



# Concrete thoughts on city speculation

**SARAH McNEILL**

**Architect** Jonathan Lake says he wants to live in a city where some buildings irritate him or inflame debate.

Inflaming debate is the idea behind the Perth Festival's four-year commitment to a series of art installations called The Architects Project.

Festival director Shelagh Magadza has invited five architects and artists to design a building with as much imagination as possible.

"She told us we could be

as free, open and imaginative as possible and to speculate a bit about what might be possible," said Jonathan.

Jonathan is the brother of theatre lighting designer Andrew Lake who is currently working on the festival play Jandamarra, for Black Swan Theatre.

Jonathan is a lecturer in Architectural Design at Curtin University and runs his own company, Jonathan Lake Architects, designing buildings that he says have a strong connection to WA's climate, landscape and

environment.

He believes that Perth's greatest problem is comparing the city to other cities instead of focussing on our state's assets.

He also believes that government and council departments are too caught up in regulations, encouraging mediocrity and planning to the lowest common denominator.

"Perth's city buildings are boring and unimaginative, designed for the greatest amount of floor space for the lowest cost," Jonathan said.

"People don't seem to

want to be challenged by their environment. They play it safe.

"I don't want to live in a city where a building goes up and no one cares about it."

His inspiration for The Architects Project was a sponge.

"I wanted to explore the idea of a sponge's fluid and interlocking spaces and how it absorbs its environment.

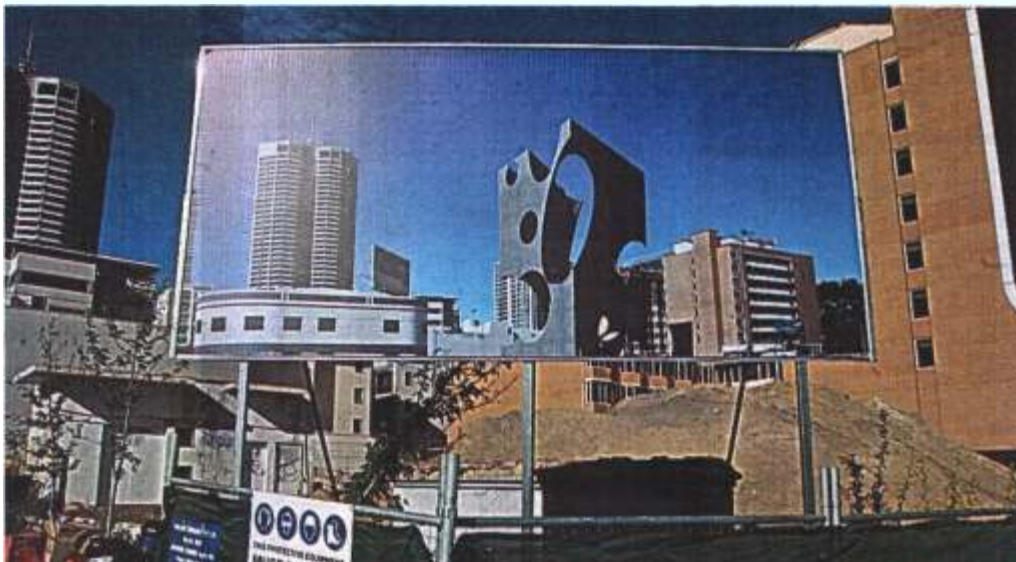
"We should think more about the environment, buildings using the sea breeze, becoming sun dials or hollowed-out, see-through spaces."

He said he was just as happy for people to love or hate his ideas, as long as it provoked a response.

"We need to encourage a greater interest in trying to be excellent," he said.

There are five billboards of fantasy buildings for five empty lots in Perth's CBD.

Along with Jonathan Lake, the architects who have contributed to a new design aesthetic are architects Gresley Abas, Iredale Pedersen Hook, Simon Pandal and artist Callum Morton. Check [www.perthfestival.com.au](http://www.perthfestival.com.au) for location details.



■ Jonathan Lake's billboard is on the corner of Wellington and Milligan streets.