

# Aust. Press Cuttings Agency

Melbourne, Victoria

From

"HERALD"

Melbourne, Vic.

16 OCT 1971

# HE TOLD IT THE WAY HE SAW IT

Architect Robin Boyd, who died last night, once said that his writing was only a hobby, "a night-time thing."

But those scribbles packed a punch — with blasts at buildings, streets, towns, cities and the environment.

He not only criticised. He made suggestions for making the world a better place.

Mr Boyd was famous in Australia and overseas for his building designs.

He won the Victorian Institute's citation for the best educational building in 1968 for McCaughey Court, a seven-storey flat block at Melbourne University.

His Fletcher house at Brighton won the citation for the best domestic building in 1969.

He designed among others, Domain Park, Melbourne's first air-conditioned high-rise apartment block, the John Batman Motor Inn, the zoology building at the Australian National University and Menzies College at LaTrobe University.

## Medal

When he won the Australian Institute of Architects gold medal in 1969 he was still working on the "dinosaur" — Australia's building at Expo 70 in Osaka.

Mr Boyd's best-known book was "The Australian Ugliness," published in 1960.

In it he criticised the new suburbs sprawling around the big cities.

"Underneath a few 'personalising' features, hundreds of thousands of individually - produced villas almost give the impression that they want



Australia's pavilion at the 1970 Expo in Osaka . . . designed by Robin Boyd.

to appear mass-produced," he said.

More recently, he criticised take-away food shops as the newest form of the great Australian ugliness.

He said their design varied between unoriginal, phony, clumsy, traditional, crude and jarring.

Then he designed one—the Toorak "Fishbowl."

He made another of his more recent attacks on St. Kilda Rd. — "once a leafy road with hardly one bad building."

"What they have done to St. Kilda Rd. is like someone putting a maxi-skirt on the Venus de

Milo . . . the gaudy strip of petty, new, comic carnival buildings . . . I don't think the word tragic is too emotional."

Robin Boyd, 52 when he died, was the son of the Australian landscape painter Penleigh Boyd.

Robin Boyd was four years old when his father died in a motor accident, in 1923.

His mother decided there were enough painters in the family and directed him towards architecture while he was at school.

He was educated at Glamorgan Preparatory School and at Malvern Grammar. Then he studied

architecture at Melbourne Technical College.

He was articled to Kingsley Henderson, then one of Melbourne's leading architects.

From there he branched out to become architect, lecturer, author and critic.

He once wrote the property columns of a Melbourne newspaper.

He wrote his first book "Australia's Home" in 1952, saying in the preface "Australia is the small house.

## Ugliest

His other books included "The Puzzle of Architecture" in which he said the 20th century was the ugliest in history, and "New Directions in Japanese Architecture." He was co-author of "Living in Australia."

Boyd loved his native Melbourne, but even that took a lashing from his pen. Once he said he was thinking about renewing his subscription to "The Royal Give-it-back-to - the - Dutigallor - Tribe Society."

And more than anything, he hated the ugliness that has grown up around the beaches.

Beaches, dotted with car parks, he said, were Melbourne's greatest ugliness.

# Australia 'was his love'

Robin Boyd was one of Australia's greatest architects, Mr Peter McIntyre said today.

Mr McIntyre is the immediate past-president of the Victorian chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Mr Boyd was the institute's Victorian president.

Mr McIntyre said: "He was an Australian architect with an international reputation.

"Although he criticised Australia and its buildings, Australia was his first love.

"There has probably never been a person with

such wide interests in the profession."

The Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, said that Robin Boyd's death was a loss to Australia.

Mr Boyd was one of the creative Australians who made his mark on this country in the last two or three decades, he said.

Architect Sir Roy Grounds, said: "Robin had an approach of a knight in shining armor that most of us as kids imagine but never really achieve in real life.

"Robin never stopped living it from his student days until now.

"John Ely Burchard, the eminent Dean of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where Robin was visiting professor of architecture once said to me that Robin managed to use his mind in the way a great surgeon can use a scalpel.

"I agree with that and more.

"His combination as practising architect, critic, lecturer and writer, his initiative as a leader in his profession at every level he touched upon, marked him for all of us as the man living at the height of his times."