The Book as Site:
Alternative Modes of Representing and Documenting Architecture

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Statement

This volume is presented as a record of the work undertaken for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.
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Architectural space is usually documented in the form of orthographic projections, that is, plan, section and elevation drawings, with perspective and three-dimensional models. These render the space in a particular way and hence, have limitations and specificity. The artist’s book – that is, a book made as an original work of art, with an artist or architect as author – offers a different mode of presenting documentation and reading representation. This thesis examines the potential for the documentation of space by coupling the artist’s book with the content of post factum architectural documentation. Through an examination of the relationship between the drawing, the building and the book, and various case studies, the potentiality of the book as a site for architecture is examined.

This thesis proposes the artist’s book as a complementary, three-dimensional architectural representation with a generational and propositional role within the design process. This examination repositions books within an expanded notion of the design process, which displaces the built object as the endpoint of this process, and investigates the critical facility of artists’ books.

The creative work presented for examination comprises three artists’ books – Mies van der Rohe: Built Houses; Ise Jingū: Beginning Repeated; and $1.45¢: Houses in the Museum Garden: Biography of an Exhibition – which operate as case studies, within the text. These works are informed by the research of the dissertation and frame the reading of this text. Three other works, undertaken through the course of the study, are also presented, and further explore the ideas presented in the textual enquiry of the thesis.