The pressure to innovate has become pervasive. Both inside and outside the architectural profession we are increasingly pressed by the quest for the new; by an innovation imperative. But what does ‘innovation’ really mean for architecture? Predominantly framed in terms of technological invention, economics and consumption, the notion of innovation is often problematically applied to the arts. Design and creativity are widely considered as drivers within innovation economies, but how can architects understand and approach the imperative to innovate meaningfully, ethically and on their own terms? Suggesting a process that is fundamentally emergent, collective and environmentally situated, The Innovation Imperative explores architectural innovation in terms of the production of vitality. Emphasising attention to ways of doing as key to innovation, this title of AD brings together historical perspectives with a range of leading provocative, emerging approaches to architectural practice that together offer fresh insight into the often vague and ubiquitous atmospheres of innovation-speak. Ultimately, this issue asks how an emphasis on vitality might offer a more nuanced understanding of the aesthetic value and ethical know-how intertwined within innovative architectural endeavour.

• Contributors include: Mario Carpo, Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, Jondi Keane, Brian Massumi, Leon van Schaik, Michael Weinstock, and Gretchen Wilkins and Liam Young.

• Featured architects and designers include: Arakawa and Gins, Eva Franch i Gilabert, Greg Lynn, MOS (Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample), Francois Roche, Veronika Valk and Vergelabs.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Pia Ednie-Brown** is an Associate Professor at RMIT University in Melbourne on the Architecture programme and the Spatial Information Architecture Laboratory (SIAL), where she has directed numerous creative research projects involving multiple disciplines across the arts and sciences.

**Mark Burry** has been consultant architect to the Temple Sagrada Família in Barcelona since 1979. He is Professor of Innovation at RMIT and Director of its state-of-the-art Spatial Information Architecture Laboratory (SIAL). He is the founding Director of the university's new research initiative, the Design Institute. In 2006, Burry was awarded an Australian Research Council Federation Fellowship and he was recently the recipient of the USA Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture (ACADIA) Award for Innovative Research.

**Andrew Burrow** is an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow at SIAL working on the ARC Discovery Grant Acts of Electronic Communication, and acting as executive director for the day-to-day running of SIAL. His research interests concern computational accounts in design.

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