; and Transport for London.

malcolmreading.com