



Case Study 09

The Brick Show

Wheelers Hill VIC

**Representing Australia's clay
brick and paver manufacturers**

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earthenworks

William Kelly, Urban Design Forum, March 2000

"One of the most innovative public/urban art exhibition initiatives in many years ..."



(Frame) Reticule: Video artist James Verdon compared a brick wall to the pixilation of a computer screen (although this brick wall is permanently on 'pause').



Dancing of Life: Artist Anthony Sum visualised two rearing Chinese dragons, reminiscent of the larger Nine Dragon Screen in Beijing. This is also the Year of the Dragon.

Brick as an artform... is it possible?

Derham Groves* thought so and devised **The Brick Show**, a unique art exhibition in the heart of Melbourne's brick-veneer territory. He wrote this review for Hod.



Ten architects and artists were invited to each design a brick wall, 26 units wide and 31 units high, for **The Brick Show**, an exhibition held from 20 February to 31 May 2000 at the Monash Gallery of Art in suburban Wheelers Hill. Artists Andrew Leicester and Mark Stoner and architects Peter Corrigan and Carey Lyon were obvious choices because of their excellent previous work in brick. The other participants were selected because it was thought their style of work would translate successfully to the 'new' medium. For example, textile artist Joy Smith was invited because the knitting process is similar to bricklaying. The 10 freestanding walls were constructed back-to-back in the gallery's verdant park setting by talented apprentice bricklayers from the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE using materials donated by the Victorian brick industry. The outcome was an intriguing mixture of the everyday and the unusual. On one hand, the walls were like murals or sculptures in an upmarket gallery setting. Conversely, they were similar to brick company display panels, only larger and more considered. **The Brick Show** was intended to acknowledge the richness of Melbourne's polychrome brick buildings and pay tribute to the bricklayers' art. It achieved both objectives and highlighted the benefits of creative collaboration between art and industry, attracting generous support from industry, VicArts and the Australia Council. The everyday may be suddenly and unexpectedly invigorated by a fresh viewpoint. Without doubt, **The Brick Show** changed many staid opinions about bricks, including those of some members of the brick industry who were amazed to discover the humble clay brick can be interesting, let alone artistic!

Alan Attwood, *The Age*, 26 February 2000

"There is something rather surreal about these patterned walls ..."

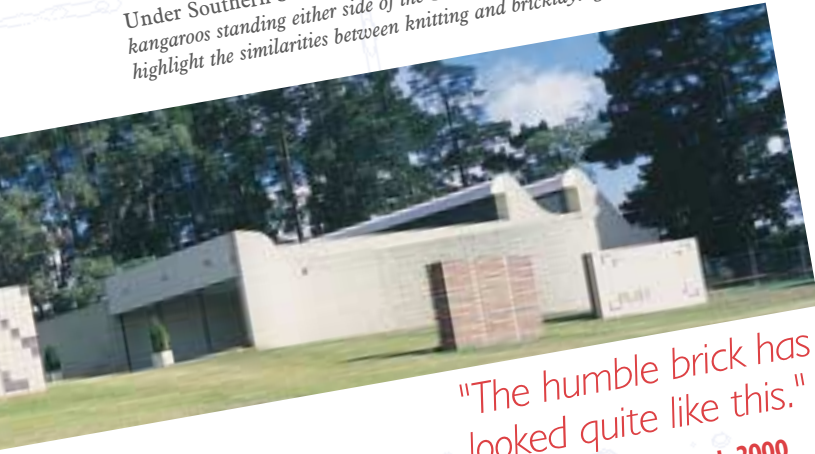
*Dr Derham Groves BArch (Deakin) MArch(RMIT) PhD (Minn.) is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne and the author of a number of popular history books on architecture.



Under Southern Skies: Tapestry artist Joy Smith envisaged a pair of kangaroos standing either side of the Southern Cross. The stylised figures highlight the similarities between knitting and bricklaying.



Ochre Field: Artist Karen Casey's wall looks like a cross-section through the earth's strata. Two white vertical lines pulsate through the wall, perhaps symbolising seismic energy.



"The humble brick has never looked quite like this."
Good Weekend, 18 March 2000



Brickochet: Inspired by the stoical role played by brick walls in children's games, architectural firm Six Degrees designed a wall which would make an impassable wicket-keeper, a handball target for rising AFL stars, and a tennis opponent with an unbeatable return serve.



Brickman: Long before graffiti became an artform, a comic character known as Foo appeared on walls. Peter Corrigan, arguably Australia's foremost brick architect, punched words out of the wall, with a reflective backing for emphasis.



Zip: Artist Mary Newsome highlighted the similarities between a zipper and bricks laid in a stretcher bond, contrasting the speed and flexibility of one with the immovability of the other.



Wordplay: Artist Andrew Leicester drew an analogy with the crossword puzzle. The bricks were stack bonded to achieve the grid with the numbers sand-blasted into the brick face.



Continuum: Sculptor Mark Stoner utilised the tonal qualities of bricks, ranging from white to chocolate. Despite its size, this wall appears to be a tiny fragment from a much larger canvas.

babyFACE BRICKS:
The pixilation quality of brickwork is dramatically evident in Lyon Architects' wall featuring a baby's eyes and nose. The title is a play on the term 'face brick'.

