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SMREKAR, ERMIN

ERMIN Smrekar (1931–) was born in Trieste, Italy and migrated to Australia in 1956 where he completed supplementary exams before establishing a design practice in 1969 in Melbourne. Later, e+ architecture was formed (2006) between Ermin Smrekar Architect and BGA Architects (Bendigo) through Terry Mitton, who worked with Smrekar for 12 years before he joined BGA as a director (1998). Smrekar's prolific architectural output continues with this partnership.

Smrekar's early buildings include Office Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (1982), Lygon Lodge, Carlton, Vic. (1967), San Carlo Chapel (1984), Veneto Club, Bulleen, Vic. (1972), Old Melbourne Hotel, North Melbourne (1970), House, San Remo, Vic. (1983) and the Eastern Beach Townhouses, Geelong (1978). These works are distinctive and have been celebrated by architects because they inspired new references for a modern Australian architectural language.

Expression of structure, use of raw concrete, rational spatial organisation and abstract patterning of shapes associate these buildings with **Brutalism**. Smrekar's work can be linked to that of Luigi Morretti and Marcello D'Olivo in Italy, and contributes to a fragmented but evident set of associated works in Australia by émigré architects who include **Enrico Taglietti** and Czech émigré, **Alex Jelinek**. Debates about architectural **heritage** in Australia have unfortunately not saved from demolition San Giorgio's Restaurant, Carlton (1972–1986), a unique example of supergraphics as architectural composition. However, six Smrekar buildings have since been listed in a 2008 study of post-WWII built heritage in Vic., one of which is the Fishermen's Pier Restaurant in Geelong (1972), a robust and refined architectural statement about the division between water and land.

MIRJANA LOZANOVSKA

J. Goulding, 'Expansive mood', Belle, 81, 1987.

Heritage Alliance, 'Survey of post-war built heritage in Victoria', 2008, online.

S. Reeves, 'Heritage overlooked', Architect, autumn 2005.