Entry type: Person
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Landorf, Christine (Chris)

(1961 -)

Born	19611223, Broken Hill New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Academic, Architect

Summary

Christine Landorf is an architect and academic who grew up in Broken Hill. With David Manfredi, she designed the Visitors' Centre there and three of her students – Angus Barron, Steve Kelly and Dario Palumbo – designed the Broken Hill Miners' Memorial. Together, the Memorial and the Visitors' Centre received the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design.

Details

The second daughter of Ross and Marion Landorf, Chris has a strong connection to Broken Hill. Both her maternal and paternal grandparents settled and worked in the city, though they came from quite different social backgrounds. Her paternal grandfather worked underground in the mines as a winder house driver, and her father Ross after him completed a fitting and turning apprenticeship before working as a mine manager. Her maternal grandfather was a surveyor who, after working in Southern Cross and Mount Isa, became the General Manager of New Broken Hill Consolidated. Chris's mother Marion (née Hooper), was born in Southern Cross in Western Australia and worked as a comptometrist on the mines in Broken Hill before her marriage.

Chris attended Alma Primary School and enjoyed an active childhood riding bikes and playing sport on the weekends. She spent two years at Willyama High School before moving to Adelaide to attend boarding school. After completing high school, she began a degree in Interior Design at the South Australian Institute of Technology, and at the end of second year transferred into Architecture on the advice of her lecturer. Chris was one of only two women in a class of 28, but never experienced sexism or discrimination. Although her father Ross held conservative views, he gave Chris his full support and never discouraged her from pursuing an atypical career in a predominantly masculine profession. Rather, Ross was proud that his children were studying at university as he had never had the opportunity to undertake tertiary study himself.

After graduating Chris worked for a small practitioner, Russell Prescott, and then for the bigger firm of Rod Roach Architecture. At the age of 26 she was employed by the Adelaide City Council to work on the redevelopment of the town hall, a major project spanning several years. Having completed her Interior Design degree part time, Chris began teaching this discipline at the University of South Australia whilst undertaking a Masters of Business. After moving to teach architecture, she became a program convenor and was appointed Head of School for three years.

Though she left Broken Hill at the age of 14, Chris maintained a connection to the town where she was born. She regularly returned to visit her parents until they left the Silver City in 1985, and researched Broken Hill's history as part of a final year project for her architecture degree. While teaching at the University of South Australia, Chris initiated a summer elective study trip to Broken Hill. The project was set up in conjunction with the Line of Lode Association, which was interested in making a tourist attraction out of an old mine lease that had been donated back to the city. Chris's students proposed a number of designs for a visitors' centre, a restaurant and a memorial. The Association was thrilled by the proposals and, after receiving $1.84 million in Centenary Funding, was able to commission two of the projects: the Miners' Memorial and the Visitors' Centre. The walls of the Miners' Memorial, designed by students Angus Barron, Steve Kelly and Dario Palumbo, are inscribed with the names and causes of death of those who died in the mines. The design for the Visitors' Centre was conceived by Chris and her former student, David Manfredi. Its fractured roof and constricting walls simulate the experience of being underground. Both buildings were officially opened by the Hon. John Anderson, Deputy Prime Minister, on 21 April 2001. In December of that year they received the Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Chris Landorf continues to teach architecture at the University of Newcastle while completing a doctorate in Industrial Heritage. Her PhD investigates the sustainability and preservation of significant industrial sites, combining the maintenance of the built environment with a respect for its heritage. It compares the management models of six industrial sites in the United Kingdom with the management model proposed for the city of Broken Hill, recently nominated for the National Heritage list. If that nomination is successful, Broken Hill will be the first Australian city to be heritage listed in its entirety.

This entry was prepared and written by Georgia Moodie.

Published resources

Book Section
What's left when the ore runs out, mate?, Landorf, Christine, 1998

Journal Article
A Sense of Identity and a Sense of Place: Oral History and Preserving the Past the Mining Community of Broken Hill, Landorf, Christine, 2000

Managing for Sustainable Tourism: A Review of Six Cultural World Heritage Sites, Landorf, Christine, 2009

Conference Paper
Silk Purses from Sows' Ears: An Argument for Industrial Heritage: The Cultural Significance of Broken Hill, Landorf, Christine, 2002

Site Exhibition
Unbroken Spirit: Women in Broken Hill, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bh/bh-home.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Private hands (These records may not be readily available)
Interview with Christine Landorf

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